

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

FRIDAY 19 JANUARY 2024, 10:00AM

**ROCHDALE – MERCURE ROCHDALE HOTEL, MANCHESTER ROAD, CASTLETON,
ROCHDALE OL11 2XZ**

AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
10:00	1.	Welcome Welcome, Chairman's Introduction, and Apologies for Absence	For information
10:05	2.	Minutes of RFCC meeting 20 October 2023 and matters arising (Paper) To approve the minutes of the last RFCC meeting and to receive an update on any actions and matters arising	For approval
10:10	3.	Recent flooding incidents (Paper) To share reports on, and to discuss, winter weather and flood incidents across the North West in the last quarter	For information
10:30	4.	Flood Poverty – Project Findings and Recommendations (RFCC Business Plan Action ID8) 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), and Dr Paul O'Hare (Manchester Metropolitan University)</i>	For information and discussion
11:10	5.	Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan – Progress Update (Paper) To receive an update on the progress made in the GM IWMP <i>Presented by Dee Grahamslaw, Placed Based Planning Lead, United Utilities</i>	For information and discussion
11:20		BREAK	
11:25	6.	Report from the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group (Papers) To include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2023/24 Programme Update - 2024/25 Indicative GiA Allocation - Local Levy Programme Update - Capital Programme Co-ordinator Role Review <i>Introduced by Neville Elstone, Chair of the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-Group, and supported by Adam Walsh, EA Area FCRM Programming Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)</i>	For decision
11:45	7.	RFCC Business Plan and Local Levy Programme 2024/25 To receive an update on the RFCC Business Plan and to consent the NW RFCC Local Levy Programme for 2024/25 <i>Presented by Sally Whiting, EA FCRM RFCC Senior Advisor, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire and Adam Walsh, EA Area FCRM Programming Manager, C&L</i>	For decision
12:05	8.	Recent national developments relevant to flooding policy and programme implementation – Recent NAO Reports and NIA Recommendations To receive an overview of the recent NAO reports and NIA Recommendations. <i>Presented by Dan Bond, EA Deputy Director, FCRM Programme Management Office</i>	For information and discussion

12:35	9.	SMP Explorer Launch To receive an overview of the launch of the Shoreline Management Plan Explorer Tool. <i>Presented by Carl Green, North West and North Wales Coastal Group Chairman and Katie Eckford, SMP Co-ordinator, Sefton Council.</i>	For information and discussion
12:55	10.	Any Other Business	
13:00		CLOSE / LUNCH	

INFORMATION PAPERS

Info item A	Update from the North West and North Wales Coastal Group	NW RFCC specific
Info item B	Quarterly Update from United Utilities	NW RFCC specific
Info item C	National FCRM Update Paper – December 2023	National EA
Info item D	Proposed RFCC meeting date for January 2025	NW RFCC specific
Info item E	Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	NW RFCC specific

Future RFCC meetings

26 April 2024 (Virtual meeting)
19 July 2024 (Face to face meeting)
18 October 2024 (Face to face meeting)
24 January 2025 (Virtual Meeting) TBC

Future RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group meetings

12 April 2024 (Virtual meeting)
5 July 2024 (Virtual Meeting)
4 October 2024 (Virtual Meeting)
10 January 2024 (Virtual Meeting)

AFTERNOON SITE VISIT

The visit will be to Rochdale Town Centre, which is approximately 15/20 mins drive from the meeting location. It is expected to last around 45 minutes to return to cars for 3pm or soon after.

2:15pm - meet outside the 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.

[Rochdale Leisure Centre Car Park, Rochdale | Rochdale Borough Council](#)

As an alternative, parking is available close by at Aldi supermarket (also on Entwistle Road OL16 2HZ) for 90 minutes, which will be enough time for the site visit.

The 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 and reference to the EA's Roch FCRM scheme and interactions between the three projects.

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**North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 20 October 2023**

Attendees

Members and invited presenters

Adrian Lythgo (Chairman)
Councillor Giles Archibald (Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Stephen Clarke (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor James Shorrock (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Tricia Ayrton (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Richard Silvester (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Philip Cusack (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Karen Shore (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Laura Crane (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk 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)
Neville Elstone, (EA Appointed Member – General Business)
Paul Barnes, (EA Appointed Member – Agriculture)
Perry Hobbs, (EA Appointed Member – Water Industry)
Carl Green, Chair of the North Wales and North West Coastal Group
Fran Comyn, Rochdale Borough Council
Paul Cobbing, Independent Consultant
Paul O'Hare, Manchester Metropolitan University
Dee Grahamslaw, United Utilities
Paul Shaffer, Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)
David Hodcroft, Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Environment Agency Officers Present

Nick Pearson, Area Flood Risk Manager (GMMC)
Fiona Duke, EA Area Flood Risk Manager (Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L))
Mia Hanson, EA Area Flood Risk Manager (C&L)
Sally Whiting, Senior FCRM Adviser (GMMC)
Adam Walsh, FCRM Programming Manager (C&L)
Laura Lamb, FCRM Programming Senior Advisor (C&L)
Crystal Orton, RFCC Project Manager (GMMC)
Dermot Smith, Senior FCRM Adviser (GMMC)
Philip Carter, Senior Specialist, Sustainable Places (C&L)
Sarah Fontana, Senior LA Capital Projects Adviser (GMMC)
Elizabeth Lowe, Commercial Business Relationship Manager, Local Operations
Helen Telfer, Senior Advisor, Green Growth Team (GMMC)
Michelle Evans, RFCC Secretariat Officer (GMMC)

Local Authority Officers:

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Doug Coyle, Westmorland and Furness Council
 Nick Rae, Westmorland and Furness Council
 Alison Harker, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Andrew Harrison, Cumberland Council
 Chloe Tringham, Cumberland Council
 Marcus Leigh, Lancashire County Council
 Laura Bigley, Lancashire County Council
 Clare Nolan-Barnes, Blackpool Council
 Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Claire Wyn-Jones, Liverpool City Council
 David Boyer, Warrington Council
 Matt Winnard, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Jill Holden, Greater Manchester Combined Authority
 Imran Munshi, Blackburn Council
 Dwayne Lowe, Bolton Council
 Sarah Parkington, Rochdale Council
 Katie Eckford, Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator / Coastal Group Secretariat
 Johnny Phillips, United Utilities
 Marianne Ridley, United Utilities
 Tracey Garrett, National Flood Forum

23 (31) Welcome, Chairman's Introduction & Apologies for Absence

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting and thanked Members for their understanding in moving to a virtual meeting. Rochdale was the original meeting location, however due to poor weather conditions and the chance of flooding in and around Rochdale the decision was made to hold the meeting virtually instead. Adrian gave his apologies to any inconvenience this change in arrangements had caused.

No Declarations of Interest have been received.

Adrian advised apologies for the meeting have been received from Councillor Elizabeth Grey and Councillor Ian Moncur, both from the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership; David Harpley (EA RFCC Appointed Member – Conservation); Stewart Davies (EA Board Member); Ollie Hope (EA Area Flood Risk Manager for GMMC), and Ian Crewe (EA Area Director for GMMC), who is on incident duty this morning.

Adrian welcomed: Councillor Richard Silvester (first RFCC meeting); Councillor James Shorrock (first RFCC meeting as Lancashire Partnership Chair); Claire Wyn-Jones from Liverpool City Council (who has been nominated to place the Local Levy vote on behalf of the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Ali Harker (the new Cumbria Partnership Co-ordinator); Mia Hanson (new EA Area Flood Risk Manager for Lancashire, who is job sharing with Fiona Duke); Laura Lamb (EA Cumbria & Lancs FCRM

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Programming Senior Advisor, presenting the Programme Update item alongside Neville Elstone); and Michelle Evans (acting RFCC Secretariat, in the absence of Rachel Harmer).

Adrian also welcomed today's speakers: Dermot Smith and Philip Carter (presenting on Biodiversity Net Gain), David Hodcroft and Dee Grahamslaw (here to present the item on Integrated Water Management), Paul Shaffer from CIWEM presenting with Laura Bigley and Johnny Phillips (on the Surface Water Flooding item), and Paul Cobbing and Paul O'Hare (here to present the Flood Poverty Project item). Tracey Garrett from the National Flood Forum is also here to observe today's meeting.

Adrian referred Members to his quarterly Chair's Update paper, shared with Members in September. He did not want to specifically focus on anything in the update, but highlighted some developments since the paper was written.

He referenced the £25 Million Defra fund for Natural Flood Management (NFM), being administered by the Environment Agency (EA) which is now open for bids. Details of this have been circulated by the EA to sub regional partnerships. There is an opportunity to work with the Rivers Trusts, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trusts, and other third parties on important NFM interventions, which critically address communities we know to be at risk.

Adrian highlighted information paper B, which provides some up-to-date flood risk data for the Northwest, reflecting Committee members' previous queries about how we look at the numbers of properties at risk. He advised this data shows the number of properties at risk of flooding across four flood categories, by partnership and by council area. He highlighted that across the Northwest there are approximately a quarter of a million properties at risk of flooding and although there are differences between the sub regional partnership areas, there are significant numbers of properties at risk in all five. He recommended this may be something to have a look at in the sub regional meetings when considering the highest priorities for flood risk within each partnership area.

Adrian highlighted the Risk Management Authority (RMA) Coastal Survey, mentioned in Information paper A, which is a survey for Shoreline Management Plan coastal practitioners, planners and elected Members. He understood from Coastal Group colleagues there haven't been many responses from elected members and the survey closing date was today. It will be kept open until the evening of the 22 October for anyone who wishes to take part but hasn't yet had the chance to do so.

Adrian made Members aware of the national RFCC EA Appointed Member recruitment campaign which went live on 19 October, the purpose of the campaign going national being to try and raise the profile of RFCCs, to increase interest in our work and to attract more applications. Members heard that within the Northwest there are three appointments needing to be re-advertised. Adrian advised that the current post holders are very welcome to re-apply.

Adrian advised that earlier this week he attended the launch of the second National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA), of which there is now a copy available online. Members

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heard, as reflected in the first NIA, there are very significant recommendations for Government and others around water and flooding, amongst all of the other economic infrastructure that we have in the country. Adrian highlighted some of the report's contents, including the National Infrastructure Commission's recommendation to reduce surface water flooding by 2055, which action should reduce the number of properties at highest risk by 60%. He advised, by implication if the recommendations aren't picked up then that that won't happen.

23 (32) Minutes of the RFCC Meeting held on 21 July 2023 and actions and matters arising

David Shaw proposed and Carolyn Otley seconded the minutes of the July 2023 RFCC meeting.

The minutes of the meeting were approved by the Committee.

There were no matters arising.

23 (33) Recent Flooding Incidents

Adrian Lythgo advised Members there is a formal report setting out the level of flooding in the last quarter that has been reported through to us. He advised that specifically he thought it was important that we have a formal report this quarter, since Members will be aware from his update and more widely that there were some tragic fatalities, which followed flooding in Merseyside.

Adrian advised we are not able to comment on the cause of the flooding as there is a Section 19 Report and other investigations are ongoing, but this does show the risk from surface water flooding that we will be taking about later in the meeting.

He provided Members with the opportunity to comment on any flooding in their areas should they wish to do so.

There were no further comments.

23 (34) Report from the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group

Laura Lamb presented the investment programme update.

2023/24 Investment Programme update

Reporting on outcomes from the 2023-24 programme, Members heard the Northwest target is forecasting (at mid-August) to better protect 4,379 properties from flooding, against our unofficial target of 3,598.

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Total capital funding available for the Northwest is £109.220 Million. This includes £94.777 Million of FCRM Grant-in-Aid (FCRMGiA), £8.457 Million of Local Levy, and £5.986 Million of Partnership Funding contributions. Forecasts at mid-August 2023 show the Northwest is expecting to draw down £115.433 Million this year. This is £6.213 Million more than allocated.

Actual spend to the end of August 2023 was £24.723 Million, meaning there is a remaining £90.710 Million forecast remaining to spend/claim. £67 Million of this relates to EA-led projects and £23 Million relates to Local Authority-led projects (LAs).

Local Levy Programme

Laura provided a Local Levy programme update and confirmed £1.6 Million of allocations had been released through a recent review 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 of Local Levy funding allocation 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.

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

Cllr Giles Archibald enquired about whether interest is earned on the Local Levy balance. Neville advised Giles will be contacted outside of the meeting to address this. (ACTION: Adam Walsh)

Neville Elstone thanked Laura Lamb for her presentation.

Adrian thanked Laura for providing the factual part of the report and advised it is just worth reflecting from the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group that there was some good discussion around how we could make the information on risks more explicit in terms of trends between meetings, not necessarily at individual project level, but to bring the information alive a bit more, and we undertook to take that away. Neville advised that

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since the meeting some early work has been done on this which is detailed in the presentation slides and anticipated we should see some further details in January.

Indicative allocation for 2024/25 and Local Choices

Laura then provided an overview of the FCRMGIA refresh bid for 2024/25. Members noted the original bid was submitted in July 2023 and indicative allocations have been received back from National with Areas and project teams in the process of responding to advise of changes they would like to make. Laura provided detail on the use of over-programming to help to balance risk. She explained that GMMC Area and Cumbria & Lancashire Area have very different risks, and take different approaches to it, but that both use over-programming to provide a buffer so that Areas can overspend if necessary and to also give the Government and the Treasury confidence that the allocation can be spent.

Laura provided Members with some more detail on the over-programming in GMMC and C&L along with the projects that are attached to this work. Adrian added that the level of detail provided by Laura was not available at the time of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group meeting and was still work in progress at that time.

Carolyn Otley commented that there appears to be plenty of capital funding available, but perhaps not the revenue funding to allow us to deliver it. Laura confirmed this is correct and noted revenue budgets are more squeezed and we are trying where possible to capitalise what we can to enable delivery to continue.

Neville Elstone raised his concern for the future programme. Members noted that it appeared the funding that is being allocated nationally isn't being allocated in a way that allows us to deliver well in the Northwest and questioned if there was anything we can do as an RFCC to make the case for change.

Adrian Lythgo advised the whole Local Choices process is designed to allow the Committee to agree the efficient use of capital funding. What the EA and the Treasury don't want is to tie up funding in schemes that are not progressing, so the Local Choices process allows money to be moved around the country to the Areas and schemes that are delivering. He also referred to Carolyn's comment about the relative scarcity of revenue funding compared to capital funding and confirmed this is something the RFCC Chairs discuss on an ongoing basis and is not restricted to the Northwest EA and LAs.

Local Levy Strategy

Sally Whiting then spoke briefly on the NW RFCC Local Levy Strategy, advising that following its original publication in 2020, a refresh of the document will take place between now and January 2024. Members were advised the engagement process has begun around specific elements of the strategy and an online survey has been sent out. Sally welcomed all to provide their thoughts and feedback, noting the low level of responses so far and urged Members and officers to respond.

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RFCC Business Plan

Sally Whiting then provided an overview of the RFCC Business Plan work taking place, advising there is a lot of activity with approximately 22 live projects underway.

The latest spend forecast against the Business Plan is circa £1.2 Million, which is an underspend of about £240k. This is slightly higher than last quarter, which is as a result of clearer spend forecasts from projects which are now starting. Sally also provided an indication of the likely investment requirements for the next couple of years, required to continue the projects that are going to be underway.

For the benefit of newer RFCC Members, Sally provided a quick flavour of a range of the projects taking place.

Members were requested to formally acknowledge the completion of two actions:

- ID19 Natural Flood Management (NFM) delivery projects - now completed.
- ID14 LA Capital Project Delivery – there have been numerous developments and improvements led at a national level which are now in the process of embedding, and along with the ongoing support provided to LAs through the LA Capital Project Advisors, there is no further standalone action to be taken under ID14.

Sally then presented a request for £30k of Local Levy to fund key deliverables from ID12 'Paving over Front Gardens' Project, where the Committee has previously approve funding for a Project Manager resource to lead the project. This is about raising awareness and changing behaviours in homeowners, suppliers and contractors and in order to reach and influence them the project is planning to create a show feature garden at the RHS Tatton Show in July 2024. There is also an RHS Urban show taking place in Manchester in April 2024 for which we are exploring opportunities for involvement.

Members were advised that United Utilities have confirmed their support of match funding for the garden (£20K) and in combination with the additional £30k contribution will enable the garden and other project deliverables.

Paul Barnes enquired as to whether there were any opportunities to contribute to the Paving over Front Gardens project. Neville advised the contact details for the Project Lead will be shared with him and thanked Paul for the offer of support.

Sally Whiting then advised the Committee that a further discussion that had taken place at the Sub Group meeting on the review of the funding for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator role, Members had asked for additional information to be provided and therefore the matter was deferred to the next meeting. Nick Pearson will be leading on the review process and the output will be brought back to the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group in January 2024.

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Resolved:

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

- Noted the progress on the 2022/23 (Year 2) capital and resource (formerly revenue) programmes.
- Noted the risks to the North West investment programme for 2023/24.
- Considered and approved the North West FCRM GiA Local Choices return.
- Noted the outcome of the review of Local Levy contributions to FCERM schemes and the more gradual reduction in the Local Levy balance currently forecast.
- Noted the main aspects of the Local Levy Strategy that will be refreshed and agreed to respond to the survey if they have not already done so.

RFCC Business Plan:

- Noted the progress on the RFCC Business Plan.
- Recognised projects ID19 and ID14 as complete.
- Agreed to support the additional Local Levy funding of £30k for the ID12 'Paving Over Front Gardens' Project.

There were no further comments or questions.

23 (35) Biodiversity Net Gain - Implementation Update

This item was discussed in advance of the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group item, but is minuted here to keep in line with the meeting agenda.

Adrian reported that the national requirements with respect to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and some of the related legislative developments have been delayed, however it is timely to provide Members with an update on the considerations that are associated with BNG. The EA and other RMAs have been considering what the BNG requirements will mean and are anticipating their implementation.

The Committee heard that BNG is a way to contribute to the recovery of nature, whilst developing land, and it's making sure that wildlife habitat is in a better state than it was before the land was developed. BNG will aim to reverse the decline in wildlife habitat and introduce measurable and quantifiable improvements in biodiversity, as a result of new land developments.

Dermot Smith provided an overview of the drivers behind the new BNG legislation. He provided the context of the biodiversity crisis in addition to the climate crisis highlighted in the State of Nature Report of 2023 which shows there are some considerable declines across biodiversity in almost all areas. He cited the example of the Turtle Dove, which since the early 1970s has declined in numbers by approximately 99% and is now on the Rare Breeding Birds Panel.

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Philip Carter provided an overview of the policy background and planning implications for the BNG legislation, which became a legal requirement through the Environment Act and established a minimum amount of BNG that developers should lawfully provide through their new developments, under the three categories of habitat, hedgerows and watercourses.

The Environment Act makes it clear that developers need to provide a minimum of 10% BNG, which means they will have to compensate for 110% of any impacts of their development on biodiversity. Local Authorities seek higher BNG through evidence-based policies and the EA has a target of achieving 20% BNG on its schemes. BNG is measured in units and calculated based on the existing biodiversity value of a site, with a backstop date of 2020, which means a developer cannot reduce the biodiversity value of a site before it is developed.

Members noted:

- It will not be acceptable to increase BNG for one category in expense of another category, i.e. you cannot provide 30% BNG just for habitat.
- A BNG plan will need to be produced by the developer.
- BNG can be provided onsite (preferred) or off site (but carries a multiplier).
- BNG will require an ongoing maintenance commitment for 30 years.
- The EA will not be a statutory consultee on BNG proposals, but will be able to offer relevant advice.
- Any BNG site that is provided will be recorded on a register to be maintained by Natural England.
- The Government has allowed a third option to on site and off site BNG, which is the purchase of BNG credits.

Philip Carter explained when the BNG requirement will come into force:

- Now, if it's already in the Local Plan as a local planning requirement
- January 2024 for most development applications (delayed from November 2023)
- April 2024 for small sites (less than 10 houses)
- 2025 for national significant infrastructure projects

There will be some exceptions, for example householder extensions will not require BNG.

Between now and January 2024 the Government are preparing statutory documents to cover items such as: exemptions; irreplaceable habitats; The Register; Planning System and Commencement Regulations. We can also expect to see the final version of the statutory biodiversity metric for calculating BNG, along with draft BNG templates for habitat management and monitoring over the 30-year period. In addition, there will be a guidance pack for landowners, developers and LAs around their roles and responsibilities in the delivery of BNG.

Dermot Smith provided Members with further information on how BNG is going to be measured and highlighted risks to the delivery of projects due to these new requirements, along with the increase of project costs. Members heard that money may be available through the Partnership Funding Calculator for Outcome Measure 4 (environmental

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outcomes), but this may not be sufficient and will bring greater complexity in developing and delivering projects. Partnership working will be key in delivering some of these requirements. More discussions with landowners will need to take place, more legal agreements will need to be put in place, and partners will be needed to manage land for long periods of time, all of which brings significant risk.

Members heard that in 2020 the EA set up a Biodiversity Net Gain Assurance Group in the two North West Areas to help prepare for this new legislation and to support projects that were having to deliver BNG. National teams were also involved so they knew what support and guidance they would need to establish to help with this work.

Members noted that Planning Authorities will have a dual role to play, firstly they will enforce the regulations and decide on planning applications and secondly, they will facilitate the delivery of BNG in their local Nature Recovery Strategies.

Dermot showed Members a BNG tracker spreadsheet set up for North West projects to monitor and manage the delivery of BNG. This monitoring tool will help to see BNG requirements in a more joined up way, linking requirements to potential sites, and supporting more strategic conversations with environmental NGOs as potential partners.

Councillor Giles Archibald enquired about the BNG aspects of the Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme and was advised the BNG data for the scheme was not yet available.

Dermot also suggested one way the RFCC could help manage the delivery risks associated with the new BNG requirement might be to use Local Levy funding to support the strategic purchase of land parcels, to create some larger areas of habitat, or to purchase some BNG units from eNGOs. While this does introduce some risk associated with being able to provide BNG geographically close enough to the site where it is being lost, this initiative would not be a net cost to the Levy programme as it would be another form of underwriting capital project delivery until FCRMGiA funding for the projects can be secured and then the Levy-funded BNG units would effectively be bought back. In the worst case scenario, if a BNG site was secured and then it was concluded it would never be required to compensate for our projects, it could be sold on the open market and with the habitat already established it would attract a higher value.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Dermot and Philip for their presentation and advised on the consideration of Local Levy, the Committee should do that as part of refreshing the RFCC's Business Plan in the January to March 2024 period, so it can be done in a considered and thorough way.

Councillor Giles Archibald asked if any lobbying is taking place for other causes of biodiversity loss to be featured in this programme going forward. With specific reference to peat he asked if this can be featured as a specific issue of discussion in the future. Cllr Archibald also expressed some disappointment that the 20% BNG requirement was not now to be applied at project level (rather than across the whole programme) and would only apply to capital projects.

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Dermot quoted EA guidance recently received which while only applying the 20% BNG target to projects requiring planning permission, it is the EA's aim to achieve a measurable biodiversity improvement on all works including revenue and maintenance programmes. Dermot reflected that BNG is a specific tool to help address biodiversity loss and part of the EA's role has been to advise Government on the issues raised by BNG but reflected there is much more Government policy in terms of Environmental Land Management (ELMs), which is going to help to address some of the farmland and agricultural declines.

Paul Barnes commented that BNG can be stacked and, by incorporating it with ELMS Schemes there are good opportunities to attract double funding for the same thing – the only situation where this is possible.

Councillor James Shorrock asked how the EA planned to support RMAs to meet and deliver the BNG requirements of projects currently in the investment programme. Dermot responded that we would support LAs in the same way we do for the EA's own programme, to monitor and track projects and their BNG requirements and achievements using the same tool, to enable oversight across the whole programme. He also acknowledged it is likely to be slightly more challenging to access this information from LAs.

Councillor Philip Cusack welcomed the BNG requirement and the EA's aim to deliver 20%, but highlighted a warning that needs to be raised across the country, of resource and skills shortages within the planning system to make it happen. He advised the Royal Town Planning Institute recently estimated that 61% of public sector planners could not confirm that they'd have the in-house resource or ecological expertise to deliver BNG requirements. Implementing and policing this new process is going to be a huge problem for many LAs.

Dermot Smith acknowledged and recognised this pressure with the resources not currently available but expressed some hope that the situation may improve once the requirement is fully live. Philip Carter also commented that BNG does place a strong onus on developers who if not compliant will be in breach of their planning permission or conditions, or s106 agreement. This should hopefully provide a sufficient 'stick' to ensure developers do the right thing, subject to LAs having the resources to enforce.

Adrian Lythgo remarked on the RFCC's awareness of pressures within LAs and on the links and relationships with planners. He suggested that it might be something for Chris Findley and David Shaw to give some thought to under the relevant Business Plan ambition.

Suzana Ilic thanked Dermot and Philip for their presentation and asked how this will be applied to coastal projects, noting there will be challenges especially for projects that are at the edge of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Dermot confirmed that BNG also

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applies to coastal projects and believes there is some special guidance in dealing with areas close or next to designated sites.

Fiona Duke advised that where there are designated sites at the coast, if we're having any impact, we would need to provide compensatory habitat in advance of going for planning permission and doing any development. She gave one example of the Hambleton Scheme on the River Wyre. Compensatory habitat is separate to BNG, so we need to provide BNG on top of that compensatory element, therefore protected sites follow a different process to BNG.

Adrian highlighted that with regard to the Our Future Coast programme, Carl Green will need to clarify whether BNG or compensatory habitat was being looked into.

David Shaw agreed with Councillor Cusack's concerns and advised that we should not forget the Community Forests as a potential partner for delivering this work.

Adrian thanked Members for the discussion and advised this is clearly another important consideration for land use planning and some of the opportunity costs of land that could probably be used for several different purposes. He advised the Committee collectively need to make the case for why land should be used for BNG associated with flood schemes.

23 (36) Local Levy for 2024/25

Adrian Lythgo reminded Members that this is the formal vote with respect to the Local Levy where LLFA RFCC Members are asked to consider and vote on the rate of Local Levy funding for 2024/25. This vote takes place in October every year, to provide Local Authority Finance Directors time to feed this into their budget preparations for the 2024/25 financial year.

The Local Levy raises in the region of £4.4 Million a year, which is a crucial way of leveraging in additional capital money and take forward multiple projects, as discussed earlier in the meeting.

Members noted it is specifically the responsibility of LAs to raise the Levy as it comes from within their Council Tax revenue, and therefore it is a vote purely for LA Councillors on the Committee, or their properly nominated substitutes.

Adrian confirmed that formal nominations had been made by the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership for Sarah Wardle and Claire Wyn-Jones to place the Local Levy votes on behalf of their Councillors. Adrian asked Members if they had any objections to these two nominations, confirming he was happy to accept these substitutes, and Members confirmed they were also happy to accept the two nominations.

Adrian discussed the Local Levy vote and the process the Committee follows, noting that each of the five sub-regional partnerships considers the position that it would prefer in

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terms of the extent to which or whether there is an increase in the Local Levy, and that those discussions have taken place. He advised he is aware of the levels of increase that the sub-regional partnerships are wishing to see and for that reason he will firstly see if there are any general comments that Councils wish to make about the Local Levy, and then secondly, he will ask if any Councillor wishes to propose the level of increase for 2024/25.

Adrian asked if there were any comments from Councillors, of which there were none.

Councillor Stephen Clarke formally proposed a 3% increase in the Local Levy, which was seconded by Councillor Giles Archibald.

The Committee voted that the Local Levy increase for 2024/25 should be a 3% increase.

Adrian advised the agreement to raise the Local Levy by 3% should be celebrated and noted that we have a consensus across all of the sub-regional partnerships that the Levy should increase by 3%. On behalf of the Committee Adrian thanked the LLFAs for this support, as he is very aware of the revenue pressure on LAs more generally and the other calls LAs have on this funding. He noted that the LAs were making a priority of the protection of communities that flood, and the work that we do.

Resolved: The Committee:

- Agreed a 3% increase to the Local Levy for 2024/2025
- In accordance with section 23(3) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 it was agreed that the sum of £4.544 million be met from the levy in 2024/25 and that the Environment Agency issue a levy under section 17 of that Act on those County and Unitary Councils shown below, whose areas are situated in whole or in part in the area of the Environment Agency's North West Flood and Coastal Risk Management Region for the financial year 2024/25. The levies made on those councils shall be paid by them in four equal payments on 1 May 2024, 1 July 2024, 1 October 2024 and 1 January 2025.

County Councils:

Derbyshire, Lancashire, Northumberland, North Yorkshire, Shropshire and Staffordshire.

Unitary Authorities:

Blackburn-with-Darwen, Blackpool, Bolton, Bury, Cheshire East, Chester and Cheshire West, Cumberland, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Sefton, Stockport, St Helens, Tameside, Trafford, Warrington, Wigan, Wirral and Westmorland and Furness.

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23 (37) Surface Water Management

Adrian Lythgo referred back to his opening remarks regarding the increasing impact of surface water and the national and regional focus on addressing surface water flooding. He introduced Laura Bigley, Paul Shaffer and Johnny Philips to present this item.

Laura Bigley began by highlighting that in November 2022 the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) published its report looking at the impacts of surface water flooding and then in January 2023 there was the publication of the review of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. A consultation on the implementation of Schedule 3 is expected from Government soon.

Laura Bigley started with an overview of who the NIC are. The NIC report from 2022 identified there were over 300,000 properties in England currently at risk of surface water flooding, compared to 240,000 properties at risk from river and coastal flooding and without action it estimates up to a further 295,000 properties (i.e. almost a doubling) could be put at high risk by 2055. Laura explained the three key recommendations the NIC have identified to start to address the issues, which are: 1) to stop as much water as possible getting into drains; 2) to expand the capacity of drainage systems and 3) to create more joined-up targeted governance and funding.

Laura presented a slide on the number of properties currently at risk of surface water flooding in the North West, totalling almost 40,000, with the highest concentrations in the Merseyside and Greater Manchester partnership areas.

Laura provided Members with more detail on the specific actions the NIC believe are required under each of the recommendations.

In terms of recommendations to the Committee, Laura asked Members to read the second NIC Report published earlier this week, and then consider: what the Committee's aspirations are for surface water in the North West; is there anything we could do as a Committee to 'get ahead' to deliver benefits to communities across our region; and how we could use the NIC recommendations to influence the refresh of the Committee's Business Plan and Local Levy Strategy.

Laura then moved on to cover the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Review, published in January 2023, which provides a framework for the approval and adoption of drainage systems. She highlighted key milestones on a timeline since the original creation of Schedule 3 in 2014. A key recommendation from the review is that the Government must act and implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, with the unitary authority or the County Council becoming SuDS approval bodies (SABs). Schedule 3 will also provide national standards for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of SuDS. Thirdly it makes the automatic right to connect surface water runoff to the public sewer conditional on that drainage being approved by the SAB. Members heard that Schedule 3 has already been implemented in Wales where a post

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implementation review has highlighted some teething issues and lessons learned which will hopefully be incorporated into the English legislation and processes.

Members were provided with information on what may require approval from the SuDS Approval Body (SAB) and received an overview on what the public consultation steps will look like, the first being the implementation approach and the second being the regulatory impact assessment.

Members noted;

- the importance of responding to the public consultation on the implementation of Schedule 3 in England.
- things could change and nothing is guaranteed until the legislation is passed.
- unless or until Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act comes into force it is very much business as usual for LAs and other Risk Management Authorities in relation to SuDS.

Paul Shaffer from the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM) then presented on a review of surface water management that CIWEM were asked to undertake from the perspective of RMAs, focussing on local government. This sought to obtain independent input around cooperation and collaboration, funding, and capacity and skills, and on whether things have changed since the 2020 Jenkins Review, recognising there have been Surface Water Action Plans and the National FCRM Strategy. A survey was undertaken in Summer 2022, supported by focus groups with LAs and water companies. Paul provided an overview of the survey results.

This covered the Duty to Co-operate which was quite patchy with some RMAs better than others, partly due to a lack of clarity about organisations' respective roles and responsibilities, especially those of the Environment Agency and its strategic overview role. The survey also recognised inconsistent approaches nationally in how some of the same organisations are co-operating and sharing information, including on assets and Section 19 reports. The increasing use of nature-based solutions and the need for co-ordination to deliver SuDS with multiple benefits, particularly retrofitting, could compound these challenges and requires changes in working and greater clarity on what is required.

Responses on Collaboration reflected the view that the EA and LLFAs are the best collaborators, with other RMAs (including water companies and highways authorities) less so. Again, roles and responsibilities, and knowing who to talk to within organisations, and resources were all issues affecting the quality of collaboration.

On Funding, Paul advised that only half of the LAs/RMAs reported having a ring fenced or allocated budget for looking after surface water management, and very few of those had long term certainty.

Insufficient budgets and certainty have contributed to poor resourcing and challenges in undertaking statutory duties, and capacity and skills were shown to be a real concern

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across all of the LAs, only a third having the full complement of staff. This was a key concern for many LAs.

A total of 19 recommendations have been developed addressing all the above themes and challenges, relating to leadership, engagement, clarity, funding applications, training and apprenticeships, knowledge management and sharing of resources and knowledge (Local Hubs).

The Committee were advised that Paul and Laura are working with the EA on improving surface water management, particularly looking to identify some quick wins and early gains with regard to communication and engagement.

Johnny Phillips from United Utilities informed Members of a new rainwater management team set up to focus on this within UU, and provided Members with an overview of the Price Review 2024 Business Plan submission, in which from 2025 to 2030 UU are:

- Planning to spend £3 Billion to reduce sewer spills from storm overflows from over 400 sites across the North West.
- Seeking a 32% reduction in sewer flooding across the North West.

Johnny provided Members with highlights of the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) which details UU's long term plan to achieve strategic planning targets and identifies £290 Million of investment in surface water management over a 25-year period. The huge investment now going into reducing storm overflows will significantly help with rainwater management overall, both through conventional solutions where appropriate but increasingly by addressing rainwater at source, through partnerships, using nature-based solutions and green-blue infrastructure within the public realm delivering multiple benefits.

He touched on the components which will create the Asset Management Plan (AMP) 8 programme, that is the WINEP, DWMP and Advanced WINEP. The Advanced WINEP will provide for investment and resource now on longer term partnership working to get ahead for the next AMP period. He then touched on UU's Rainwater Management Strategy which looks across catchments from the Uplands, through Attenuation and Disconnection in more urban areas, and finally Reuse, valuing our water resources more.

Finally, Johnny provided a picture of the UU's new Rainwater Management Team. They have acknowledged they need to work differently to deliver all of the programmes, activities and projects for the next AMP. The team will include Business Development Team Managers and Operations Managers to work more closely with the EA and RMAs.

Councillor Giles Archibald queried the slide Laura Bigley had shared on surface water flood risk in the North West and asked if this was for houses at risk of surface water flooding, fluvial flooding or coastal flooding. He asked what assumptions are being made about climate change projections and if there is a total picture of all the risks.

Also in relation to Laura Bigley's presentation, Councillor Tricia Ayrton commented that it appears there are some quite significant exemptions in which developments the rules will apply to, specifically questioning the terminology 'significant development'. It appears to be a potentially huge loophole within the guidance because some of it is stated quite

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subjectively. She asked if the term 'significant development' will be clarified. Laura advised this will be part of the public consultation, noting there will be much more clarity on the scope, the threshold and the process for what this looks like for different scales of development.

Councillor Philip Cusack similarly raised his concern about the proposed exemption in Schedule 3 of permitted development. He recognised that legislative change may be required but he expressed his view that it is critical that permitted development including things such as paving over front gardens is included within this somehow. In terms of general surface water management, he highlighted the importance of the planning system and particularly local plans. He reported that his LA has a surface water policy within the local plan reflecting the hierarchy of how surface water should be managed. He asked how many other LAs in the North West have this kind of policy in their local plans and if they don't have this then could we as a body suggest some wording for a supplementary planning document to go into local plans to that effect.

Laura Bigley advised that what has just been described including the drainage hierarchy is a national requirement and not a local requirement, so every local planning authority in England should be compliant with that requirement. Individual local authorities have some flexibility to make this more strict if required. And it is the role and responsibility of the LLFA through their advice to the LPA to make sure that developments adhere to the hierarchy. In relation to the proposal for a North West supplementary planning document, Laura advised to hang fire for now until we know more about Schedule 3 and SABs have a key role to play in development of more strategic planning requirements on surface water management. Instead she encouraged the application of evidence-based documents for local plans.

Claire Wyn-Jones highlighted that the Merseyside Strategic Partnership has recently submitted to the RFCC information on the lack of resource within Merseyside to deal with the implementation of Schedule 3 and wanted to reiterate that as a partnership Merseyside have got concerns regarding resource and what the implementation will look like.

Adrian Lythgo advised as the CIWEM survey results have shown, this is a concern that is held more widely than Merseyside and this concern also came back through the North West capacity survey from the sub regional partnerships.

Adrian thanked Members for the discussion noting that clearly surface water is the largest unmitigated flood risk that we have in common with other RFCC areas. In response to Councillor Archibald's question, the numbers that were presented as flood risk for surface water are separate to the numbers that are in the information paper (Info item B), which include flood risk from rivers and on the coast. He reminded Members that one of our ongoing pieces of work is trying to get as good a handle as we can on the strategic flood risk that we experience across the North West. He advised Councillor Archibald that there is not currently a definitive number for all sources of flood risk combined, something which we are still seeking to understand better.

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On the concern regarding climate change predictions made by Councillor Archibald, Adrian advised that predictions can vary between different cases and asked if we can provide a longer answer on climate change scenarios and predictions for flooding in due course. Councillor Archibald agreed and welcomed this.

Adrian then reiterated Laura's recommendations on how the RFCC will respond to the Schedule 3 consultation. This is something that he will engage the Committee in, it is just a case of how this will be done. Secondly and referencing the RFCC's Business Plan, he asked that if Members share the view that surface water is the largest unmitigated flood risk that we're responsible for overseeing as the RFCC, then it follows that when we refresh the business plan, we ought to think quite widely about surface water actions. He suggested having a particular workstream that feeds into the next refresh of the RFCC Business Plan around surface water and in the meantime taking this away and thinking about how this could be shaped.

There were no further comments.

23 (38) Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan – Approach and Learning

David Hodcroft, GMCA, and Dee Grahamslaw, UU, provided the Committee with an update on the work that has been taking place in Greater Manchester on the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP).

Adrian Lythgo advised the presentation is about sharing and learning and because there is a shared interest across the region and indeed nationally regarding the work that has been taking place in Greater Manchester.

David Hodcroft provided a short history of the journey Greater Manchester has been on, gaining real traction in 2015 with an EU funded project (Natural Course) to deliver real improvements to rivers and the water environment in the North West, and then moving forward to 2021 where GMCA agreed a trilateral partnership and Memorandum of Understanding with UU and the EA to manage water differently.

In the past 12 months while the plan has been in development, there have been three Mayoral Round Tables, and a draft plan was submitted for approval in June, informed by a review by the Role and Scrutiny Committee on issues relating to flooding and integrated water management. The plan helps to address a number of recommendations made by the Scrutiny Committee to the Combined Authority (CA).

David advised that although currently there is the trilateral partnership between GMCA, UU and EA, it is hoped that Transport for Greater Manchester and the individual authorities will be brought on board and then by 2025 there is a vision to extend the partnership into a multisector partnership bringing in a wider range of stakeholders.

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David referred to the National Infrastructure Commission recommendations on surface water, recognising that the Commission's Terms of Reference were quite limited to surface water, whereas Greater Manchester have looked at water management more broadly, with social, economic and environmental outcomes.

A high level analysis of planned investment in Greater Manchester has been carried out, revealing that between 2023 and 2030 the four organisations of Transport for Greater Manchester, CGMA, EA and UU will be investing circa £2.4 Billion.

David discussed the skills and resources issue and advised that by bringing together our teams we can learn from each other and not have to compete for the limited resource. There is also an ambition to bring graduates on apprenticeship schemes into this sector, which will help to develop our skills and provide the collective teams with more resilience.

Dee Grahamslaw summarised the plan, focussing on its seven interdependent workstreams, and which link well to the RFCC's Business Plan. Dee provided Members with a flavour of each of the workstreams, including the work that has been ongoing for the past 12 months:

- Living Integrated Opportunity Programme
- Digital Platform
- Adaptive Policies and Standards
- The Partnerships
- Skills and Resources
- Integrated Investment Plan
- Marketing and Engagement

Maps were illustrated detailing investment opportunities across the area, some in the next seven-year period, relating to transport, housing, the water sector or related IT activity. This work has been done to understand where there may be opportunities to collaborate and integrate planning across partner organisations. It has been done quite quickly as organisations have been able to share information readily, underpinned by the collaborative agreement and the political mandate from the Mayor of Greater Manchester.

Dee reinforced the aim to extract and share learning from the GM initiative, supported by the RFCC through its Business Plan. She referred to a workshop in October to capture learnings around governance, outcomes and delivery, along with the costs and programme management needed to deliver an integrated plan for water management more generally. She highlighted some of the early learnings from the workshop including needing individuals who are keen to collaborate and share information, and those with the softer engagement skills that can often be overlooked. The need to build rapport with others and the ability to build relationships has been key to the project's progress.

Dee reflected on the huge task it had been to get the project to where it is in a year, but that this had been a good timescale and has provided the momentum to drive the project forward.

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Adrian Lythgo thanked Dee for her presentation. He emphasised that there are aspects of what Dee has described happening in other sub regions across the North West but the distinctive thing in GM is the way it has been systemised, made to work as a system rather than a series of one-off initiatives, and in looking to do that for the long term.

23 (39) Flood Poverty – Project Findings and Recommendations

Due to time restrictions, Adrian Lythgo asked if there are any key messages from the Flood Poverty project that can be shared today, in light of the fact that this item was originally due to be coupled with an afternoon site visit, and he suggested this item to now be moved to the January 2024 RFCC meeting instead.

Fran Comyn agreed this would be better and as an interim measure he suggested for himself, Paul Cobbing and Paul O'Hare to host an online workshop for those who are interested in the findings of the project ahead of the next Committee meeting, which was agreed. Paul Cobbing advised that dissemination of the project findings and recommendations is an important part of the engagement process and asked if there are people who would find this information useful then to let him know.

Paul O'Hare advised there is nothing further for him to report today, but he is keen to give this topic more time and possibly through a workshop as Fran has suggested.

Adrian Lythgo apologised for having to cut short the presentation, due to the meeting discussion taking longer than expected. He advised Fran that it would be excellent if a workshop can be pulled together to discuss the learning from the Flood Poverty Project and he confirmed the item will be brought back to the next RFCC meeting in January as the first substantive discussion item.

23 (40) Any Other Business

Adrian Lythgo referred Members to Information Item D detailing the proposed RFCC meeting dates for 2024. He advised if any of these dates cause any significant problems to let RFCC Secretariat colleagues know.

The following further items of business were advised by Members:

- Paul Barnes recommended Members seek out lectures on soil carbon from Walter Jehne, a soil scientist, on YouTube, which are relevant to our work.
- Carolyn Otley reminded colleagues of the new GCSE Case Study on Low Crosby on the Flood Hub, along with many other educational resources, and highlighted that it would be fantastic if LA colleagues could share the information with their education teams to make local schools more aware.
- Suzana Ilic reiterated the message to respond to the survey on Shoreline Management Plans.

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Adrian thanked Members for their attendance to the meeting highlighting the rich information that had been shared along with making some important decisions.

Members were then advised that whilst the meeting has been taking place, in Scotland there has been a second fatality in conjunction with the storm that's currently coming across the country. Adrian wished everyone a safe weekend and closed the meeting.

There were no further items of business.

The next RFCC meeting will be held on 19 January 2024 and will be a face-to-face meeting.

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UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2023

	ACTION/ MATTER ARISING	ACTIONED
1.	<p>Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group/ Local Levy Programme Councillor Giles Archibald enquired about whether interest is earned on the Local Levy balance. Neville advised Giles will be contacted outside of the meeting to address this. ACTION: Adam Walsh</p>	<p>Defra Finance have been contacted and we await their response.</p>
2.	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain – Implementation Update Councillor Giles Archibald asked peatland can be featured as a specific issue of discussion in the future. Adrian highlighted with regard to the ‘Our Future Coast Programme’ Carl Green will need to clarify whether BNG or compensatory habitat are being looked into. ACTION: Carl Green</p>	<p>This has been noted and will be included at the appropriate time. *Please see the information from Carl Green below.</p>
3.	<p>Surface Water Management Councillor Giles Archibald asked what assumptions are being made about climate change projections in the flood risk data and if there is a total picture of all the risks. Adrian asked if we can provide more detail on climate change scenarios and predictions for flooding in due course.</p>	<p>It is very much the intention to continue to provide up to date flood risk data to the RFCC and the sub-regional partnerships. As soon as is possible this will begin to include predictions for risk under different climate change scenarios.</p>

*Biodiversity Net Gain and Compensatory habitat are key areas for improving land management practice and creating and improving important habitats.

The Cumbrian Innovation scheme is working specifically on improving peat beds and there are other initiatives supported through the RFCC including the [Wyre Natural Flood Management Scheme](#) that have made demonstrable improvements to peatland areas. The Our Future Coast Programme is working with a wide range of Landowners, communities and coastal interests to create opportunities for BNG by allowing (opening up the possibility for) options for coastal management that provide multiple benefits by working with nature. The programme is looking at creating and improving a variety of coastal habitats including saltmarshes, sand dunes and lowland land management including improving infiltration to restore aquifers and restore peat beds.

The OFC programme is also working with Nature North on linking important Coastal habitats through a “National North West Coastal Park”. Nature North are also leading on the [Great North Bog](#) project and we are looking forward to sharing lessons learnt.

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RFCC QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENT REPORT

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

Partnership: Cumbria

Cumberland Council

Five flood incidents have been reported. Two reports of internal flooding from groundwater received on 14 November 2023 and 7 December 2023 relate to the same residential property. External / unknown flooding to a further five residential properties has been reported. No reports of flooding to non-residential properties have been received during this period.

Westmorland and Furness Council

Eleven flood incidents have been reported. These can be related to two weather events. Internal flooding to 5 residential properties and 1 non-residential property; and external flooding to 2 residential properties and 3 non-residential properties coincided with Storm Debi on 13/14 November 2023. Three non-residential properties suffered flooding (1 internal and 2 external) after heavy rainfall on 7/8 December 2023, with one of these suffered external flooding for the second time in this period.

Community impacted	No of residential properties	No of non-residential properties	Main source of flooding
Cumberland			
Millom (Haverigg) – 14/11/2023	1 internal		Ground water
Whitehaven (Meadow Road) – 20/11/2023	1 external		Surface water
Whitehaven (Leathwaite) – 24/11/2023	1 external		Surface water
Millom (Rottington) – 07/12/2023	1 unknown		Unknown
Millom (Haverigg) – 07/12/2023	1 internal 2 external		Ground water and surface water
Westmorland and Furness			
Kendal (13/11/2023)	1 external		Groundwater / spring
Bowness (13/11/2023)	1 external		Blocked culvert
Ulverston (13/11/2023)		1 external	Blocked culvert
Broughton in Furness (13/11/2023)	1 internal		Surface water
Barrow-in-Furness (13/11/2023)	2 internal	1 internal	Surface water
Broughton in Furness (13/11/2023)	2 internal		Surface water
Windemere (13/11/2023)		1 external	Surface water / blocked culvert
Penrith (14/11/2023 + 07/12/2023)		1 external	Main River / surface water
Ulverston (7/12/2023)		1 internal	Surface water
Kendal (08/12/2023)		1 external	Groundwater / spring

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RFCC QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENT REPORT

Partnership: Lancashire

Blackburn
Oct – Dec 23

Storms / Flooding Event

Flooding Event – 5- 6 Oct

Storm Babet – 18 – 20 Oct

Storm Elin 9th – 10th December

Storm Fergus 10th – 11th December

Storm Gerrit 27th – 28th December



Flooding

- Significant Surface water runoff flooding reported
- Significant Highway flooding issues
- Only 2 properties internal flooding reported



Partnership: Combined Greater Manchester Authorities

Community impacted	No of residential properties (Internal/External)	No of non-residential properties (Internal/External)	Main source of flooding
Bolton	1 external		Surface water run off
Hindley, Wigan		1 internal	Blockage.

Flood impact to infrastructure is limited to minor issues with highways and there are no known or suspected environmental impacts.

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RFCC QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENT REPORT

Partnership: Merseyside

Wirral – this has been a wet quarter - multiple locations of highway flooding. 7 x internal and 3 x external property floods. Locations and times varied across the Wirral and seem to be operational issues e.g., debris on roads blocking gullies. October rainfall at Mid-Wirral location was 192mm, usual is 90-100mm and in November was 145mm, average 90mm.

Liverpool City – 41 x reports of highway flooding in this quarter and no internal property flooding. Flooding mainly due to blocked gullies due to leaf fall.

Knowsley – 1 x external flooding to property and 64 x Highway flooding incidents. 28 x key route network and 36 x non key route network. Incident, on M62, of ponding on hard shoulder and in heavy rain into lane one.

Sefton – A fairly quiet quarter in Sefton. 4 x external flooding incidents and 1 x key route network. Key Route Network flooding affected a bus route and the buses refused to run. Transpires that the landowner hadn't been maintaining the drainage in his field. This has now been rectified. There is an ongoing flooding issue with a new housing development site where a ditch is holding water and it is not connected to any other drainage and is flooding back gardens. Resulting in a frustrated community. As it is a development site, the Planning Authority has more authority than LLFA. Attempting to try to get them more involved in this to force the developers to undertake the works to resolve this this issue.

Community impacted	No of residential properties (Internal/External)	No of non-residential properties (Internal/External)	Main source of flooding
Wirral	7 x internal, 3 x external.	42 x highway flooding	Lots of blocked gullies by leaf fall.
Liverpool City	0	41 x highway flooding	Mainly due to blocked gullies by leaf fall.
Knowsley	1 x external	64 x highway flooding, 28 x key route network and 36 non key route network	
Sefton	4 x external	1 x key route network	

Brief details of any impacts on infrastructure (including transport)

Sefton - 1 x report on the key route network. KRN flooding affected a bus route and the buses refused to run. Transpires that the landowner hadn't been maintaining the drainage in his field. This has now been rectified.

Knowsley - 1 x incident, on M62, of ponding on hard shoulder and in heavy rain into lane one.

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RFCC QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENT REPORT

Partnership: Cheshire Mid Mersey

Three new S19 reports being produced across the partnership from Storm Babet.

Storm Henk – Cheshire East

- Over the Christmas period, Storm Henk has impacted areas within CMM mainly in Cheshire East.
- **3 properties** with internal flooding in Wilmslow **2** from a suspected from an ordinary watercourse breaching a road bridge. The Number of other properties with flooding to their surrounds including basements, garages, and gardens, to date we estimate this to be 10.
- Around 6 impacted properties from the collapsed culvert under the canal in Scholar Green.

The impact of Storm Henk is still being investigated by Cheshire East Council at the time of writing this report no S19s have been triggered.

Local Authority A – Cheshire East Council

- 10 flooded properties with Storm Babet but no S19’s triggered due to spread of properties.

Local Authority B – Warrington Borough Council

- Has commenced a S19 report following Storm Babet which affected two properties.

Local Authority C – Cheshire West and Chester Council

- Widespread flooding from Storm Babet – **49 internal properties**, 6 businesses further information below.

Local Authority D – St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council

- Not widespread impact but single batches Wheatsheaf specifically, also reports of external flooding across borough but none other to trigger a S19.

Community impacted	No of residential properties (Internal/External)	No of non-residential properties (Internal/External)	Main source of flooding
Warrington	2	-	Fluvial/Pluvial
Cheshire East - Borough wide	10	-	Fluvial/Pluvial
Cheshire West and Chester Borough wide	49	6 Businesses	Fluvial/Pluvial
Wheatsheaf – St Helen’s	0	-	Fluvial/Pluvial
Wilmslow – Cheshire East	3	10	2 from ordinary watercourse
Scholar Green – Cheshire East	6 – Impacted properties – extent of flooding TBD		Collapsed Culvert under the canal at Scholar Green

Event in St Helen’s caused flooding in Wheatsheaf pub. Other main roads also flooded as well as the Crematorium again, being dealt with aside from Wheatsheaf other impacted areas within St Helens won’t require a S19.

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19 JANUARY 2024

RFCC QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENT REPORT

Any other information

49 residential properties and 6 businesses suffered internal flooding across 16 separate catchments within Cheshire West. Cheshire West and Chester Council to commission a Section 19 Report. Several Multi-Agency meetings with CWaC and EA have been held to discuss the flood event with affected residents and business owners. Both CWaC and the EA outlined actions already taken and planned works required as a result of the flooding.

KEY INGREDIENTS to developing an INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN

Lessons Learned From Greater Manchester



Document: Key Ingredients To Developing An Integrated Water Management Plan
Lessons Learned From Greater Manchester

Date: 31/10/2023

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Sharing the Learning

United Utilities (UU) is leading the delivery of Action 9, within the North West Regional Flood and Coast Committee (RFCC) Business Plan which is part of the ambition of ‘managing water at catchment scale with nature’.

Action 9 seeks to take a whole catchment approach to managing water in a more holistic way, aligning well with the initiative taken within Greater Manchester to develop an Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP).

The aim of the 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.). The Integrated Water Management Plan being developed for Greater Manchester is seeking to do that and the RFCC were keen to support the sharing of learning from this initiative, across the North West and more widely.

Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Lessons Learned

We have gained valuable insights through interviews and workshops involving key stakeholders from UU, Environment Agency (EA) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), who played a crucial role in the development of the GM IWMP. The themes that were used to provide a framework to facilitate our discussions are presented in the table on the right.

The subsequent pages offer a concise summary of the GM IWMP and key lessons learned during its development. These insights encompass not only recommendations for the essential components necessary for creating an Integrated Water Management Plan at the catchment scale (or wider) but also considerations for ensuring its longevity.

IWMP Key Learnings	
Area	Sub-Area
Project Phase	Planning, Mobilisation, Phase 1 Delivery
Governance	Goals, Leadership, Management, Framework, Change Management, Conflict Resolution, Funding
Delivery	Culture, Processes, Technology, Resources, Stakeholders, Engagement, Communication, Quality, Gaps, Maturity, Collaboration
Cost & Programme	Timeline, Budgets, Contractual Arrangements
Barriers	Headwinds, Tailwinds
Outcomes	Results, Accomplishments, Impact
Implementation	Implementation Plan, Building momentum

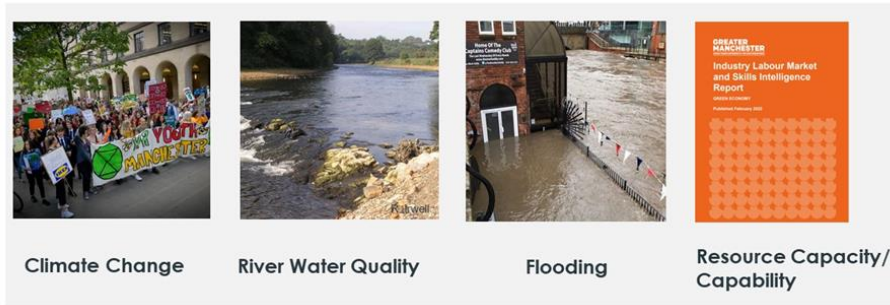
Greater Manchester Integrated Management Plan Summary

The Challenge

Greater Manchester is connected by water but how it is managed is highly fragmented. Issues are brought to light on frequent occasions when there is too much water (flooding), too little (droughts) and when it is too dirty (polluted waterways).

Rainfall is predicted to rise by 59% by 2050 even if carbon reduction targets are met, with the North West projected to have the highest percentage increase in rainfall in the country. It won't fall evenly with intense periods of rain falling, especially during the summer – to coin the phrase a month's worth of rainfall in one hour.

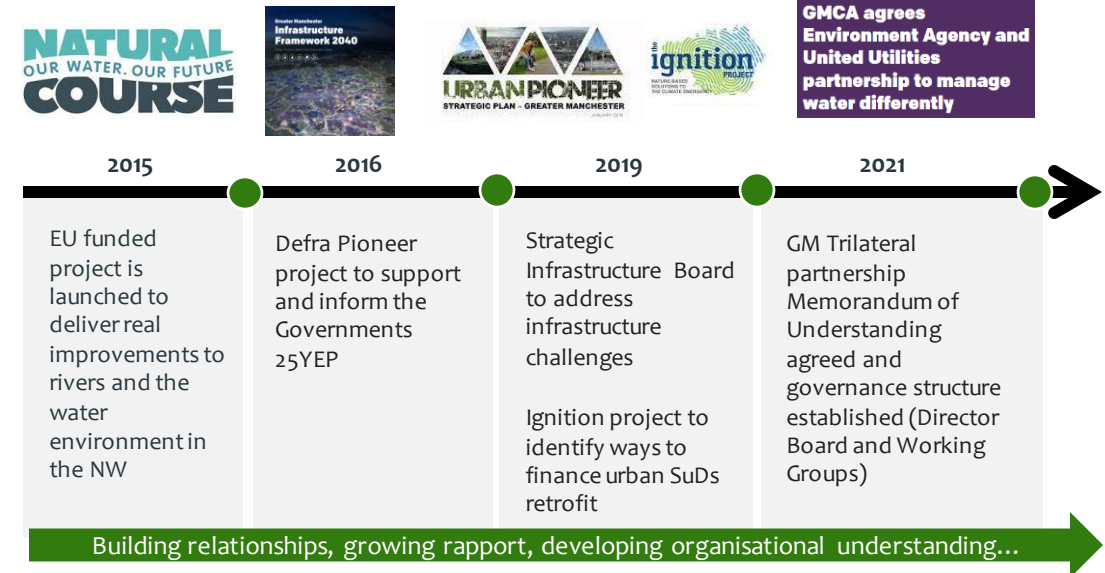
There is also a resource capacity and capability challenge, with limited continuity planning (especially within the Combined Authority (CA)/Local Authorities and within the EA) to meet the increasing demand and expectations required to manage water (and place) differently.

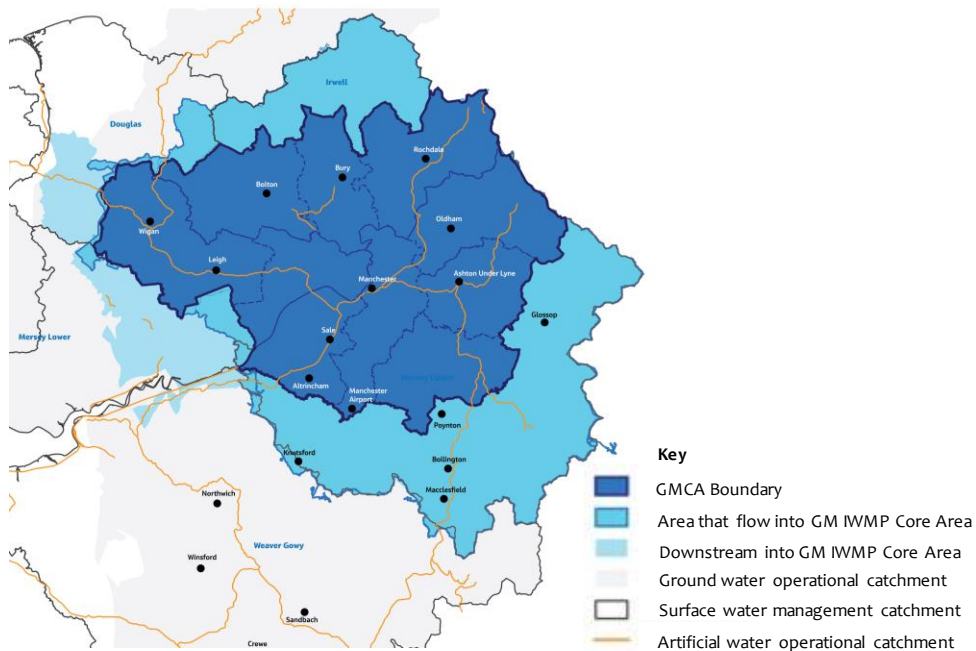


The Combined Authority working alongside UU and the EA is stepping up and providing leadership to manage problems inherent within the current system, to deliver benefits for people, places, and the environment.

In September 2021 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the CA, the EA, and UU, creating the first partnership looking to manage water differently across the city region. This developed from many years of collaborative working stretching back over a decade.

History of Partnership in GM





Boundary of IWMP

Vision

Working together, we will manage Greater Manchester's water wherever it falls, to enhance the environment, support people and forge prosperous places.

Three Mayoral round tables were held between 30 September 2022 and 11 September 2023. In May 2023, the CA heard from Scrutiny Committee members how important and complex the issue is - water is essential for life, how we manage it has often been neglected and forgotten – the impact of a changing climate (and extreme weather) is here and now. Water quality is also a key issue.

A whole system change is required. Catalyst 2030 defines systems change by “confronting root causes of issues (rather than symptoms), by transforming structures, customs, mindsets, power dynamics and policies, by strengthening collective power through the active collaboration of diverse people and organisations. This collaboration is rooted in shared goals to achieve lasting improvement to solve social problems at a local, national and global level”.

The Plan

In June 2023, the Integrated Water Management Plan was taken to the CA for approval. The CA members heard from the CEOs of the EA and UU. The CEO of the EA highlighted the national leadership that Greater Manchester is providing in this space and UU informed the CA that an infrastructure plan is being developed with a significant level of investment planned - over £13.7 billion planned between 2025 and 2030 supporting 30,000 jobs, of which 7,000 will be new jobs within the company and wider supply chain.

Core Objectives

- Breaking down the barriers by working together- Working together to manage water in an integrated way.
- Creating multiple benefits - Ensuring that all interventions consider water neutrality, flood resilience, water quality improvement and build in climate adaptation.
- Businesses and the community become an important part in creating the value. Involving businesses and community stakeholders to deliver resilient, diverse, and inclusive public spaces. Creating opportunity and access for jobs and skills needed for integrated water management.



The Integrated Water Management Plan has been developed by the partnership to help it to:

- Accelerate the implementation of natural flood management interventions in key locations. This will reduce carbon emissions, improve our resilience to climate change and will benefit nature, conditions for people and the quality of towns and cities.
- Reduce the operation of storm overflows so we can prevent rainwater from entering the combined sewerage system and improve water quality.
- Create new jobs, develop skills and apprenticeship roles that benefit residents in Greater Manchester.
- Ensure new CA or TfGM developments are delivered in partnership with United Utilities so water management measures can be factored in.

Building on the vision and objectives, through partnership working and shared experiences, the team have developed a series of workstreams to support implementation of the plan.

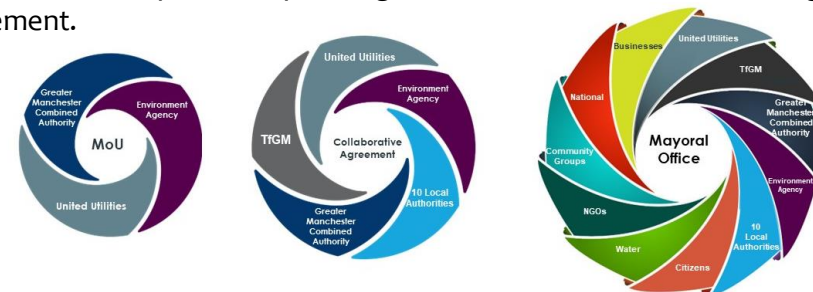


Over the next 6 months the Integrated Management Team will be focusing on the following actions:

- Establishment of the Integrated Water Management Team, implementation of team culture and charter and sharing of resources across GMCA, EA and UU.
- Further development of the living integrated opportunity programme (projects and interventions within geographical locations and catchments).
- Identification and progression (from concept to business cases) of the first tranche of geographical clusters to demonstrate the impact and delivery of better outcomes.
- Confirmation of the needed skills and graduate/apprenticeship existing programmes across the CA, UU, and EA for integrated water management to commence in September 2024.
- Review of the existing CA governance structures to strengthen accountability, scrutiny and provide clarity of responsibility in accordance with the principles for good governance.
- Establishment of the partnership board in accordance with the governance framework.
- A communication and engagement plan outlining who will be engaged, when and how during 2023-24.

The Future

The intention is to grow the partnership by 2025 to on-board the 10 Local Authorities in Greater Manchester and Transport for Greater Manchester, extending this further to create a multisector partnership driving collaborative action towards integrated water management.



Interviews with UU, EA and GMCA Directors

Through a series of interviews with UU, EA and GMCA Directors, we gathered their thoughts and lessons from the IWMP progress so far, and these are the highlights of the conversations:

Collaborative People

Identifying individuals to lead the development of the IWMP who are not only enthusiastic about collaboration but also possess interpersonal skills is vital. These skills include effective communication, empathy, being proactive, adaptability, and continuous relationship-building. People with these attributes can sustain the energy and momentum of collaborative efforts. They serve as bridges between different stakeholders and senior leadership, helping to navigate complex dynamics within each organisation, mediate potential conflicts, and keep the spirit of cooperation alive.

Data sharing is essential for developing an IWMP. The endorsement of data sharing by senior sponsors from the project's inception can set the tone for the entire initiative, ensuring that the necessary resources and commitment are available to make data-driven collaboration successful.

While it's crucial to have a group of core individuals who can drive the collaboration forward, it's equally important to keep this core team compact to ensure efficient decision-making and timely project delivery. A smaller dedicated core group can maintain a sharp focus and progress the work at a fast pace. However, it's essential to strike a balance involving a broader array of stakeholders throughout the development. This expanded participation serves to have the buy-in of a wider group and harness a diversity of perspectives, expertise, and resources.

Collaborative People

- Senior sponsor mandating data sharing early on
- People who are keen to collaborate, share information with the right 'soft' skills to maintain energy and momentum
- Keep the core group small to guarantee delivery – but remember to involve wider stakeholders

Set your Stall

To establish a strong foundation for the plan, one of the first steps is defining a well-structured timeframe. The one-year timeframe of the GM IWMP has proven to be highly effective in maintaining momentum. This duration strikes a balance between being long enough to accomplish significant goals and short enough to keep participants engaged and focused on the task. A clear timeframe provides a sense of urgency and a tangible endpoint for your efforts.

Another important step is to define the scope and immediate stakeholders, agree on the specific goals and objectives, and define a vision to set the direction for developing the IWMP.

Balancing engagement formats, face-to-face and virtual, is key for efficient decision-making. Co-location of the key people involved in developing the IWMP fosters deeper connections and trust, allowing for more in-depth discussions and relationship building. On the other hand, virtual engagement offers flexibility and enables the involvement of wider groups of stakeholders when needed.

An often overlooked but crucial aspect is defining the payment protocol early on. Establishing clarity regarding financial matters, including budgets and payment schedules, can prevent misunderstandings and streamline the financial aspects of the project. It's a fundamental step in ensuring that all stakeholders are on the same page and that financial transactions run smoothly throughout the project's lifecycle.

Set your Stall

- Set a timeframe – 1 year was great to keep momentum
- Confirm the scope of the challenge and immediate stakeholders
- Get a balance of face to face and virtual engagement
- Define early on the payment protocol

Document the Outputs

A collaborative shared virtual working space, such as Microsoft Teams, with a well-defined structure is essential for effective collaboration and knowledge sharing. These spaces should be designed for easy navigation by all partners involved.

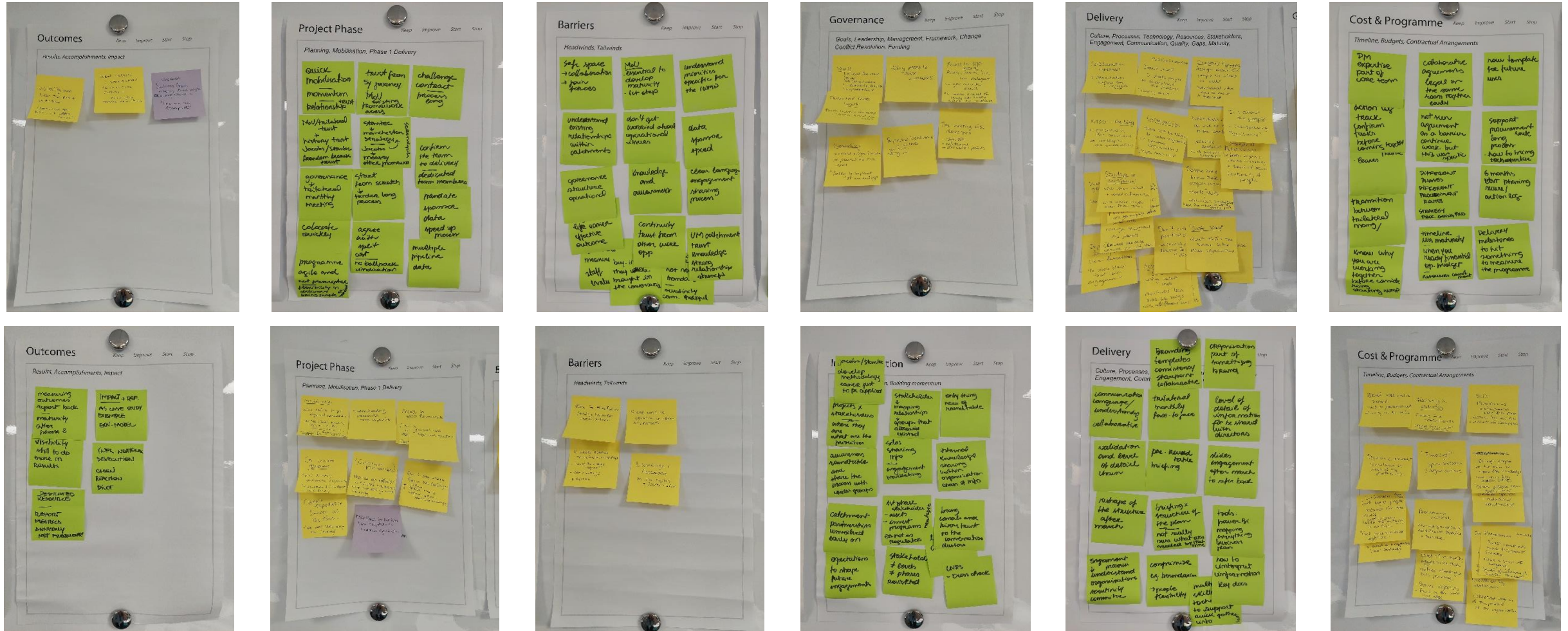
Documenting outputs goes beyond simply archiving information; it also involves capturing the valuable learning and insights gained throughout the project. This proactive approach ensures that the project's knowledge is not lost when team members move on, or new members join. Learning from successes, challenges, and solutions can be catalogued as a valuable resource for current and future team members and ensure the longevity of your project's impact.

Document the Outputs

- Collaborative shared working areas with good structure so can be easily navigated by partners
- Capture the learning to ensure no problems with knowledge sharing in the future within and outside of the team (as new members come in)

Lessons Learned Workshop

In a face-to-face workshop session together with UU, EA, GMCA and Jacobs core team, we explored key learnings of the GM IWMP using different themes.



Key Ingredients to Developing an IWMP

Learning from the GM IWMP, the key ingredients for the successful development of an Integrated Water Management Plan start with strong collaboration and trust defined by a core team with strong interpersonal skills and early political endorsement of data sharing.

These core team members will act as bridges between stakeholders and senior management, nurturing cooperation. Enabling transparent reporting at checkpoints to various stakeholders in a well-structured timeframe, clear communication, and a balanced approach to engagement formats ensure efficient decision-making.

The pre-existing, solid relationships between key stakeholders and partners were pivotal in the plan's development, also establishing a cohesive and robust brand identity that unifies the three organisations as one.

Another key ingredient was the programme manager, playing an important role in ensuring the fast pace of the plan, utilising tools such as the action log for monitoring and confirming task progress.

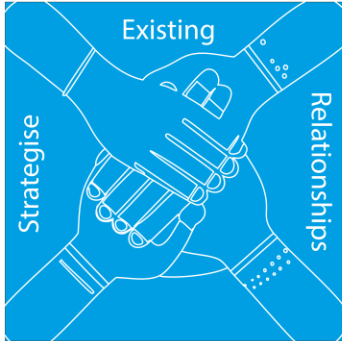
Collaboration and partnerships stand as foundational pillars of success. However, their effectiveness hinges on a well-defined vision, solid outcomes, and measurable metrics, all supported by detailed action plans designed to yield tangible results. The establishment of contractual arrangements and precise procurement processes is essential. The realisation of accomplishments and results should be transparently communicated to senior responsible officers, facilitated by robust output monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

A holistic and comprehensive systems-based approach is indispensable to understanding of the different challenges, its underlying causes, and allocating responsibilities. In situations where diverse organisational cultures, guidance, legislation, and policies intersect, the clarity of communication is crucial. The potential for misunderstandings arising from misinterpretation necessitates the implementation of a team charter. This charter, introduced last spring, serves as a guide that outlines the core values governing the Integrated Water Management Team's collaboration, fostering trust and promoting a harmonious working environment.

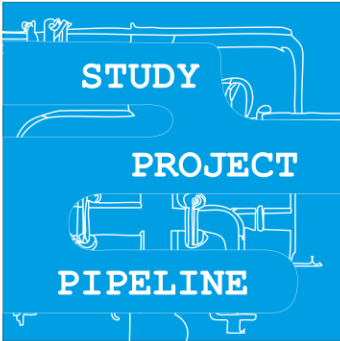


FOUNDATIONS

Recognise the existing relationships within the geographical area



Environment Agency's role not as a regulator but as a strategic partner



A rapid overview of projects pipelines

Engage internally and externally of the leading organisations



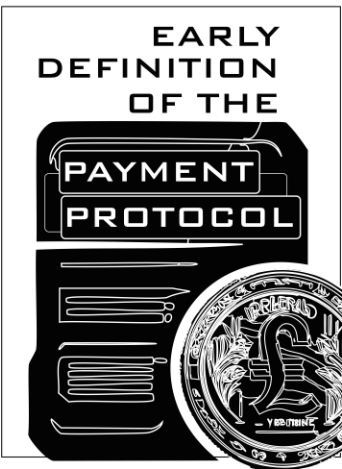
Balance between preparing for monthly leadership meetings and producing work



Keep the core group small to guarantee delivery – but remember to involve wider stakeholders



People who are keen to collaborate, share information with the right interpersonal skills to maintain energy and momentum



Define leadership to drive a collaborative process, merging technical knowledge with interpersonal skills

Nurture pre-existing relationships



Align each stakeholder's expectations to create a unified vision and align objectives between the different organisations, managing political expectations, scrutiny/transparency and accountability

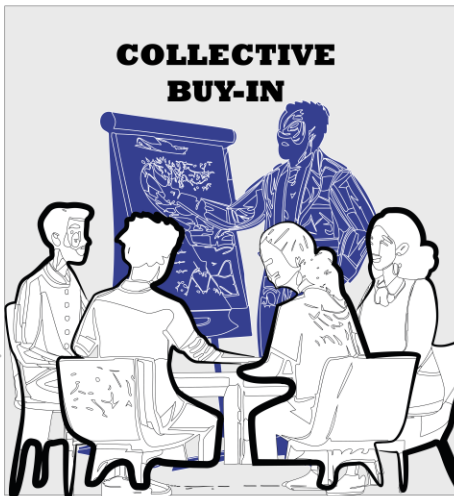


INTEGRATE



Promote a virtual collaborative sharing space

Share knowledge between team members



Ensure collective buy-in from each stakeholder to facilitate data sharing and promote political endorsement



Build a unified brand: different organisations represented as one

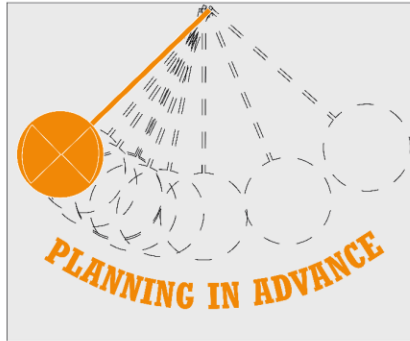


Harness the existing relationship between the organisations to start the journey



STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Set a quick start, fast paced tasks tracked to build up and keep momentum



PLANNING IN ADVANCE

Define optimal work arrangements to find a balance between face-to-face meetings and virtual collaboration. Create a team culture, developing a charter



KEEP MOMENTUM

Planning in advance, setting focused themes for each week, defining milestones through a flexible and non-prescriptive programme, bringing in Subject Matter Experts when required



Early Definition of Priorities

Define priorities as early as possible to work towards realistic expectations

STRUCTURE

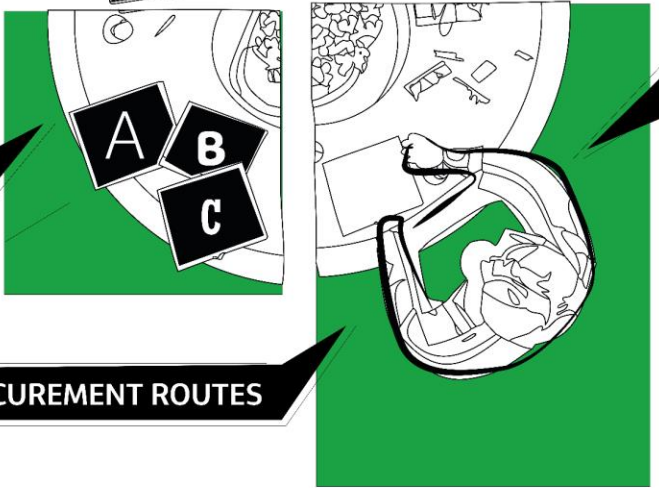
Programme Manager expertise should be part of the core team, utilising tools such as action log to track / confirm tasks, report milestones, manage budget and control metrics

PROGRAMME MANAGER EXPERT



Engage early on Legal and Commercial leaders from each organisation to agree collaborative agreements

LEGAL & COMMERCIAL



Start as early as possible the development of a resourcing & funding plan

RESOURCING & FUNDING PLAN

Use existing procurement routes to start quicker, and different phases can be completed through different procurement routes

PROCUREMENT ROUTES



VISIBILITY



Strive for visibility, celebrating outcomes as a model case study and achieving national influence

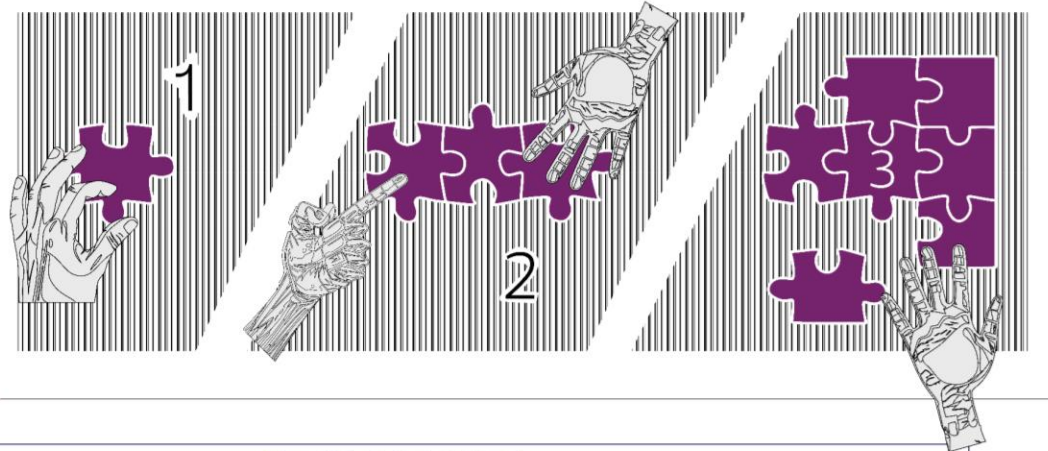


Measure outcomes to demonstrate plan maturity process

SIMPLE METHODOLOGY

Easy methodology to apply

Engage with stakeholders at the right time



DOCUMENTATION



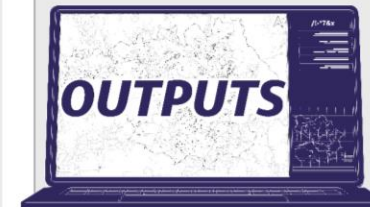
Simplify information sharing within organisations



Allocate dedicated team members to establish ownership accountability



Translate and simplify complex data into accessible information



Document the outputs for easy navigation, capturing outcomes to facilitate knowledge sharing within and outside of the team

NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 19 JANUARY 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 6

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 5 January 2024

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

Attendees:

Adrian Lythgo	RFCC Chair
Neville Elstone	RFCC Member – General Business and Assurance and Chair of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group
Cllr Stephen Clarke	RFCC Member - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr James Shorrock	RFCC Member - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Tricia Ayrton	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Richard Silvester	RFCC Member - Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Philip Cusack	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Karen Shore	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strat. Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Nick Mannion	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strat. Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Daniel Barrington	RFCC Member - Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
David Shaw	RFCC Member – Planning and Design
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities
Chris Findley	RFCC Member – Development and Sustainable Investment
Fiona Duke	Officer – EA Area FR Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)
Mia Hanson	Officer – EA Area FR Manager, C&L
Nick Pearson	Officer - EA Area FR Manager, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire Area (GMMC)
Adam Walsh	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, C&L
Paul Bowden	Officer – EA FCRM Operations Advisor, GMMC
Pete Miles	Officer – EA FCRM Manager, Lancashire
Anthea Rawcliffe	Officer – EA FCRM Advisor, C&L
Shannon Gunning	Officer – EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Sally Whiting	Officer – EA Senior RFCC Advisor
Rachel Harmer	RFCC Secretariat

Support Officers/Observers:

Cllr Jane Hugo	Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Andy Tester	Officer, EA FCRM Programming Manager, GMMC
Ayush Sheth	Officer, EA FCRM Programming Team Advisor, GMMC
Crystal Orton	Officer, EA FCRM Project Manager, GMMC
Sharma Jencitis	Officer, United Utilities (UU)
Jason Harte	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Nick Rae	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Andrew Harrison	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Alison Harker	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Marcus Leigh	Officer - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Imran Munshi	Officer - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Laura Bigley	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Lorah Cheyne	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Sarah Wardle	Officer – Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 19 JANUARY 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 6

Jill Holden	Officer - Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Matthew Winnard	Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Stephen Roberts	Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Neville Elstone opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance.

Neville then set out a modification to the voting element of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Subgroup. This is felt to be more workable than as currently set out in the ToR and would be trialled at today's meeting, following which the ToR would be formally amended. The voting arrangements were as follows:

- Any RFCC member (elected and independent) attending the FBA Sub-group meeting has an individual vote on all matters of business, unless different arrangements are agreed for specific items.
- Elected RFCC members can nominate officers to represent them and vote in their place.
- Votes will be on the basis of a majority.
- Should the votes be even, the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group Chair will have the deciding vote.

Councillor Jane Hugo, who sits on the Lancashire Partnership Group but is not currently one of the two RFCC elected Members, enquired as to whether she could vote. Adrian Lythgo confirmed that she could not vote as only Members of the RFCC have this right, but reiterated that she is still very welcome at the meeting. He reminded Members that the purpose of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group is to allow us to go into more detail on specific topics to then make recommendations to the full Committee, or in some limited circumstances to exclude things from the Local Levy programme, where appropriate. It is much more for scrutiny rather than decision-making.

Neville advised apologies had been received from Councillor Elizabeth Grey, Councillor Ian Moncur and Councillor Tony Brennan (all from the Merseyside SFRP), Councillor Giles Archibald (Cumbria SFRP), Kate Morley (new RFCC Member – Conservation), Susannah Bleakley (new RFCC Member – Coastal), Jim Turton (Cheshire Mid Mersey SFRP), Ian Crewe (EA Area Director – GMMC) and Ollie Hope (EA Area Flood Risk Manager – GMMC).

We noted Councillor Giles Archibald had correctly nominated Jason Harte (Westmorland and Furness Council) to represent the Cumbria partnership.

2. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting of the FBA Sub-Group on 6 October 2023

Neville referenced two matters arising which were deferred from the last Sub-group meeting. He advised we will be discussing the Capital Programme Co-ordinator Role Review later in the meeting and the Partnership Co-ordinator Contribution Review item is still pending and will be brought back to the April 2024 meeting.

We approved the draft minutes of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting held on 6 October 2023. Carolyn Otley proposed the draft minutes and Councillor Philip Cusack seconded them.

NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 19 JANUARY 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 6

There were no further comments or matters raised.

3. Feedback from the RFCC Meeting on 20 October 2023 and actions since

Neville reminded us of the key decisions from the 20 October RFCC meeting following the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group's recommendations.

In terms of decisions, the Committee:

- Considered and approved the North West FCRM GiA Local Choices return (RFCC Business Plan):
- Recognised projects ID19 and ID14 as complete
- Agreed to support the additional Local Levy funding of £30k for the ID12 'Paving Over Front Gardens' Project

There were no further comments made.

4. Investment Programme Update 2023/24

Adam Walsh opened this presentation on progress on delivering the in-year capital (all RMAs) and resource (EA only) programmes.

We heard that 2,857 properties across the North West have already been better protected this year. This is 80% of our target, and comes from 11 projects. Latest forecasts indicate a total of 3,462 North West properties will be better protected by year end. Key schemes contributing are the Wyre Beach Management Scheme, the Radcliffe and Redvales FRMS and the West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The forecast has reduced from the 4,379 properties reported at the last Subgroup meeting due to scheme delays meaning that some properties will now be better protected in future years. This includes the Penketh and Whittle FRMS but there are a number of projects in this category across all partnerships the detail of which can be found in Appendix A.

We heard the total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2023/24 programme is £107.456 Million. Forecasts show that we are expecting to spend £107.22 Million this year, £0.234 Million less than allocated. This is due to several projects being deferred, including the Hambleton Scheme, the CLA Culvert Programme and the CLA and GMMC Screen programmes. These were all impacted by the transition to the new delivery frameworks, previously identified as a risk.

At the end of November actual spend was 43% of the full year forecast. EA schemes have spent 48% of their forecast – with £42.88 Million left to spend. LA schemes have claimed 22.6% of their forecast with £18.25 Million still to claim in 2023/24. We noted significant spend is still required between now and the end of the financial year. Adam urged LAs to submit any grant claims as soon as possible.

Adrian Lythgo highlighted the wet winters we are often experience, which heightens the risk of poor ground conditions stopping or delaying some schemes. He asked if any assessments have been done which can provide a level of confidence for schemes affected. Adam advised we are currently trying to categorise the risk on deliverability for schemes. However he gave a medium to high level of confidence there will not be a huge impact affecting current outcome forecasts significantly.

NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 19 JANUARY 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 6

With regard to efficiency savings, we heard that nationally we are significantly under the 10% efficiencies reporting target, which is a condition of FDGiA funding. Adam outlined new reporting approach which has been adopted which aims to increase submissions, acceptances, and response times by using Area resources to assure the quality of efficiency claims before they are reported to National. Training has been supplied to both EA and RMAs, with technical support available locally and within National teams. We noted this new approach.

Within the North West, Adam reported that so far we have accepted claims across 10 projects with a total value of £4.77 Million. This takes the total North West accepted claims to date in this current 6-year programme to £6.2 Million. This is positive but there is still a way to go to achieve our target. Adam provided an example of efficiency savings from the West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme relating to the procurement of pre-cast concrete contract, which provided 19 weeks programme time saving and resulted in £1.5 Million of financial savings.

Councillor Stephen Clarke raised his concern about the Hambleton Scheme being deferred. Fiona Duke provided further details explaining that there has been a problem with the planning permission, where Wyre Borough Council changed their requirements but Jacobs, the contractors, had not realised this change had happened. She explained that there is not a delay to the whole programme for Hambleton, but the compensatory habitat component (which is required first) has been delayed because of the planning permission problems. Planning has now been submitted and the whole Hambleton programme is now expected to be delivered to schedule.

Councillor Clarke thanked Fiona for this information and Fiona reflected that lessons have been learned by the contractor in relation to ensuring their understanding of planning requirements. She also flagged that anyone involved in delivering projects that becomes aware of any change to local planning requirements, should ensure that contractors are made aware.

EA Resource (Resource and Maintenance) Funding Allocation 2023/24

EA resource funding for the North West in 2022/23 currently totals £21.055 Million. We heard this includes staff costs, maintenance, and resource project information and currently both areas are showing a forecast above budget. Adam explained that an additional £25 Million has been allocated across the country, specifically for maintenance delivery, of which the North West allocation is £1.36 Million (£0.8 Million for GMMC and £0.56 Million for C&L). This does not appear in our budgets yet. We heard there is also approximately £1 Million of capital salaries to be recharged from resource to capital budgets, and in C&L there is an accounting error with the Glasson Dock Scheme which will result in £0.6 Million being moved from resource to capital. These changes will result in a forecast reduction of approximately £3 Million to the reported figures.

Paul Bowden, EA FCRM Operations Local Delivery Lead for GMMC Area, then provided an overview of the maintenance work that has been delivered during the last quarter, which includes;

- Collaborative working in GMMC on Penleach Brook, which was very overgrown and UU outfalls were not working correctly. The EA, UU and the Woodland Trust came together in October to carry out a multi-agency maintenance operation.
- Operation of the demountable defences at Northwich which have been used again this week. What was once an occasional need is now becoming a regular occurrence.
- In C&L desilting work at Hesketh Bank has been carried out along with maintenance of other urban watercourses.
- The work at South Lakes principal depot (and Sale depot) acting as a central hub distributing pumps, plant and materials.

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We received an overview of maintenance delivery activities across the North West and noted that both C&L and GMMC are in a similar position with both areas work schedules being mostly on track, but embankment, channel conveyance and vegetation management work has been delayed due to poor weather conditions. It is hoped that the weather will improve and this work can be brought back on track.

Paul advised with regard to high and medium risk asset management systems, asset inspections are on track and have not been affected by the bad weather. He noted if other regions have problems we may be asked to send our asset inspectors to help with their work and our work would then be delayed if the inspectors are needed elsewhere. We heard that asset inspection on high and medium risk systems will always be carried out, but the lower risk systems may not stay on track.

Paul explained that the slides showing the maintenance delivery information is slightly different between the two Areas. This is down to how activities are grouped/packaged.

Adrian Lythgo made a link between the presentation and a small part of the NAO review, which talked about the national balance between capital and resource funding. He welcomed the additional £25 Million, but noted this is probably just a one-off. We will probably not know the final maintenance allocation for next year by the main January Committee meeting. He also highlighted that this information is just the EA maintenance position and all other RMAs have their own version of revenue pressures.

Fiona Duke highlighted that there had been a recent Guardian newspaper article on maintenance. She commented that going forwards it would be beneficial for us to look at the maintenance of high-risk assets. She reinforced the pressure there is on maintenance funding which with the increase in wet weather becomes more critical.

Neville Elstone touched on working with other key partners and asked if there was anyone in attendance from United Utilities, which there was not. He asked if this needs to be maintained at partnership level or whether it needs to be maintained at a regional level.

Carolyn Otley asked for clarification on her understanding that LLFAs can only bring down capital funding as part of the GIA and are delivering a bigger proportion of the capital schemes, but are not seeing any revenue flow across to support that. Paul Bowden confirmed that this is his understanding. Adrian Lythgo advised that LAs do get a notional allocation of their ever-reducing Government grant for their flood responsibilities, but this does not relate to the increasing number of assets going into the ground. Carolyn noted that certainly in the medium term this has the potential to become quite an issue.

Paul advised that for 2024/25 we expect to be in the same position with regard to our budget and highlighted that there have been no changes in the funding allocation for the Asset Performance teams for the past three years. With flood events and incidents becoming more common and frequent, impacting the condition of assets, this will lead to much faster deterioration and will require greater, more intensive maintenance regimes. This is not reflected in the funding allocations. He noted the NAO report did pick up on many of these matters and we will wait to see if this translates into any actions.

We heard that framework renewals are due in April 2024, and there may be new suppliers that are not familiar with the areas that we cover. Paul advised it could take time to build these

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relationships and for them to become efficient, and there is a strong possibility these could be more expensive. Again this has not been reflected in our allocations.

With incident response now becoming business as usual, where all assets will then need re-inspecting and no doubt many will require repairs, routine maintenance work may need to be cancelled or postponed in order for that asset maintenance work to be prioritised.

Neville thanked Paul for his presentation and there were no further questions.

Adam Walsh then provided a summary of the risks to the overall investment programme, which include: optimistic forecasts; inflation; weather conditions; incidents, and resources (All RMAs). We heard industrial action has now been removed as a risk for this year, as currently no further industrial action is planned, however we noted this could affect delivery in 2024/25.

There were no further comments.

We considered and recommend that the RFCC:

- notes the progress on delivering the 2023/24 capital programme
- notes the progress on delivering the 2023/24 resource maintenance programme

There was no further discussion on this item.

5. Indicative Investment Programme for 2024/25 (GiA)

Adam Walsh provided an overview of the indicative capital and resource allocations for 2024/25. He reminded us that the indicative capital allocation in October was £93.38 Million against a bid of £108.7 Million. Following the RFCC's Local Choices submission we heard that our request for additional GiA has been largely accommodated with a final allocation of £98.56 Million.

National are asking RFCCs to view their final allocations as the minimum amount of funding required, and an over-programme of 20% has been built into the programme in order to support achieving the minimum spend.

The number of properties benefitting from reduced flood risk in 2024/25 attached to the £98.56 Million funding allocation is 1,710. A list of the projects contributing to this figure was provided.

We heard that the increase to the 2024/25 allocation (of £5.18 Million) mainly relates to three projects: Blackpool Beach Nourishment; Rivermede Embankment, and Little Bispham.

We also heard the 2024/25 £327k funding for the River Calder at Billington Scheme has been pushed back in the current programme and there is an indicative figure in the programme for future years.

We heard the message that we should not slow down on delivery and should look to accelerate delivery or discuss new opportunities for delivery.

Adam provided the detail of the top 10 schemes in each of the areas, which represent 90% of the total project expenditure allocation for 2024/25.

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With regard to the supporting and enabling programmes, we will look to bolster certain elements of this programme, particularly the reconditioning, through our over-programme.

We heard in terms of the GiA asset maintenance allocation for 2024/25, it is hoped the final settlement will be available at the April 2024 meeting.

There were no further comments or questions.

We considered and recommend that the NW RFCC:

- Consent the FCERM GiA Capital allocations and maintenance resource allocations for 2024/25.

6. Local Levy Strategy Refresh

Sally Whiting provided an overview of the Local Levy Strategy and its recent refresh, during which a survey was provided for suggestions and comments. 11 responses were received. She gave a flavour of the refreshed document by highlighting the sections.

The document has generally required small-scale updates rather than a substantial refresh but she wished to raise two aspects which were worthy of Subgroup discussion.

She reminded Members that there is an established principle in the 2020 strategy that sets a presumption that no more than 15% of the total project cost should be financed by Local Levy funding, where that would be over £0.5 Million. We heard this has worked well and there is a strong consensus for retaining this in the refreshed strategy, but there has been additional suggestion that we should set a presumed maximum contribution as an amount of funding as well. She asked us to consider two options:

Option A – £5 Million. Fixed for the duration of the Local Levy Strategy (likely to be 2 or 3 years) but would provide a clear and definite maximum for those involved in delivering projects.

Option B – The amount of the annual income (currently £4.544 Million)

This is quite similar, but the slight advantage is that this could increase overtime, but also a slight risk because it could introduce some complexity.

Sally welcomed any feedback or comments and advised the final document will come to the April 2024 meeting for final agreement.

Councillor Silvester expressed his preference for Option A (£5 Million) as is straightforward and a figure that we can all remember. Carolyn Otley also supported this option.

Councillor Mannion agreed Option A is the most practical option, but asked if we need to index this so that we don't need to revisit it every year.

Councillor Silvester added a further comment that he would support setting the presumed maximum contribution for a period of three years to retain the desired clarity and stability.

Councillor Shorrock advised that the Lancashire partnership preferred Option B, as they support the flexibility that this can provide.

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Jason Harte, representing Cumbria, expressed their preference for Option A, being the slightly higher of the two amounts in the light of cost inflation, and for its greater simplicity.

Sally advised that it is not critical to reach a decision on this now, and that further feedback could be provided after the meeting, possibly via another survey or a simple voting process.

Reflecting that there had been feedback from four of the five partnerships Adrian asked if Councillor Barrington, representing Merseyside, had a view, to help Sally form an idea of the overall consensus.

Councillor Barrington shared the view that Option A is the most sensible and Option B may be too complex.

Neville Elstone advised that there seemed to be a clear steer on the proposals and thanked us for the helpful discussion.

Sally then highlighted the other aspects for potential discussion which relates to Local Levy funded staff resources and how they are reviewed. She reflected that the review process for Levy funded roles will not always be exactly the same due to their having different hosts, employment and funding arrangements, however we are seeking to bring a greater degree of consistency to all reviews by applying the following principles:

- An independent RFCC Member will be asked to sponsor and oversee role and contribution funding reviews.
- An appropriate senior EA Manager with a degree of separation from the role(s) will normally act as the lead for the review, in consultation and conjunction with the sponsoring Member.

Sally invited feedback.

Carolyn Otley gave her general support to this suggestion agreeing it sounded very sensible, along with Councillor Cusack and Councillor Shore.

There were no further comments or questions.

We considered and recommend that the NW RFCC:

- Supports Option A, as set out in section 3.2.
- Supports the proposed principles for reviews of Local Levy funded staff resources.
- Reviews and provides feedback on the draft Local Levy Strategy by the end of January 2024.

7. Local Levy Programme Update

Adam Walsh presented this overview, highlighting the 2023/24 resource of £15.550 Million (£4.411 Million income plus £11.139 Million carried forward from 2022/23). We noted that the total current allocation for 2023/24 is £8.497 Million and Appendix B provides a breakdown.

In terms of the Local Levy resource, we were reminded that for a number of years the RFCC has carried a sizeable reserve in its Local Levy fund. At the start of 2023/24, this balance was £11.139 Million. As a result of a review of future allocations which was reported to us in October, 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. While a reducing balance is

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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.

Adam Walsh reiterated the intention to provide confidence ratings on Levy funded projects and their spend going forwards, to be developed over the next quarter.

It was confirmed that the future indicative allocations shown in the graphs do include the Local Levy ask for the Kearsley scheme which we were to hear more about.

There were no further comments.

Request for Local Levy Funding - River Irwell at Kearsley FRMS

Shannon Gunning (EA FCRM Advisor) provided us with a background and overview of the scheme, illustrating a community which has been affected by two flood events in the last 8 years. Approximately 80 homes will benefit from the scheme. She introduced the Local Levy request as being an additional £2.4 Million, to supplement the £600K approved previously, the total of which (£3 Million) is slightly under the 15% presumed cap set by the RFCC.

Since the original Local Levy allocation of £600K, approved in January 2021, there has been a significant increase in scheme costs due to challenges around the stability of the riverbank, ground conditions, and the proximity of the houses. Shannon provided some explanation of these issues.

We heard that £5.83M GiA and £350k of Department of Education funding have been secured. Ongoing efforts are going into securing potential funding from the Frequently Flooded Allowance and other government departments. Shannon reported that the Project team are still in discussion with Bolton Council about potential contributions.

We noted the with a total scheme cost of £20.3 Million, and secured funding of £6.78 Million, there is a significant funding gap of £13.52 Million.

Councillor Clarke remarked that while there is clearly a big flooding problem here, with 80 properties benefitting and for the total cost quoted, this is a cost of around £250k per property which is extremely high. He asked if there are any more benefits. Shannon reported that the number of properties the scheme will protect is still under review, but that looking ahead with climate change scenarios, by 2020 148 properties will be better protected.

Shannon confirmed that it is mainly residential property that would benefit from the scheme. We noted the access route to the local primary school will be protected by the scheme, but there are no further businesses or critical infrastructure in the area.

Councillor Shorrock expressed the view that further analysis be provided on the likely other sources of funding and the degree of certainty for the project as this is a substantial ask from the Local Levy. Shannon advised that the EA are working to try and fill the funding gap from other sources and Members will be kept up to date with progress.

Neville Elstone highlighted that the RFCC have previously acted as an underwriter of schemes and where Local Levy has not been used, it is then handed back to Local Levy balances.

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Clare Nolan-Barnes thanked Shannon for the presentation and asked what the standard of flood protection is for the £20 Million cost estimate. Shannon advised the contractor is currently working to establish this.

Clare asked if the £20 Million current estimate could still change and whether there were any other potential sources of funding. Shannon advised the project team are awaiting the Frequently Flooded Allowance information to be released and will be putting a bid in to this fund. She highlighted that the local MP Yasmin Qureshi has raised the issue in Parliament multiple times and has been in conversation with Rebecca Pow. In addition, conversations are still taking place with Bolton Council and OGD (Other Government Department) funding is also being looked into.

Adrian Lythgo commented that to make it explicit, Local Levy counts as Partnership Funding, and that if the Committee could support this scheme it could potentially unlock more GiA funding or other central Government funding, as would the possible contribution from Bolton Council.

We considered the request for an additional £2.4 Million of Local Levy for the River Irwell at Kearsley FRMS.

Votes in favour: Jason Harte, Carolyn Otley, David Shaw, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Barrington, Councillor Shore, Councillor Mannion. Councillor Clarke advised that he would prefer for the matter to be deferred until further information is available.

We considered and recommend that the RFCC:

- notes the current/ future position of the Local Levy programme and latest spend forecast.
- approves the additional Local Levy contribution of up to £2.4 Million for the River Irwell at Kearsley Flood Risk Management Scheme.

We were then provided with an update on the Preston and South Ribble scheme by Pete Miles and Anthea Rawcliffe. We received details of the scheme funding profile, currently estimated at £80 Million. Against this the project have secured £42.4 Million GiA, Booster funding of £15.8 Million, Department of Education funding of £0.9 Million, OGD funding of £12.83 Million and £3 Million of Local Levy funding already approved. This amounts to £75 Million and therefore there is a £5 Million funding gap.

Pete Miles advised the project will be coming to the RFCC in the first quarter of 2024/25 to formally request additional Local Levy funding but in the meantime the project team are still working hard to attract further partnership funding.

We received an overview of the reasons behind the increase in costs, which include unforeseen ground conditions, additional technical challenges of working in an urban area, a requirement to rephase due to withdrawing from ERDF funding for a number of reasons, delays due to local circumstances, planning restrictions, permitting constraints and local concerns.

Fiona Duke remarked with reference back to Councillor Clarke's earlier comment about the River Irwell at Kearsley FRMS, and the cost per property, that the Preston scheme better protects 5000 properties which therefore calculates at £1k per property. She reflected that this is quite small compared to the Kearsley ask, so the value for Local Levy here is good.

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Mia Hanson introduced herself as Area Flood Risk Manager for Lancashire and advised she is currently taking on the role of sponsor for the Preston Scheme.

There were no further comments or questions.

As the final part of this agenda item, Adam Walsh advised that the proposed Local Levy allocation for 2024/25 is £8.188 Million, the details of which are shown in Appendix C of the report.

We recommend the RFCC consider and approve the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2024/25.

8. RFCC Business Plan

Due to time restrictions we agreed to defer this item to the main January RFCC Meeting.

9. Capital Programme Co-ordinator Review

At this point in the meeting, officers were asked to leave the meeting, so only RFCC Members and essential EA officers could discuss the review.

We received an overview of the review conducted by Nick Pearson, along with the results of the survey carried out. We noted there were 30 anonymous survey responses, 70% of which supported the continuation of the role, either as it stands or with changes (which changes being the highest). 10% of responders did not support the role continuing.

Councillor Shorrock provided the view of the Lancashire partnership which is that they are happy to support this role, but would like closer scrutiny and monitoring and would like the co-ordinator to attend the Lancashire SFRPG meetings twice year to report on progress made and how their work load is progressing. He advised they thought the role should be reviewed after 12 months, rather than approving for the full three years. They wish to see the Co-ordinator reporting back in six months time, and then again at 12 months, with a view to approval of the funding for the final two years.

Councillor Mannion advised he is happy to support the proposal, but questioned whether 12 months is too short a timeframe to review the role again.

Councillor Clarke echoed Councillor Shorrock advising that they would like the role to be reviewed every 12 months, and reinforced that they would like more visibility of this post, and for the postholder to attend some of the Lancashire SFRP meetings, in order for them to ensure it is working effectively and is subject to scrutiny.

Councillor Cusack expressed his support for the role but did not support a 12 month review as he feels this is too short, and adds an element of uncertainty to the role, and could limit interest in the role from those considering applying for it.

Councillor Silvester advised he had originally asked for this item to be deferred as he was new to the Committee and had not yet fully understood the role and how it was funded. Since then he has received useful briefing from Nick Pearson and now has clarity on why the role has been funded by the Local Levy. He recalled the Subgroup hearing at the October RFCC meeting why this role is vital, is providing results and is very necessary. He therefore now supports funding of the role for three-years until the end of March 2027, as the budget is set until March 2027 and will provide consistency to the Committee and the projects around the Northwest. He did not support the

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review after 12 months. He also added that he would like to see the postholder attending the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup meetings going forwards to inform and clarify Members' views.

Fiona Duke advised that as a new member of this group she understands where the Lancashire SPFRG comments have come from, but she wished to reassure them that she has had discussions with Nick Pearson on the management of the role so the visibility being asked for does materialise. Direction and objective setting for the role will be provided by the EA leadership teams including ensuring there is parity between the C&L and GMMC elements of the role. The EA Area Flood Risk Managers are therefore comfortable that they can make the changes the Lancashire partnership have expressed concerns about.

Councillor Shore supported the recommendations and the comments regarding the post visibility and reporting, but did not agree with a 12-month review, for the reasons already stated. She also advised it is not the role of elected members to performance manage the individual, which is an operational issue – it is only their role to determine what resource they need. She is confident that from what has been said that any concerns raised can be addressed, suggesting a possible compromise of a 12-monthly review of how things are going if required. But she supported the proposal for the post to be funded until the end of March 2027.

Councillor Ayrton confirmed her agreement with a lot of the comments and supports the proposal, but does not support a review after 12 months, supporting funding of the role until 2027.

Before opening the vote, Neville clarified with Members that Adrian Lythgo is not able to vote on this and that they should not read anything into the fact that he is not voting. Neville asked Members to place their vote and asked those who supported the recommendations to raise their hands electronically.

Votes in favour: Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Shore, Carolyn Otley, David Shaw, Chris Findley, Councillor Mannion, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Barrington and Jason Harte.

Adrian Lythgo added it was worth summarising the position with respect to the Lancashire Councillors, that they are supportive of the role, but they also wish to have greater visibility of it and issues that are important to them discussed, including through attendance at sub regional partnership meetings. He advised that even though they are not in support of funding the role for three years, they are supportive of the role and everyone wishes to see the same changes to how the role is operating. Councillor Clarke and Councillor Shorrocks agreed this was a fair comment and would not disagree.

Neville thanked all for the discussion, the clarity of the decision, and also for taking the considerations forwards.

Recommendation:

We recommend the RFCC supports the continuation of funding for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator post to the end of March 2027, with the following recommendations:

- To Increase its **visibility** across the North West, including regular attendance at agreed tactical meetings and presentations at RFCC.
- To have a clearer role in providing and understanding **training needs** across the North West.
- To assist LAs accessing **partnership funding**.

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- For the Committee to have an increased visibility of the CPC **role's key annual delivery goals**.

10. Any Other Business

This agenda item was taken before Item 9 in reality to support the smooth running of the meeting, given that officers were asked to leave for Item 9.

Councillor Nick Mannion enquired about LA contributions to the Local Levy funding going forwards and questions on the value for money this brings locally, in the context of significant LA financial pressures. He also asked if an RFCC Member induction could be arranged for his and others' benefit.

Neville Elstone advised both of these items will be taken away as actions to be followed up outside of the meeting.

We noted a future discussion is required to discuss the RFCC's representation on the Wyre NFM Buyers Group.

Neville Elstone thanked everyone for attending the meeting. There were no further items of business and the meeting was closed.

11. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting is 12 April 2024.

North West Investment Programme

Report to the North West RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

5th January 2024




1. Purpose

1.1 This report to the Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group (FBASG) provides progress on delivering the in-year (2023-24) capital, resource and local levy investment programmes, and information to support consent of the 2024-25 FCERM Grant-in-Aid (GiA) capital allocations and the asset maintenance resource allocations.

The FBASG are asked to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the progress delivering the 2023-24 capital and resource programmes • Consent the FCERM Grant-in-Aid (GiA) capital allocations and the asset maintenance resource allocations for 2024-25 • To note the current position and latest spend forecast of the Local Levy Programme • To consider the new Local Levy request for the River Irwell at Kearsley Flood Risk Management Scheme and make a recommendation to the RFCC • To recommend to the RFCC the approval of the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2024/25

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



2.1. Overview

 Properties to be better protected	 Partnership funding	 Efficiency savings
<p>We are investing £5.2 billion over the current six-year programme (21-27) to better protect circa 200,000 of properties</p>	<p>National Overview We have secured £1.495 billion of partnership funding contributions*</p>	<p>£40,003,383 accepted claims to date in this current six-year programme £21,674,199 accepted claims within Q1 and Q2 of 2023/24</p>
<p>3,488 properties forecast to be better protected in 2023-24</p>	<p>North West Overview Approximately 6% of the North West Programme in 2023-24 is made up of partnership funding</p>	<p>£6,191,301 accepted NW claims to date in this current six-year programme £4,762,399 accepted claims within Q1 and Q2 of 2023/24</p>
<p><small>*see section 3.21 of the national paper for further detail</small></p>		

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2.2 2023-24 Capital Programme

What outcomes are we delivering?

		2023-24 * Target 3,598	2023-24 Forecast 3,462	2023-24 Actual 2,857
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**No official RFCC target. Targets are split by Area.*

2.2.1 Forecast figures at mid-November 2023 indicate the North West will better protect 3,598 properties from flooding this year, of which 2,857 properties are now better protected. The forecast reported at the last FBASG was 4,379, a decrease of 917. This is largely due to scheme delays and properties with reduced risk being claimed in future years. This applies to a number of projects across all partnerships the detail for which can be found in Appendix A.

Are we spending the funding we have secured?

	Capital funding available £107.456 million	Capital forecast £107.222 million
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2.2.2 The total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2023-24 programme is £107.456 million. This includes £97.777 million of central Government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid), £6.692 million of Local Levy and £5.987 million of Partnership Funding Contributions.

2.2.3 Forecasts at mid-November 2023 show that we are expecting to draw down £107.222 million this year. This is £0.234 million less than allocated, and £8.211 million less than forecasts reported at the last meeting. This is due to several projects being deferred including the Hambelton Scheme (~£3m), CLA Culvert Programme (~£1m), CLA Screen Programme (~£1m) and GMMC Screen Programme (~£1m).

2.2.4 At the end of November actual spend is 43% of the full year forecast. EA schemes have spent 48% of their forecast – with £42.88 million left to spend. LA schemes have claimed 22.6% of their forecast with £18.25million still to claim in 2023-24. See Appendix E.

2.2.5 Risks: 2023-24 (this financial year)

- Current forecasts may still be over optimistic and reduce between now and the end of the financial year
- Increase in the cost of materials (inflation), impacting scheme costs and potential viability continues to be a consideration

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- Adverse weather conditions during the winter months may delay delivery of all programmes
- Incidents may delay delivery as teams move across to this priority activity
- Resources (all RMAs)

2.2.6 Risks: 2024-25 (next financial year)

- Current forecasts and allocations of funding in 2024-25 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 in 2024-25.

What level of efficiency are we demonstrating?

2.2.7 The Environment Agency Portfolio Management Office now leads on co-ordination of efficiency submissions and reporting. We have received efficiency claims data for Q1 and Q2 submissions for this current financial year, with a total accepted claims value of £4,762,399 with contributions from 10 projects across the North West (£21,674,199 Nationally across 47 projects). To date in this six-year programme, the total value of accepted claims is £6,191,301 across 13 projects (£40,003,383 Nationally across 102 projects). See appendix G for more detail.

2.2.8 Nationally we are significantly under the 10% Efficiencies reporting target, which is a condition of FDGiA funding. To increase submissions, acceptances, and response times, the Environment Agency has adopted a new communications approach. In addition to this, training has been supplied to both EA and oRMAs, with technical support available locally and within National.

2.2.9 This new approach utilises Area resources to act as gatekeepers to review CERT submissions (Combined Efficiencies Reporting Tool). CLA and GMMC areas and the EAs Programme and Contract Management team (PCM) have nominated Efficiencies Leads (ELs). All claims will be sent to the Area or PCM nominated EL who will check for fundamental errors or omissions. If there is an issue, it will be fed back so it can be corrected and re-submitted. “Clean” CERT forms will then be forwarded on to the National PMO team by the EL for review.

2.3 2023-24 EA Resource Maintenance Programme

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

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

2.3.3 As outlined in section 2.2 of the national paper, a total of £25 million has been allocated in-year, nationally, as part of a Secretary of State agreement to transfer a proportion of capital (CDEL) funding to resource (RDEL) funding. This increase in

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budget is not reflected below and will appear in corporate reporting systems in January. This equates to an increase of £1.36m for the NW and £0.56m and £0.8m for CLA and GMMC respectively.

EA Resource Programme financial summary 2023-24 (November position)

Resource Programme, inc. Maintenance, Staff Costs and Resource Projects	Budget (£k)	Forecast (£k)	Forecast Variance to Budget (£k)
Cumbria & Lancashire	11,458	13,722	-2,264
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	9,598	10,966	-1,368
EA Total FCRM GiA Resource	21,056	24,688	-3,632

The FBASG are asked to:

- Note the progress delivering the 2023-24 capital and resource programmes.

3 2024-25 Capital and Asset Maintenance Resource Programmes

- 3.1 The North West has now received its Flood Defence Grant in Aid final capital allocation for 2024-25, which is £98.6 million. This figure is for capital maintenance, defence and property level resilience schemes along with the enabling and support programmes. A full breakdown of the NW 2024-25 allocation can be found in Appendix F.
- 3.2 The local choice submissions have largely been accommodated by the national allocation team and the NW final allocation is in line with our local choice bids. Any project specific changes can be managed through the respective Area over programmes.
- 3.3 The North West has received its asset maintenance resource indicative allocation for 2024-25 which is £12.093m. As noted in the national paper in section 4, as with previous years, we will not know our full resource allocation until the outcome of the Defra group planning process is confirmed. This is expected in March 2024.
- 3.4 The request of the RFCCs is to provide consent to allow the implementation of the regional programmes of work, a requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010). This will ensure that consent is in place before programmes can be implemented at the start of the new financial year in April 2024. This also ensures there is no delay in delivering the programme to help protect communities from flooding.

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The FBASG are asked to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consent the FCERM Grant-in-Aid (GiA) capital allocations and the asset maintenance resource allocations for 2024-25

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

4.1 Current position 2023-24

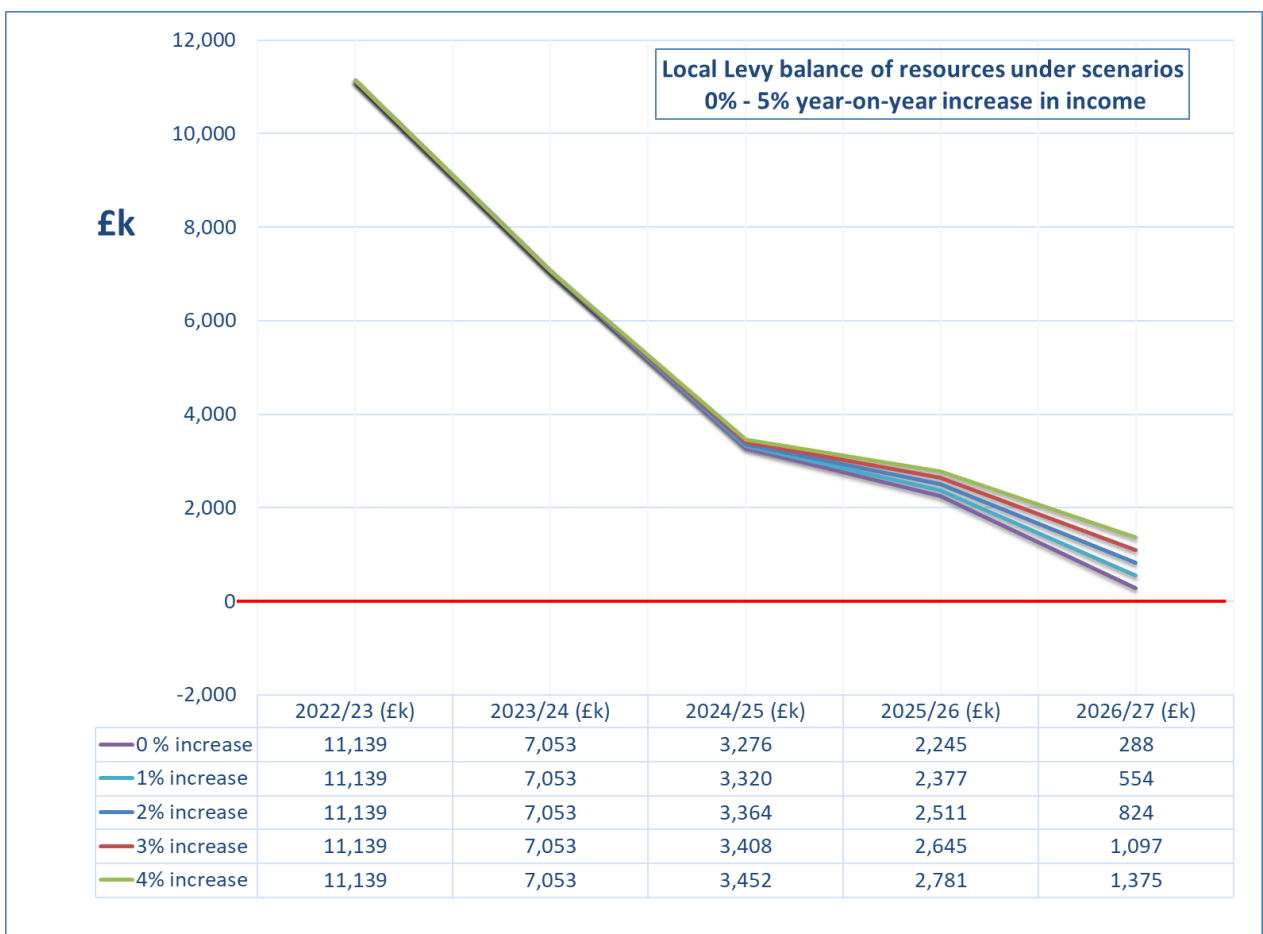
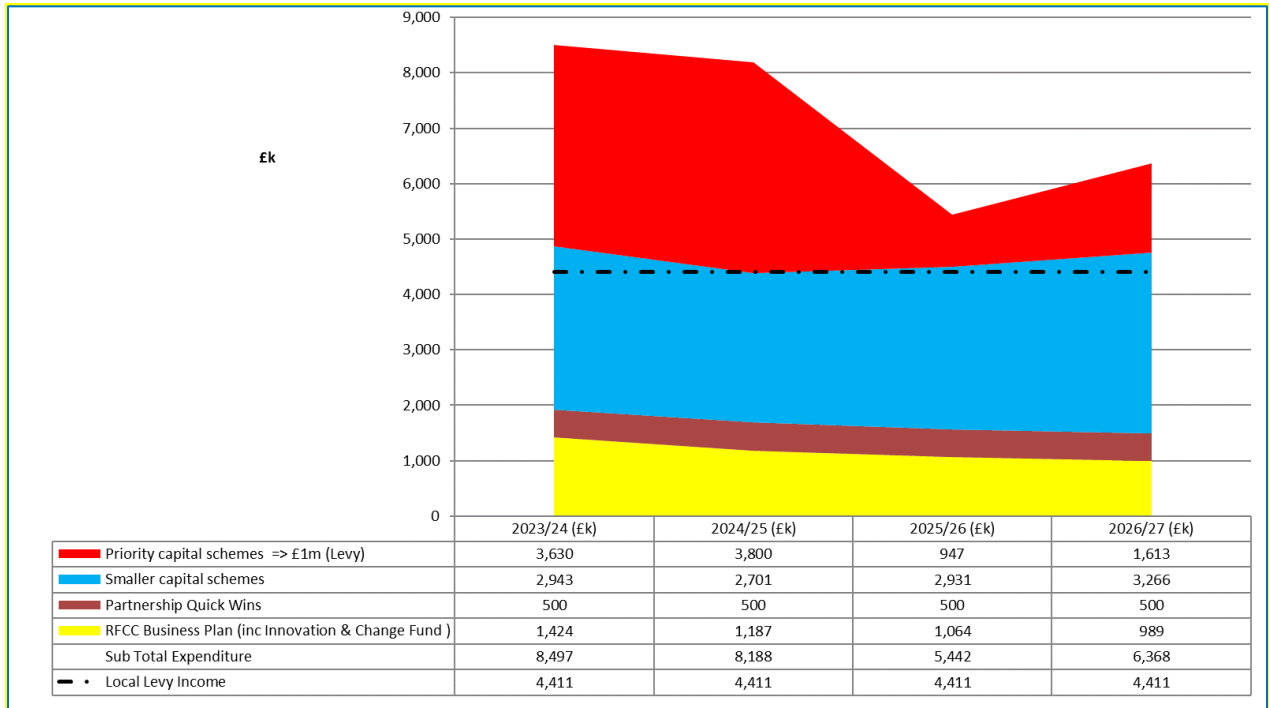
- 4.1.1 The North West RFCC started the 2023-24 financial year with a total Local Levy resource of £15.550 million (£4.411 million income plus £11.139 million carried forward from 2022-23).
- 4.1.2 The total current allocation for 2023-24 is £8.497 million. The updated Local Levy programme allocation for 2023/24 (see Appendix B).

Summary of Local Levy income and spend

2023-24	
Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)	
Cash balance at start of year	11.139
Local Levy income	4.411
Total available balance	15.550
Allocation	8.497
Expected remaining balance at year end (based on allocation)	7.053

- 4.1.3 For a number of years, the RFCC has carried a sizeable reserve in its Local Levy fund. At the start of 2023/24, this balance was £11.139 million. In October a review of future allocations was carried out. The outcome of this review 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. 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.
- 4.1.4 The below graphs show the updated income & expenditure scenario which includes the additional request for Local Levy for the River Irwell at Kearsley scheme detailed in section 4.2 below.

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4.2 Requests for Local Levy support for FCRM schemes

River Irwell at Kearsley Flood Risk Management Scheme – Local Levy Request

The project team kindly requests that the Committee support an additional Local Levy contribution of up to £2.4 million to help better protect 80 + residential properties. This figure has been derived by calculating 15% of the scheme cost, which is £3 million, then subtracting the £600k that has been already allocated.

The approval of this funding is important for the Outline Business Case Submission in June 2024 to allow the project to progress to the next stage. The project team will continue to hold discussions with partner organisations to bridge the shortfall in funding as part of an agreed Funding Strategy and update the Committee accordingly.

Please see Appendix D for further detail.

- 4.2.1 Taking into account the request for Local Levy above, balances are forecast to reduce to approximately £300,000 by the end of 2026/27, under the 0% local levy increase scenario.

4.3 RFCC Business Plan

- 4.3.1 One component of the Local Levy programme is the investment in the RFCC Business Plan projects. Please refer to the separate paper provided for more details on this.

4.4 Local Levy programme 2024/25

- 4.4.1 The proposed Local Levy allocation for 2024/25 totals £8,188k (details can be found in Appendix C).

The FBASG are asked to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To note the current local levy position and latest spend forecast.• To consider the new Local Levy request for River Irwell at Kearsley Flood Risk Management Scheme and make a recommendation to the RFCC.• To recommend to the RFCC the approval of the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2024/25

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	Properties better protected – 2023-24 forecast breakdown
Appendix B	North West Local Levy 2023-24 – Allocation and Forecast
Appendix C	North West Local Levy 2024-25 – Proposed Programme
Appendix D	River Irwell at Kearsley Flood Risk Management Scheme – Local Levy Request
Appendix E	Capital Funding spend to date (actual)
Appendix F	2024-25 Final Capital Allocation
Appendix G	Capital Efficiencies

Appendix A	Properties better protected (rOM) – 2023-24 forecast breakdown
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Scheme Name	Partnership	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Forecast	Difference
Penketh and Whittle FRM Scheme	Cheshire	275	0	-275
Churchill Ave Culcheth Culvert Renewal	Cheshire	30	24	-6
Badgers Rake Lane, Little Sutton	Cheshire	4	5	1
Adder Hill Great Boughton	Cheshire	0	3	3
Newchurch Estate, Culcheth, Warrington	Cheshire	52	0	-52
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	Cheshire	16	0	-16
Little Bollington River Bollin PLR	Cheshire	14	0	-14
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	Cheshire	0	12	12
Woolston Park FRM Scheme	Cheshire	0	13	13
Frog Lane Drainage Improvement Scheme	Cheshire	0	3	3
Grant Close, Westbrook FRM Scheme	Cheshire	0	6	6
Black Brook Culvert St Helens	Cheshire	9	0	-9
CL Culvert Refurbishment Programme *	Cross-Partnership	40	45	5
ENVDebrisScreensGMMC *	Cross-Partnership	127	102	-25
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	Cross-Partnership	0	0	0
Appleby pumping station capital maintenance *	Cumbria	0	51	51
Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	12	13	1
Dubmill Point Coastal Erosion	Cumbria	0	0	0
Etterby Terrace, Carlisle	Cumbria	0	16	16
Ewan Close, Barrow in Furness	Cumbria	71	0	-71
Flimby Surface Water Alleviation - RMA Scheme	Cumbria	31	34	3
Greenbank, Ambleside Surface Water Flooding	Cumbria	0	7	7
Greystoke Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	19	0	-19
Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	Cumbria	12	0	-12

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Lindale Road Grange over Sands	Cumbria	21	0	-21
North Road, Holme Village Flood Alleviation*	Cumbria	0	17	17
Orchard Place, Cleator Moor	Cumbria	31	0	-31
Ravenglass, Cumbria - Surface Water	Cumbria	19	20	1
School Lane, Staveley - Surface Water Risks	Cumbria	0	12	12
Shap Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme	Cumbria	31	0	-31
Skirting Beck, Egremont *	Cumbria	75	83	8
Spittal Farm, Wigton	Cumbria	0	9	9
Threlkeld Village	Cumbria	40	0	-40
Warwick Bridge PFR scheme	Cumbria	0	16	16
Radcliffe & Redvales Flood Alleviation Scheme *	Greater Manchester	0	430	430
Manchester Restoration of Open Channels of Ordinary Watercourses	Greater Manchester	385	309	-76
Jenny Beck Culvert Refurbishment, Bolton *	Greater Manchester	81	65	-16
Golburn Clough, Greenfield Oldham	Greater Manchester	0	28	28
Lenham Gardens Surface Water Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester	0	13	13
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	Greater Manchester	82	0	-82
Manchester Trash Screens Phase 2	Greater Manchester	37	0	-37
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Lancashire	22	0	-22
Fitzgerald Drive, Darwen *	Lancashire	0	15	15
Hardman Brook-Hall Carr Brook, Hardman Avenue, Rawtenstall	Lancashire	20	0	-20
Lentworth Drive at Burrow Beck *	Lancashire	40	44	4
Lumb Brook, West View, Rossendale	Lancashire	47	38	-9
Wyre Beach Management Scheme (Phase 1) *	Lancashire	1,896	1,760	-136
West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme *	Merseyside	0	245	245
Salerno Drive – Culvert investigation works	Merseyside	0	24	24
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	Merseyside	15	0	-15
Forty Pitts Drain (possible collapse)	Merseyside	44	0	-44
TOTAL		3,598	3,462	-136

*rOM already claimed (total rOM claimed to date 2,857)

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Partnership	Number of schemes forecasting properties better protected in 2023-24	2023/24 Target	2023/24 Forecast	Difference
Greater Manchester	7	585	845	260
Merseyside	4	59	269	210
Cheshire	8	400	66	-334
Cumbria	12	362	278	-84
Lancashire	4	2,025	1,857	-168
Cross-Partnership	3	167	147	-20
Total	38	3,598	3,462	-136

Appendix B	North West Local Levy 2023-24 – Allocation and Forecast
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Partnership	Scheme Name	LRMA Name	2023-24 Local Levy allocation (£k)	2023-24 Local Levy Forecasts (£k)
Cumbria	Low Crosby Pumping Station	Cumberland Council	450	0
Cumbria	Mill Beck, Barrow in Furness	Environment Agency	130	0
Cumbria	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	Cumberland Council/ Westmorland & Furness Council	100	100
Cumbria	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	Environment Agency	87	40
Cumbria	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	Environment Agency	70	10
Cumbria	Soutergate Beck, Kirkby-in-Furness	Environment Agency	70	0
Cumbria	Warcop	Environment Agency	20	0
Cumbria	Kendal Appraisal Package (reprofiled from 2022/23)	Environment Agency	1,430	1,430
Cumbria	Lindale Road Grange over Sands	Westmorland & Furness Council	0	270
Cumbria Total			2,357	1,850
Lancashire	River Calder, Padiham	Environment Agency	1,000	1,000
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	Environment Agency	700	0
Lancashire	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Lancaster City Council	100	100
Lancashire Total			1,800	1,100
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	115	115
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Penketh and Whittle (approved April 2023)	Environment Agency	1,000	1,000
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	Cheshire West and Chester Council	100	100
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			1,215	1,215
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	1,200	1,200
Greater Manchester	Irwell Vale to Chatterton	Environment Agency	0	101
Greater Manchester	River Irwell, Kearsley	Environment Agency	150	0

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Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	Manchester City Council	100	100
Greater Manchester	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	Trafford Council	20	20
Greater Manchester	Golburn Clough (reprofiled from 2022/23)	Oldham Council	131	131
Greater Manchester Total			1,601	1,552
Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	Liverpool City Council	100	100
Merseyside Total			100	100
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Accessing investment and funding		220	65
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Building community resilience		250	310
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Managing water at catchment scale with nature		111	55
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure		224	127
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration		619	579
Cross Partnership	RFCC Business Plan	All	1,424	1,137
Grand Total			8,497	6,954

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Appendix C	North West Local Levy 2024-25 – Proposed Allocation
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Partnership	Scheme Name	LRMA Name	2024-25 Proposed Allocation £k
Cumbria	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	Cumberland Council/ Westmorland & Furness Council	100
Cumbria	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	Environment Agency	88
Cumbria	Appleby Flood Risk Management Scheme (EA)	Environment Agency	1,500
Cumbria Total			1,688
Lancashire	River Calder, Padiham	Environment Agency	300
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	Environment Agency	300
Lancashire	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Lancaster City Council	100
Lancashire	Preston & South Ribble (EA)		2,000
Lancashire Total			2,700
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	247
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	Cheshire West and Chester Council	100
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			347
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	1,500
Greater Manchester	River Irwell, Kearsley	Environment Agency	396
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	Manchester City Council	100
Greater Manchester	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	Trafford Council	50
Greater Manchester	Stockport Rd, Romiley (LA)		120
Greater Manchester Total			2,166
Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	Liverpool City Council	100
Merseyside Total			100
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Accessing investment and funding	All	70
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Building community resilience	All	250
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Managing water at catchment scale with nature	All	42
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure	All	231
Cross Partnership	Business Plan delivery – Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	All	594
Cross Partnership Total	RFCC Business Plan	All	1,187
Grand Total			8,188

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Appendix D	River Irwell at Kearsley Flood Risk Management Scheme – Local Levy Request
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Photo taken by Bolton Mountain Rescue Team



Photo courtesy of Andy Fortine

Introduction/ Background

The communities of Prestolee and Stoneclough in Kearsley (Bolton Council) have been severely affected by two major flood events in the last 8 years. On Boxing Day 2015, during Storm Eva, 58 properties flooded with depths up to 1.5m. Again, in February 2020 a smaller magnitude flood event occurred and flooded 22 properties, all of which had flooded 5 years earlier. In the Strategic Outline Case it is estimated that c. 80 residential properties would benefit from a scheme in this area.

Scheme Development

In January 2021, the project had £600k Local Levy approved by the NW RFCC based off an estimated scheme cost of £3.5-£4 million. At the time of this ask, the option being considered was a flood wall. Since this ask, further investigations have been carried out highlighting several engineering challenges which has increased the cost of the scheme significantly. These challenges were not accounted for in the January 2021 scheme costs due to the stage of the project. The challenges highlighted include the stability of the riverbank, the ground conditions and the proximity of the houses leading to a complex design option.

The original long-listed and short-listed options were not feasible due to the site constraints meaning a further design iteration process was carried out to produce the current design option. This was an unforeseen factor that contributed to the increased costs. The current option looks at using a combination of methods to provide stability to the bank to build a flood wall. For the left bank, this option includes a flood wall at the top of the bank, as well as soil nails and rock bags to stabilise the bank. Further work has been carried out, such as ground investigations and soil nail testing to test the feasibility of the design option, which has increased scheme costs significantly. The current option being considered is more expensive due to having to provide a bank stability method in the design, which was not accounted for in the previous ask.

The current option has several challenges that were highlighted in the investigations which contractors and consultants are confident can be addressed in the detailed design stage.

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Alongside the engineering challenges, there are other challenges to consider such as gaining planning permission from the council which will need to be addressed in the detailed design stage.

Milestone	Date
Outline Business Case (OBC) Submission	June 2024
Full Business Case (FBC) Submission	September 2025
Mobilisation Start Date	Jan 2026

This scheme aims to better protected 80 houses and in 2040 will better protect 148 houses (ROM2b). There are limited non-residential benefits because of the residential nature of the area, but the scheme would reduce risk to a key route towards a primary school, allowing us to secure Department for Education Funding.

Funding and External Contributions

Local Levy Amount	Profiled Spend
£204k	2021/22
£396k	2024/25

Current Profiled spend of £600k Local Levy Funding

We have spent £204k of the Local Levy allowance in 2021/22. The £396k will be used towards the detailed design phase of the project.

Source	Funding (£)	Confidence Rating	Comment
Grant in Aid (GiA)	£5,830k	High	
Local Levy	£600k	Secured	Allocated in Jan 2021
Department for Education (DfE)	£350k	Secured	
Other Government Departments (OGD)		Medium	OGD is still being considered as a funding source
Frequently Flooded Allowance (FFA)		Medium-High	The scheme is anticipated to meet the eligibility criteria for this funding scheme and could be awarded up to £2.5 million.
Local Council		TBC	Meetings have taken place with the Director of Place at Bolton, with a further meeting to discuss contributions scheduled later this year.

Funding Overview

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The current estimated scheme costs are £20.3 million with a funding gap of £13.5 million. We are hopeful that this gap will be reduced if OGD, FFA and Local Council contributions are secured in the future. However, it is likely that there will still be a significant funding gap which we are seeking to fill with Local Levy funding.

The project team continue to have discussions with partners and seek out potential funding opportunities.

Yasmin Qureshi MP (Bolton Southeast) has raised the plight of the community in Parliament and has written to the Secretary of State and the Environment Agency asking for the project to be developed as quickly as possible.

Recommendation

The project team kindly requests that the Committee support an additional Local Levy contribution of up to £2.4 million to help better protect 80 + residential properties. This figure has been derived by calculating 15% of the scheme cost, which is £3 million, then subtracting the £600k that has been already allocated. Please see the table below for the profiling.

The approval of this funding is important for the Outline Business Case Submission in June 2024 to allow the project to progress to the next stage. The project team will continue to hold discussions with partner organisations to bridge the shortfall in funding as part of an agreed Funding Strategy and update the Committee accordingly.

Table of suggested funding profile (including previous £600k funding and £2.4 million ask)

Local Levy Amount	Profiled Spend	Comments
£204k	2021/22	Already spent as part of the £600k allocation
£396k	2024/25	Remaining balance of the £600k allocation
£600k	2025/26	Profiled from the £2.4 million request
£1,800k	2026/2027	Profiled from the £2.4 million request
Total: £3 million		

Appendix E	ACTUALS (to end of November)
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Partnership (mid-November)	Full Year Forecast	Claimed to date	Variance		EA remaining to spend	LA remaining to claim
Greater Manchester	£13.55	£5.29	‑£8.26		£6.61	£1.65
Merseyside	£6.79	£3.13	‑£3.66		£0.08	£3.58
Cheshire	£5.93	£2.26	‑£3.67		£2.57	£1.10
Cumbria	£34.07	£13.17	‑£20.90		£14.83	£6.08
Lancashire	£37.58	£17.60	‑£19.98		£14.13	£5.85
Cross-Partnership	£9.25	£4.59	‑£4.66		£4.66	£0.00
Total	£107.17	£46.04	‑£61.13		£42.88	£18.25

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Appendix F

2024-25 Final Capital Allocation

Total Programme Overview (Inc Support Programmes & Rec)

	CLA				GMMC				NW			
	Bid	Indicative Allocation	Local Choices	Final Allocation	Bid	Indicative Allocation	Local Choices	Final Allocation	Bid	Indicative Allocation	Local Choices	Final Allocation
TPE	83,254,697	71,328,659	74,497,786	74,425,591	42,683,100	36,175,018	36,175,018	37,050,418	125,937,797	107,503,677	110,672,804	111,476,009
All GiA	74,609,697	62,783,659	65,952,786	65,880,591	34,085,758	30,595,494	32,511,494	32,681,494	108,695,455	93,379,153	98,464,280	98,562,085

Overview for Def, CM and PLP Projects

	CLA			GMMC			NW		
	Total	EA	Other RMAs	Total	EA	Other RMAs	Total	EA	Other RMAs
TPE	71,084,968	51,350,368	19,734,600	27,459,424	26,192,924	1,266,500	98,544,392	77,543,292	21,001,100
All GiA	62,539,968	43,455,368	19,084,600	23,090,500	22,375,500	715,000	85,630,468	65,830,868	19,799,600
GiA	51,428,205	36,343,605	15,084,600	12,632,000	12,072,000	560,000	64,060,205	48,415,605	15,644,600
Additional GiA	11,111,763	7,111,763	4,000,000	10,458,500	10,303,500	155,000	21,570,263	17,415,263	4,155,000
Local Levy	5,520,000	4,870,000	650,000	2,022,696	1,602,696	420,000	7,542,696	6,472,696	1,070,000
Contributions	325,000	325,000	0	2,346,228	2,214,728	131,500	2,671,228	2,539,728	131,500
Other EA Contributions	200,000	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	200,000	0
Further Required Funding	2,500,000	2,500,000	0	0	0	0	2,500,000	2,500,000	0

Overview for Def, CM and PLP Projects by Partnership

County	TPE 24/25	GiA 24/25	Additional GiA 24/25	Contributions 24/25 total
Cheshire	4,140,524	3,564,000	453,000	123,524
Cumbria	31,463,381	20,683,381	8,300,000	2,480,000
Greater Manchester	19,128,400	5,244,000	9,850,500	4,033,900
Lancashire	39,761,587	30,884,824	2,811,763	6,065,000
Merseyside	4,050,500	3,684,000	155,000	211,500
Grand Total	98,544,392	64,060,205	21,570,263	12,913,924

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Support Programmes & Reconditioning

Programme	CLA Allocation	GMMC Allocation	NW Total Allocation
Total	3,341,000	9,591,000	12,932,000
Reconditioning	1,345,000	7,675,000	9,020,000
Bridges	315,000	0	315,000
Flood Resilience	0	20,000	20,000
Hydrometry & Telemetry	625,000	95,000	720,000
Modelling & Forecasting	1,025,000	214,000	1,239,000
Strategy	31,000	185,000	216,000
National Coastal Monitoring Program	0	1,402,000	1,402,000

Top 10 TPE Projects

CLA		
Name	EA/oRMA	TPE
Kendal Appraisal Package Kendal FRM Scheme	EA	12,260,000
Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	8,520,000
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	oRMA	7,896,300
Millom and Haverigg Flood Alleviation	oRMA	7,349,600
Preston and South Ribble	EA	6,147,463
Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	EA	5,000,646
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	EA	3,925,258
River Calder, Padiham	EA	3,760,000
ENVCatterallBridgeReplacement	EA	2,088,000
Capital Recondition Projects CLA	EA	1,345,000

GMMC		
Name	EA/oRMA	TPE
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	13,080,500
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	9,700,000
Capital Recondition Projects GMMC	EA	7,674,994
Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	EA	1,525,000
North West Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme	EA	1,402,000
Sankey Brook Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	476,524
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC - Assessments	EA	437,000
River Irwell, Kearsley	EA	396,000
Stockport Rd, Romiley	oRMA	340,000
GMMC 22_23 3rd Party Culvert Appraisals	EA	300,000

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Outcome Measures

CLA		
Project	EA/oRMA	rOMs
TOTAL	All	1,057
EA	EA	625
oRMA	oRMA	432
Preston and South Ribble	EA	500
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	EA	125
Whitehaven Harbour Flood Defence Capital Replacement	oRMA	95
Highgate Kendal Surface Water Scheme	oRMA	71
Whalley Surface Water Improvement Scheme	oRMA	71
Silloth Groyne Replacement	oRMA	56
Norbeck Park, Cleator Moor	oRMA	39
Blencarn Park, Rockcliffe Surface Water Scheme	oRMA	28
Shap Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme	oRMA	25
Kirkland Road, Ennerdale Bridge	oRMA	18
Etterby Terrace, Carlisle	oRMA	16
Cote Beck, Halton Flow Control	oRMA	6
Kirkby Stephen Combined Flood Risk	oRMA	5
Biggins Road, Kirkby Lonsdale	oRMA	2

GMMC		
Project	EA/oRMA	rOMs
TOTAL	All	653
EA	EA	24
oRMA	oRMA	629
Timperley Brook Surface Water Management	oRMA	140
Upper Brook Culvert relining (rear of 8 Rose Court)	oRMA	107
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	oRMA	66
Stockport Rd, Romiley	oRMA	58
Castlewood Road, Kersal	oRMA	51
Warrington Road Culvert Investigation Works	oRMA	46
Ramsbottom Flood Mitigation	oRMA	40
Wigan Structural Survey and Inspection of Poor and Very Poor Assets	oRMA	30
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	oRMA	26
Black Brook Culvert St Helens	EA	24
Tributaries of Poynton Brook, Poynton	oRMA	20
Whiston Lane Flood Alleviation Scheme	oRMA	20
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	oRMA	12
Sefton Strategic Surface Water Management Plan Delivery Programme	oRMA	10
Horton Green, Tilston Deculverting	oRMA	3

**NW RFCC MEETING – 19 JANUARY 2024 - AGENDA ITEM 6
NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING**

Appendix G

Capital Efficiencies

Current programme accepted claims to date (Since Q1 2021/22)

Area	Lead RMA	Project Name	Efficiency Saving
CLA	Environment Agency	Cutting the Carbon	£15,624
CLA	Environment Agency	Kendal FRMS	£614,070
CLA	Environment Agency	Low Crosby FRMS	£620,879
CLA	Environment Agency	Pegs Pool & Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	£122,074
CLA	Environment Agency	Preston & South Ribble FRMS	£895,748
CLA	Environment Agency	Skirting & Whangs Beck FRMS	£74,688
CLA	Environment Agency	Threlkeld Urgent Culvert Repair Works	£105,432
CLA	Environment Agency	Alt Breach Repair and Maghull Review	£80,133
CLA	Lancaster City Council	Caton Road Lancaster Phase 3 FRMS	£421,687
CLA TOTAL			£2,950,334
GMMC	Environment Agency	Penketh and Whittle FRMS	£201,742
GMMC	Environment Agency	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	£532,126
GMMC	Warrington Borough Council	Sankey Brook FRMS	£20,087
GMMC	Wirral Borough Council	West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme	£2,487,013
GMMC TOTAL			£3,240,967
NW TOTAL			£6,191,301

**NW RFCC MEETING – 19 JANUARY 2024 - AGENDA ITEM 6
NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING**

Current programme accepted claims in this financial year (Q1 and Q2 2023/24)

Area	Lead RMA	Project Name	Efficiency Saving
CLA	Environment Agency	Cutting the Carbon	£15,624
CLA	Environment Agency	Kendal FRMS	£569,947
CLA	Environment Agency	Pegs Pool & Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	£122,074
CLA	Environment Agency	Preston & South Ribble FRMS	£802,288
CLA	Environment Agency	Threlkeld Urgent Culvert Repair Works	£12,282
CLA	Environment Agency	Alt Breach Repair and Maghull Review	£15,992
CLA TOTAL			£1,538,207
GMMC	Environment Agency	Penketh and Whittle FRMS	£184,967
GMMC	Environment Agency	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	£532,126
GMMC	Warrington Borough Council	Sankey Brook FRMS	£20,087
GMMC	Wirral Borough Council	West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme	£2,487,013
GMMC TOTAL			£3,224,192
NW TOTAL			£4,762,399

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING****5 JANUARY 2024****2024/25 FCRM Grant-in-aid (GiA) Allocation****Recommendations**

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

1. Note the allocation principles and capital programme prioritisation criteria (see section 3.14 and appendix A)
2. Note the FCRM grant-in-aid (GiA) capital allocations (see section 3 and appendix B) and the asset maintenance resource allocations (see section 4 and appendix C) for 2024/25.
3. Provide statutory consent to allow the implementation of the regional programmes for 2024/25.

Headline messages:

- The January RFCC Committee meetings are an important step in the process to allocate capital and resource funding for flood and coastal risk management. At this meeting, RFCC consent is also sought to allow the timely implementation of their regional programmes.
- For the first time, over £1 billion of funding is being allocated across the FCRM capital programme.
- Discussions are still ongoing with Defra, HM Treasury and the new Secretary of State regarding reprofiling funding and resetting the targets for the capital programme. The recently published National Audit Office (NAO) report highlighted our revised forecast of better protecting a total of 200,000 properties by March 2027.
- Our resource budgets are under pressure. We have therefore provisionally set asset maintenance allocations based on retaining the same funding levels as in 2023/24 (£120m). However, in real terms this will reflect a reduction in funding.
- As with previous years, we will not know our final resource funding allocation until the outcome of the Defra group business planning process is confirmed, which is currently expected in March 2024.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out the final stage of allocating Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) capital and asset maintenance resource grant-in-aid (GiA) for the next financial year – 2024/25.

1.2 The process for allocating and approving this funding is set out in Appendix D.

2.0 Latest capital and asset maintenance programme delivery

2.1 Capital Programme – as of October 2023:

- A total of 23 schemes led by the Environment Agency and other risk management authorities (RMAs) have better protected 8,383 properties so far this financial year.
- We (EA & RMAs) are forecasting to deliver 31,000 properties better protected during 2023/24, against an Environment Agency corporate target of 28,000.
- Between April 2021 and October 2023, we (EA & RMAs) have better protected 67,734 properties from flooding and coastal erosion in total.
- There are many other wider benefits being delivered through the capital programme which are not included here. These benefits and associated targets are being discussed as part of the reset of the programme (see section 3). This includes creating or improving an estimated 3,000ha of natural habitat, and enhancing 600km of rivers.
- We have received more than 200 applications to the £25 million Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme. We are currently assessing these with the aim of announcing the successful applicants in early 2024.

2.2 Asset maintenance resource programme – as of October 2023:

- The Environment Agency's corporate key performance indicator (KPI) for asset condition for 2023/24 is 94.5% of EA high-consequence assets at required condition. Our current performance rate is at 93.6% with the third-party asset condition for high consequence assets being at 90.2%. These are figures before Storm Babet and Storm Ciaran and we are still assessing the impacts of these events on asset condition.
- Overall, we are seeing a declining trend in asset condition, predominantly caused by insufficient funding and the impact of inflation. Asset inspections are impacted by available resources in Environment Agency Area teams. Performance has dropped slightly to 94.4%, against a target of 97%, although levels of inspections have kept up with historic rates for this time of year.
- Internal Drainage Boards, Local Authorities and the Environment Agency are all dealing with the impacts of the recent Storm Babet and Storm Ciaran and the impact on our assets. The Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) has written to the Secretary of State to highlight concerns including recovery funding for other RMAs.
- A total of £25 million has been allocated in-year as part of a Secretary of State agreement to transfer a proportion of capital (CDEL) funding to resource (RDEL) funding. This funding is provided specifically for maintenance delivery with over £12 million going directly to Environment Agency Area teams, and the remainder being used on national once asset management delivery (on behalf of Areas). Funding going to Area teams will help offset increased costs such as inflation, whilst 'national-once' work will include improving our understanding of public safety risk assessments (PSRAs), eel passages, reservoirs and those assets which require more specialist inspections.

NAO report and IPA Review

2.3 In November, the National Audit Office (NAO) published their [Resilience to Flooding](#) value for money report. This covered a range of topics linked to the capital programme, and in particular referenced our revised properties better protected

forecast for the current 6-year programme, the challenges faced around inflation and rising costs, and highlighted some of our data challenges.

- 2.4 In November, the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) also carried out a Gateway 0 Assurance Review of the capital programme. We expect the final report to be completed imminently.

3.0 FCRM GiA capital allocation for 2024/25

- 3.1 Following the October RFCC Committee meetings and the submission of local choice returns, and on completion of the deliverability checks, the Environment Agency's national Portfolio Management Office have prepared the final capital allocations for 2024/25. For the first time we are allocating over £1 billion funding across the programme.

Capital programme reset

- 3.2 There have been ongoing discussions with Defra, HM Treasury and the former Secretary of State regarding reprofiling the funding and resetting the targets for the capital programme. These discussions will continue with the new Secretary of State. Any additional funding for 2024/25 resulting from a Secretary of State decision will be allocated to RFCCs.

Reclassification of budgets

- 3.3 All figures in this paper relating to the capital programme are stated as capital (CDEL) funding rather than resource (RDEL) funding (formally revenue funding). When HM Treasury set funding limits on departmental spending as part of Spending Reviews, they are split into spending on CDEL (e.g. new flood defence schemes) and RDEL (e.g. asset maintenance, staff salaries, running costs etc).
- 3.4 The Environment Agency has for some time had an exemption to accounting standards allowing RDEL costs associated with capital investments to be classified as CDEL in our accounts. To address this, HMT have approved a floods budget reclassification for 2023/24 and 2024/25 of £80 million CDEL to RDEL. However there remains a further budget reclassification risk of £182 million.
- 3.5 We are recognising this as a significant risk to the programme in this year and beyond. Without the right level of reclassification, we would have insufficient funding to fully support delivery of the capital programme and undertake development of new projects and potential impacts on the asset maintenance programme.

Funding profile and high-level allocation

- 3.6 In earlier discussions with Defra and the former 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 former Secretary of State had 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.
- 3.7 Our current **budget** for 2024/25 is £1,022 billion. Our **proposed allocation** is £993 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) alongside a potential reprofile of our annual budgets. It is therefore currently considered likely RFCCs will receive more than has currently been allocated once final decisions have been made. We will continue to communicate any changes to RFCCs.

- 3.8 Of the £993 million, £797 million is allocated directly to RFCCs through this allocation process – see appendix B for the regional breakdown.
- 3.9 The remaining amount of the £993 million allocation is national or cross-cutting investment which is not allocated to specific RFCCs. This is consistent with the approach taken in previous years.

Table 1: Final capital GiA allocation for 2024/25 against elements of the programme.

The final allocation for 2024/25 is subject to further Secretary of State decisions, including on the reset of the capital programme. Allocation for 2023/24 is shown for reference only.

Programme	2023/24 (£m)	2024/25 (£m)	Allocation (£m)
Programme to meet legal obligations associated with flood risk management works ¹	9.7	21.4	16.4 in RFCC allocation and 5 for National Reservoir work
Small scale capital projects ²	50.6	81.9	32.7 in RFCC allocation and 49.2 for cross cutting (i.e. Incident Management)
Frequently Flooded Allowance	15.0	18.9	In RFCC allocation
New and replacement schemes (including Asset Replacement Allowance and Other Government Department)	626.0	695	In RFCC allocation
Recondition schemes for assets below target condition	30.0	34.7	In RFCC allocation
Capital salaries for staff supporting, developing, and delivering schemes	48.0	45.0	Not in RFCC allocation
Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	47.4	46.5	Not in RFCC allocation
Secretary of State approved spend on Natural Flood Management (£25m in total)	-	4.1	Not in RFCC allocation
National once and FCRM Portfolio (including Fleet and IT invest to save)	48.3	46.8	Cross-cutting/ National
TOTAL ALLOCATED TO RFCCS		797.7	
TOTAL ALLOCATION (all)	875.0	994.3	
Forecast potential fund to support strengthening of the capital programme to be agreed with Secretary of State		Up to 27.7	
BUDGET (subject to capital programme reset discussions)	954.0	1022.0³	

- 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 EA owned bridges, flood forecasting, flood warning, carbon reduction, hydrometry & telemetry assets, and strategies. Includes incident management programme.
- This is for the original £5.6 billion only and does not include the additional IFRS accounting for leases transfer.

Properties better protected forecast

- 3.10 With the £993 million allocation for 2024/25 we expect to better protect around 29,000 properties in 2024/25. The target for 2024/25 will be agreed as we head towards the end of the current financial year. See appendix B for the regional breakdown by RFCC.

- 3.11 We are forecasting to deliver 200,000 properties better protected by the end of the current 6-year programme. This revised target (subject to Ministerial agreement) will still be stretching. A collective effort will be needed between the Environment Agency, Local Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, RFCC Chairs and Committees to achieve this.
- 3.12 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. We welcome the RFCC continued support in helping to ensure other RMAs, particularly Local Authorities, remain on track and flag any concerns as soon as they arise.

Table 2: Splits of Environment Agency and other RMA stats for the current programme 2021-27

	Total FCRM capital programme	EA element	RMA element
Number of projects (most likely)	1,500	860	640
		57%	43%
Grant in Aid (scheme spend)	£5.2 billion	£3.2 billion*	£1.2 billion*
		62%	23%
Properties better protected (most likely)	200,000	115,000	85,000
		58%	42%

* These figures do not include the enabling and support programme or national allocations so do not equal £5.2 billion.

Table 3: Other RMA proportion of programme over time

	2015-2021	Current programme - August 2022	Current programme - Reset 2023
Number of schemes	63%	54%	43%
Grant in Aid (scheme spend)	24%	36%	23%
Properties better protected	34%	46%	42%

* Programme reset figures are based on pre-local choice returns

Capital programme pipeline

- 3.13 This year, project bids 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.
- 3.14 Higher costs within the same funding envelope mean we will not be investing as much into the pipeline of projects for the next long-term investment programme. We welcome the RFCC continuing support in locally promoting and strengthening the development of a robust pipeline of future projects.

Prioritisation approach

- 3.15 In building the capital allocation, the allocation principles (Appendix A), as approved by the Environment Agency Board on 7 October 2020, and Defra's current Partnership Funding Policy have been applied. RFCC Chairs were involved in the development of these principles. The hierarchy for allocating capital funding for 2024/25 is:
- Approved urgent 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).
- 3.16 Around £20 million of funding has been allocated in the programme to fund projects which reach full business case in 2024/25. This was done through the RFCC local choices process. This funding helps deliver schemes which contribute towards the 200,000 properties better protected forecast. This is part of a £150 million pot of funding over the next 3 years that we asked the Secretary of State to note as part of the programme reset discussions.
- 3.17 The hierarchy for allocating capital funding is designed to complement the allocation principles. Where bids for funding exceed the available budget, 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

- 3.18 We have followed the same approach as last year and built in an additional step to review deliverability of local programmes with Environment Agency Area Directors and their supply partner Framework Directors. This approach gives confidence in the deliverability of the programme and the ability to invest local funding allocations. This review took place during October. The figures in this paper reflect the confirmation from Area Directors and Framework Directors on what they can deliver in 2024/25.
- 3.19 The maximum properties better protected by March 2027 is forecast to be 229,000. Of these, 90,000 will be delivered by March 2024, around 85,000 are associated with projects currently in construction, and the remaining 54,000 are associated with projects currently in development.
- 3.20 At the time of writing, we have already had 5 named storms so far this year, and there may be more to follow. Flood incidents and recovery will incur costs in year but could also affect our ability to spend on planned work – this is being assessed. There is also a risk that incident response and asset repair workload will have a knock-on impact to delivery next year.

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 4: Partnership funding secured

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

- 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.
- 3.23 A proposal to manage the partnership funding risk by investing £150 million to fund partnership funding gaps in projects has been developed. This was due for agreement with the former Secretary of State and has been submitted to the new Secretary of State for a decision.

Stakeholder & Beneficiary Mapping Tool (SBMT)

- 3.24 The Environment Agency are in the process of developing a new GIS based mapping tool that will help identify stakeholders and beneficiaries of potential flood and coastal risk management schemes. The Stakeholder & Beneficiary Mapping Tool will show opportunities to collaborate and seek project support and funding contributions to reduce risk to communities.
- 3.25 The bespoke tool will offer a more comprehensive understanding of potential stakeholders and beneficiaries at an early stage, in a fast, efficient, and user-friendly way. It will support the assessment, development and delivery of projects to reduce flood and coastal risks and deliver environmental improvements. The tool is expected to be available from mid-2024. It will be available to Environment Agency staff and teams from Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs), Local Authorities and Internal Drainage Boards.

Surface Water schemes

- 3.26 We are aware of the challenges around developing and delivering surface water schemes, and this summer have launched our strengthening delivery initiatives, including streamlining appraisal and business case approval for projects less than £3

million. [Our Supporting Flood and Coast Projects](#) SharePoint site has been well received by RMAs in providing information and resources. As part of the reset process, we asked 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. We are now reviewing the results.

- 3.27 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

- 3.28 Delivering carbon reduction on the capital programme is one of the key allocation principles to enable the full RMA capital programme to meet the UK net zero target of 2050 and Environment Agency projects to meet a 45% reduction target for 2030. New carbon management processes and resources have been implemented in 2023/24 to support Environment Agency projects to assess, track and maximise their carbon reduction opportunities. Further work with the supply chain will enable earlier adoption of low carbon technology. A target emissions reduction glidepath for all Environment Agency projects has been established based on these improvements to track progress towards the Environment Agency Net Zero Carbon target.
- 3.29 This year we have also assessed emission targets as part of the local choices process for Environment Agency led schemes. This is the first time we have done this and is an important part of the process to reduce our carbon emissions.
- 3.30 Support for RMA projects to forecast and report emissions will be developed in 2024/25 to enable a full RMA capital programme emissions forecast to be reported.
- Efficiencies
- 3.31 Projects have realised efficiencies that total £44 million so far in the current programme. This equates to a little over 2.4% against a funding condition of 10% efficiencies for GiA spend to be realised for the whole programme. Every project should be challenged to deliver efficiencies so that value for money is demonstrated and the investment across the 6-year programme goes further in protecting as many communities as possible.

Key risks

- 3.32 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:
- 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 economic circumstances.
 - Actual inflation is higher than the mid-range forecast we used when resetting the capital programme.

- Changes in accounting for capital projects – capital (CDEL) reclassification could leave us short on required funding.
- Significant flood events drawing time and money from the capital programme.
- Impact of spending £100 million of GiA on the Frequently Flooded Allowance.
- Statutory 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 Overall resource GiA for 2024/25 will be pressured and this is due to several factors. There has been a 20% increase in the level of maintenance need highlighted from local teams when compared to 2023/24, with inflation and rising operating costs being key factors. These increases mean that funding will not be able to deliver the same level of maintenance in 2024/25, with inflation linking to a real-terms reduction. This is separate to the capital reclassification issue noted in section 3.4.
- 4.2 As with the capital programme, during the summer months Environment Agency Area teams have been reviewing their asset maintenance activities and refreshing their programme for the next financial year. The allocation process is set out in appendix D.
- 4.3 FCRM maintenance funding is prioritised using the following approach:
- Fully fund maintenance ‘obligations’ which include electricity costs and legal requirements.
 - Rank remaining funding requirements within the AIMS:OM (operation & maintenance) asset system using weighted factors. These factors include risk, asset type and benefit cost ratio.
 - Adjustments made if required to ensure Environment Agency field team operating costs are covered.
 - In addition, within scenarios, we have looked to limit the maximum level of reductions local teams could face when compared to 2023/24 allocations.
- 4.4 Despite pressured resource GiA budgets, the Environment Agency’s Executive Directors have agreed to protect and maintain funding levels for asset maintenance at £120m, the same funding levels as last financial year. Allocations by RFCC can be seen in Appendix C. We are therefore seeking RFCC consent for asset maintenance programmes based on this national allocation. As with previous years, we will not know our full resource allocation until the outcome of the Defra group planning process is confirmed. This is expected in March 2024. Any subsequent changes to GiA resource allocations which may affect the RFCC regional programmes of work would then be implemented via the criteria outlined in section 4.3 above with any further consent only sought where we considered such changed allocations had a material impact on any programmes of work.
- 4.5 As highlighted above, less funding in real terms means that local teams are likely to be delivering smaller programmes of work. This in turn will lead to a detrimental effect on the number of assets at required condition over the coming years. The greatest impact will be seen within medium and lower consequence locations.

- 4.6 It is also worth noting that the maintenance programme is closely aligned to the capital recondition programme. This is because the capital recondition programme brings below condition assets back to their required condition. As such, we can also report that we are seeing ever increasing levels of submissions for below required condition assets. We plan to invest £30 million of capital in for 2024/25, however, this will only cover ongoing projects and those assets that have legal/statutory obligations connected to them.

5.0 Recommendations

The RFCC Committees are asked to:

1. Note the allocation principles and capital programme prioritisation criteria (see section 3.14 and appendix A)
2. Note the FCRM grant-in-aid (GiA) capital allocations (see section 3 and appendix B) and the asset maintenance resource allocations (see section 4 and appendix C) for 2024/25.
3. Provide statutory consent to allow the implementation of the regional programmes for 2024/25.

Dan Bond
Deputy Director, Portfolio Management Office
15 December 2023

Appendix A: FCRM allocation principles

Appendix B: FCRM GiA capital allocation by RFCC

Appendix C: FCRM GiA asset maintenance resource allocation by RFCC

Appendix D: Process for allocating and approving funding for 2024/25

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: FCRM GiA capital allocation by RFCC

The following sets out the final allocations for each RFCC, showing funding for all scheme types including indicative recondition allocations and the target number of properties better protected. The allocation for 2023/24 is shown for information only.

RFCC	2023/24 allocation		2024/25 final allocation	
	£m	Split of properties target	£m	Properties better protected
Anglian Eastern	84.0	1,081	97.0	1,930
Anglian Great Ouse	12.9	701	12.4	84
Anglian Northern	47.0	2,755	53.9	3,603
North West	95.1	3,599	98.6	1,772
Northumbria	17.6	384	24.7	673
Severn and Wye	25.8	294	20.7	292
South West	34.7	429	38.5	1,975
Southern	103.7	9,406	79.7	7,011
Thames	86.2	2,765	101.6	3,894
Trent	44.8	1,940	51.2	1,232
Wessex	72.4	2,369	115.7	4,553
Yorkshire	90.2	3,996	103.7	2,506
Total	714.4	29,719	797.7	29,525

1. Numbers for 2024/25 include all scheme types and additional GiA funding (Other Government Department/Asset Replacement Allowance/Summer Economic/Frequently Flooded Allowance) and indicative recondition (REC) allocations.
2. Properties figures have not been uplifted to account for non-residential properties and climate change impacts and are a maximum.

Appendix C: FCRM GiA asset maintenance resource allocation by RFCC

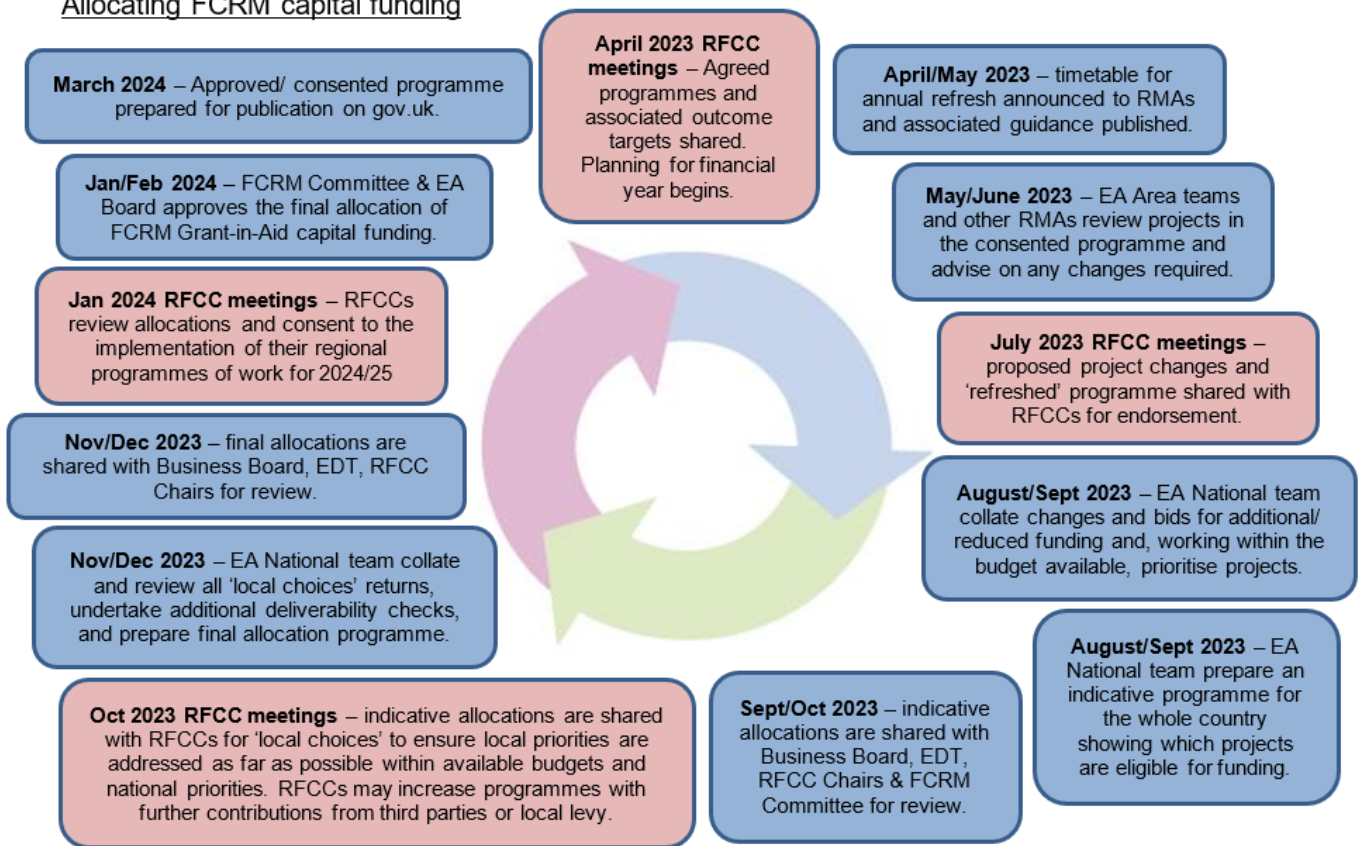
The following sets out the allocations for each RFCC, showing funding for asset maintenance, asset management projects and the effectiveness initiative. The allocation for 2023/24 is shown for information only.

RFCC	2023/24 final allocation	2024/25 current indicative allocation
	£m	£m
Anglian Eastern	8.9	8.5
Anglian Great Ouse	5.0	4.9
Anglian Northern	11.8	11.3
North West	11.8	12.1
Northumbria	2.9	3.0
Severn and Wye	4.6	4.4
South West	5.4	5.3
Southern	11.5	11.5
Thames	20.6	20.1
Trent	15.8	16.2
Wessex	8.1	8.5
Yorkshire	13.8	14.4
Total	120.2	120.2

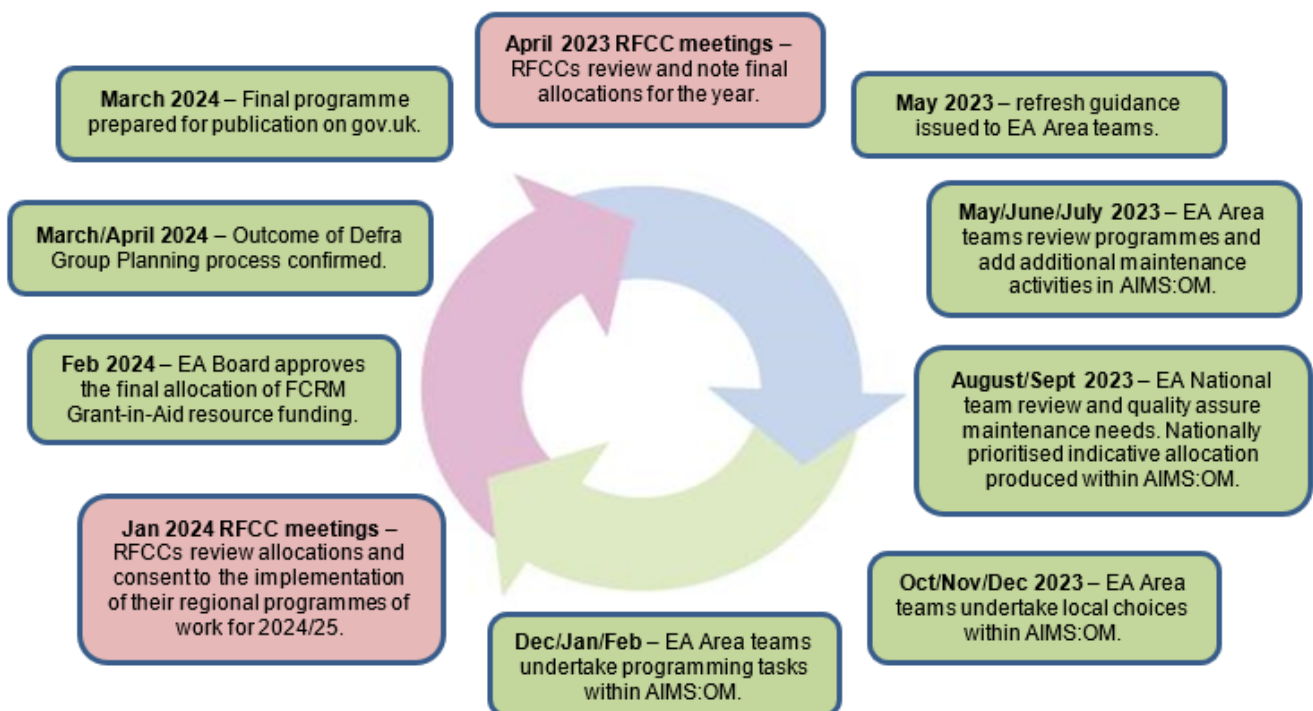
1. Funding for 2024/25 includes asset maintenance, asset management projects and the effectiveness initiative (linked to decommissioning).
2. Funding does not include grant in aid directed towards national asset management work (e.g. improvement in standards)
3. Allocations plan to include funding that will be utilised through National Once delivery (for efficiencies)
4. Allocation subject to change based upon finalised scenario and funding levels.
5. Allocations have incorporated increased costs relating to Fleet and to strengthen Director level sponsorship of asset maintenance within Local Operations

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

Allocating FCRM capital funding



Allocating FCRM asset maintenance resource funding



**North West RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group
5 January 2024**

Local Levy Strategy Refresh

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are recommended to:

- Consider, discuss and provide a recommendation to the RFCC on the two options set out in section 3.2.
- Review and provide feedback on the draft Local Levy Strategy, either at or following the 5 January meeting.

1. Purpose

1.1. This paper provides a summary of the consultation undertaken to inform the refresh of the North West RFCC's Local Levy Strategy, previously published in September 2020. It summarises the responses received, which have been addressed as part of the refresh. It also raises a couple of points for discussion, the outcome of which will be reflected in the final document. A draft of the refreshed Strategy is provided to which feedback and comments will be invited.

2. Consultation

2.1. A survey was provided to give the opportunity for member and officer input. Eleven responses to the survey were received. One was from an RFCC independent member, three were from RFCC elected members, three were from EA staff members, with the remaining four from LA officers. In terms of sub-regional partnership coverage, responses were received from the Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Cumbria, and Cheshire Mid Mersey partnerships.

2.2. As well as updating references to the Business Plan and removing reference to the former Innovation and Change Fund (now simply Business Plan investment), three particular areas were proposed for review as part of the refresh. These are set out below.

2.3. The addition of an emphasis on the transferability of learning from Business Plan projects

2.3.1. The responses to the survey show wide support for this additional principle with a suggested emphasis on the need for the funded projects to incorporate knowledge transfer and sharing as part of the funded project.

- 2.3.2. Additional comments recognise the important role for the partnership coordinators in this and the key role for the Environment Agency in its Business Plan overview role.
- 2.3.3. There are also opportunities for greater sharing of learning nationally with other RFCCs which we could probably do more proactively.

2.4. Review and confirmation of the 15% presumed cap on Local Levy contributions to schemes and the threshold at which it should apply.

- 2.4.1. 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.
- 2.4.2. The question was also raised on whether the RFCC should consider introducing a maximum £ Levy contribution to prevent 15% contributions on very large schemes having a disproportionate impact on the fund and programme. The importance of projects developing funding plans to minimise the burden on Local Levy was also raised.

2.5. Confirmation of how unused Local Levy allocations will be managed.

- 2.5.1. 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 for this to be clear and visible, and done in close conjunction with project leads/teams. The RFCC is committed to this.

2.6. Additional comments

- 2.6.1. Additional comments received related to:
- Establishing agreed arrangements for the regular review of roles funded partly or wholly by the RFCC.
 - 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.
 - Climate projections/assumptions and the suggestion to reach a consensus on planning scenarios.
 - Placing additional focus on developing skills within RMAs for collaboration (more focus on attitudes and behaviours as opposed to more traditional knowledge and skills).
- 2.6.2. Apart from the first of these, the RFCC Business Plan is probably the place to pick up these objectives. When the Business Plan is refreshed during 2024/25, these will be taken into account.

3. Points for discussion

3.1. The majority of the changes to the Strategy have been straightforward updates, restructuring of the document, or reflect the consensus of opinion apparent from the survey results. There are a couple of specific points which the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are invited to consider and discuss specifically.

3.2. Maximum Local Levy contribution to capital schemes

3.2.1. The RFCC has already agreed, and is asked to consider and confirm, a presumption against Local Levy contributions to capital schemes of more than 15% of the total scheme cost, where the Levy contribution would be over £0.5m.

3.2.2. Schemes are tending to be more complex and therefore cost more with several in the North West now costing over £100m. A 15% Local Levy contribution on this size of scheme could equate to £15m or more which feels disproportionate to the scale of the annual income (£4.544m for 2024/25) and the resulting programme. Currently the largest Local Levy contribution in the programme is £5m on the Rochdale and Littleborough scheme, spread across a number of years. At the time of this request, £5m represented less than 15% of the total scheme cost and £5m was felt to be an appropriate and proportionate sum.

3.2.3. It now feels appropriate to use the Local Levy Strategy to set out a presumed maximum Local Levy contribution as a guide to project leads on the maximum contribution the RFCC is likely to support. It will always be worded as a presumption against and therefore the RFCC could always make an exception if it felt it was warranted.

3.2.4. Two options are proposed for the level at which this presumed maximum should be set:

a) £5 million

This would be fixed for the duration of the Local Levy Strategy (likely to be two or three years) but would provide a clear and definite maximum for those involved in delivering projects.

b) The amount of the annual income (currently £4.544m)

The advantage of linking the maximum contribution to the annual income means that it could increase slightly over time, and it feels like logical rationale. However it does introduce a level of complexity as applicants may not be immediately clear what the current year's Local Levy income is, and there would need to be clarity on which year's income level applied.

3.3. Review of Local Levy funded staff resources

- 3.3.1. It is recognised that to provide greater reassurance to all RFCC members of the robustness and transparency of processes to review any staff resources funded from Local Levy, whatever the role and where they are hosted, there should be certain principles applied. To date, the general practice has been for a senior EA manager to lead these review processes, to gather evidence and feedback on the roles, to involve other appropriate members or officers, and to provide a report back to the FBA Sub Group.
- 3.3.2. Additional principles have been included in the refreshed Strategy for consideration.

4. Draft Local Levy Strategy

- 4.1. The draft refreshed Local Levy Strategy is provided as Appendix A to this paper for review and feedback.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. The RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are recommended to:
- Consider, discuss and provide a recommendation to the RFCC on the two options set out in section 3.2.
 - Review and provide feedback on the draft Local Levy Strategy, either at or following the 5 January meeting.



North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)

Local Levy Strategy [DRAFT FOR COMMENT]

January 2024

This Strategy sets out the key principles and commitments the North West RFCC will apply to make the most of its Local Levy funding and to further its Business Plan goals.

The Strategy will be reviewed again after 2 years.

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Foreword

(Subject to final review by RFCC Chair) The North West RFCC first produced a Local Levy Strategy in 2020. We have refreshed it in consultation with the whole RFCC community to reflect ongoing change in the flood risk and coastal change management programme and to update it in line with the RFCC's Business Plan (currently 2022-2025). The RFCC still holds a sizeable balance of Local Levy resource but this is forecast to reduce significantly over the next 2-3 years which will constrain the size of the programme somewhat and potentially individual project contributions. We want to be clear on our priorities and ensure Levy funding is suitably accessible to further these. This Strategy sets out the RFCC's high level aims, principles and expectations around the use of our Local Levy funding.

Local Levy is our local source of funding, raised from local authorities, which we use to address flooding and coastal erosion risk and to lever in significant funding from other sources. In the last 6-year programme (2015-2021), for every £1 of Local Levy invested in schemes, on average we drew in £2 of other funding, and on over half of schemes this was as high as £100. This return makes it a sound investment option for local authorities to attract significant national and private sector funding for making their communities more resilient to the changing climate.

Often, it is the Local Levy contribution which makes capital schemes affordable - either that or it would take many more years to raise the required funding from other sources, leaving communities at greater risk for longer.

Unlike many other public finances, Local Levy balances can be carried forward and earmarked for use in future years, providing flexibility to respond to evolving needs and programme changes.

The programme is better protecting thousands of homes, businesses and infrastructure; protecting future development sites enabling regeneration and job creation; creating habitat for biodiversity; providing new green space, improving footpaths and cycleways for recreation and amenity; along with the associated social, health and wellbeing benefits.

Through the Business Plan, we are investing in projects to develop deeper understanding of issues and barriers, to explore innovative and different ways of working, to develop and maintain tools and resources (e.g. the Flood Hub website), to explore alternative sources and mechanisms for funding, and to provide vital additional resources and capacity to support all risk management authorities.

Adrian Lythgo

Chair, North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee



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1. General principles

1.1. Priorities for the funding will be to reduce flood and coastal erosion risk across the North West through the investment programme and to help achieve the strategic aims set out in the RFCC's Business Plan.

1.2. We want to provide equal opportunity for all risk management authorities to access Local Levy funding.

This does not mean equal allocations to risk management authorities as the programme must reflect flood and coastal risk and the readiness of projects.

We aim to make Local Levy more equally accessible for all types of flood and coastal erosion risk.

Through the Business Plan we are considering current barriers to accessing funding for different types of flood risk and for different risk management authorities, and to devise alternative funding mechanisms. We will be open to considering other measures we could take to make Levy funding more equally accessible.

1.3. The Local Levy programme will not include reserved funding to support maintenance of main river assets by the Environment Agency.

All risk management authorities including the EA can apply for Local Levy funding for capital projects to repair or replace flood risk and coastal assets, which will be assessed on a case-by-case basis against agreed criteria.

Local Levy will not generally be provided for revenue maintenance activity by the EA unless the RFCC feels that there are exceptional circumstances.

2. Local Levy contributions for FCERM capital schemes

2.1. A primary aim of the Local Levy funding is to lever in other funding and continue to provide an excellent return on investment for local authorities.

The Local Levy programme will be managed as far as possible to allocate Local Levy funding when needed to align with the timing of other funding.

Flexibility within the programme should normally enable Local Levy funding to be re-profiled in line with any re-scheduling or re-profiling of other funding, in particular FCERM Grant in Aid (GiA).

2.2. We will continue to make Local Levy available to allow schemes to progress while seeking other funding contributions, effectively underwriting the other funding.

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There is a clear expectation on applicants to go to sufficient lengths to seek other funding sources first so that Local Levy is not the first option. However, the RFCC also recognises that this is balanced with the benefit of securing Local Levy contributions to encourage other potential funders.

Applicants will need to set out a proportionate project funding strategy and to report back on developments as it is implemented.

Ultimately if other funding options are not successful, Local Levy will generally still be provided to make a scheme fully fundable but this may be subject to confirmation from the RFCC.

2.3. As far as possible schemes receiving Local Levy funding should deliver benefits wider than properties better protected from flooding and coastal erosion.

Wider benefits include environmental (habitat, biodiversity, water quality, water retention), economic, social, recreation, amenity, health and wellbeing.

2.4. We will continue to expect and support the mainstreaming of nature-based solutions as part of reducing flood and coastal erosion risk.

The RFCC has moved away from providing a substantial standalone Local Levy allocation for natural flood management projects. We will work with the RFCC leads for natural flood management (NFM) to continue to support nature-based solutions becoming an integral part of the investment programme, funded from a variety of sources. This applies to both nature-based solutions and NFM in both rural and urban settings.

2.5. For Levy contributions of £0.5 million or more, there is a presumption against Levy contributions that are greater than 15% of total scheme cost.

In other words, for a Levy contribution of £0.5 million, the total scheme cost should be at least £3.3 million.

By introducing this as a presumption against, the RFCC could still choose to approve a contribution which exceeds this in exceptional cases.

2.6. For Levy contributions of less than £0.5 million, the RFCC will be open to considering requests that would represent more than 15% but would not expect Local Levy to be funding the majority (over 50%) of the scheme cost.

While not extending the same expectation of at least 85% of other funding contributions to smaller schemes, the RFCC expects Local Levy contributions to smaller schemes to be appropriately proportionate.

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2.7. The RFCC will not normally support Local Levy contributions on single capital schemes of more than:**OPTION A) £5 million**

Or

OPTION B) one year of Local Levy income

This principle has been introduced due to the increasing complexity and cost of schemes, for which a 15% contribution would take up a very large and disproportionate amount of the programme. To date the RFCC has not received requests exceeding £5 million as they already feel disproportionate but it now feels appropriate to introduce a specific value above which the RFCC would not normally approve.

By introducing this as a presumption against, the RFCC could still choose to approve a contribution which exceeds this in exceptional cases where it feels it is warranted and subject to funding availability.

2.8. The principle of proportionality applies to Local Levy requests so that there is greater scrutiny and justification required for larger Levy contributions.

For larger contributions, led by any risk management authority, there is an expectation of early engagement and discussion with Environment Agency Programming teams, Area Flood Risk Managers, the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Chair and the RFCC Chair.

3. Partnership Quick Win funds

3.1. We will continue to make funding available to each of the sub-regional partnerships each year for use as required to deliver small-scale 'quick win' projects.

The amount of funding made available to the partnerships was reviewed and increased from £50K to £100K per year. Spend against the allocation will be reviewed at appropriate intervals to ensure the level of funding being provided remains appropriate.

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4. RFCC Business Plan

This Local Levy Strategy does not set long term strategic objectives, which is the role of the RFCC's Business Plan.

The Business Plan will continue to be reviewed as required to reflect ongoing changes to national drivers and regional priorities and progress towards them.

- 4.1. We have adopted the model of individual sub-regional partnerships leading on a specific Ambition of the Business Plan. Where Local Levy funding is being provided to carry out projects, it is likely that the lead partnership(s) may derive slightly more direct benefit from the project than others. It is therefore vital that we apply a key principle of transferability to all Business Plan investment requiring consideration of applicability across the North West in all projects, and requiring the project to include knowledge sharing as an explicit element.**

The Environment Agency with its strategic overview role will support and facilitate this knowledge sharing, working in conjunction with project leads and partnership co-ordinators as appropriate.

- 4.2. We will use Local Levy funding to provide additional capacity and resources, normally on a temporary basis, where this is needed to meet the aims of the Business Plan or to support the delivery of the North West investment programme and wider flood risk and coastal change management functions.**
- 4.3. Some principles will be applied to the processes for reviewing these roles and the associated Local Levy funding.**

The review process for Levy funded roles will not always be exactly the same, due to their having different hosts, employment and funding arrangements,. However, we will seek to maintain a degree of consistency in all reviews, applying the following principles.

1. An independent RFCC member will be asked to sponsor and oversee role and funding contribution reviews.
2. An appropriate senior Environment Agency manager with a degree of separation from the role(s) will normally act as the lead for the review, in consultation and conjunction with the sponsoring member.

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5. Programme and fund management

- 5.1. We will continue to build a long-term Local Levy programme to show how the funding will be used over the coming years, how this is predicted to change any balance, and to provide greater certainty around Local Levy funding contributions.**

We currently operate a rolling 6-year programme to tie in with the national Grant-in-Aid 6-year programme but this is flexible to adapt to any future changes.

This relies on all risk management authorities planning ahead and developing pipeline projects of all sizes for the coming years.

- 5.2. We will continue to allocate Local Levy funding to enable as much activity as possible. We intend to reduce the balance and then keep it at a lower level than in previous years.**

Once we have achieved a smaller balance, natural fluctuation in the programme size may cause the balance to increase again but we would expect this to be allocated to the future programme.

We will consider setting a trigger level (desirable maximum balance) which if reached will initiate a review of the balance and future programme to identify any proactive action required to accelerate spend.

- 5.3. When a smaller balance of funding is achieved, we will consider if there is a need to introduce some unallocated contingency funding to retain some additional flexibility in the programme.**

This will enable the RFCC to respond to short term needs without significantly disrupting the indicative programme.

- 5.4. We will not allow the balance to fall below 5 - 10% of annual income, maintaining a reserve for unplanned but urgent and high priority work. This is in accordance with Defra's recommendation.**

This provision would only come into play if the existing balance was largely drawn down and this would act as a minimum that we would not allow it to fall below.

If this minimum balance position were to be reached, we would need to agree the detail of how it is managed and what would be eligible uses.

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6. Expectations of project leads

6.1. Risk management authorities who are allocated Local Levy funding are expected to progress the projects and spend the funding in the years allocated.

Updates on progress are expected to be provided through regular reporting routes which highlight any potential slippage. If Levy allocations need to be moved to a later year, this must be formally notified and must be approved by the RFCC.

Allocations not used within the agreed period may be deferred or removed by the RFCC.

Specific requirements on reporting, requesting profile changes and timescales within which Levy allocations must be used will be agreed in consultation with risk management authorities.

7. Local Levy income

7.1. The RFCC acknowledges that the decision on whether, and by how much, to raise the Local Levy is an annual one with a direct link to Council Tax. However, in common with local authorities' own medium term financial strategies, the RFCC also takes a medium-term approach to forecasting needs and resources. This covers a 3-year timeframe, the next period from 2025/26 to 2028/29. LLFA members will need to consider this each October as part of the annual Local Levy vote.

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Appendix - Rules for all RFCCs governing use of Local Levy funding

- RFCCs can only commit expenditure in line with the legislative responsibilities of RFCCs.
- RFCCs cannot commit expenditure to resolve sewer flooding which should be referred to the utility provider.
- Local Authorities (LAs) allocated Local Levy by RFCCs must comply with the project approval and grant claim process described in the "[Memorandum relating to capital grants for other risk management authorities in England \(2020\)](#)". This is the latest version of the Grant Memorandum but it is currently undergoing a further review in 2023/24 so a revised version is expected.
- LAs cannot apply for funding for work which would be covered by the Revenue Support Grant.
- Projects must be in the interests of the public and be cost beneficial. RFCCs cannot undertake expenditure that does not deliver benefits at least as great as the proposed expenditure.
- Expenditure must not break subsidy control rules on providing a direct private benefit for a company, organisation or individual.
- Procurement of services must be in line with best practice.
- Local Levy can be used as a contribution towards capital projects part funded from GiA provided that, taking into account all the contributions, the project meets the requirements of the partnership funding policy. Levy can also fully fund capital projects where GiA is not available but must have a benefit:cost greater than unity, i.e. more than 1:1 benefit:cost ratio.

NORTH WEST RFCC FINANCE & BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING 5 JANUARY 2024

NW RFCC Local Levy Funded Roles to Support Local Authority Project Delivery Review of the Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) role

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This paper reports on the process carried out since the October 2023 Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting to further review of the Capital Programme Co-ordinator role which is funded from Local Levy until March 2024.

2. Context

- The current 6-year investment programme from 2021 to 2027 has doubled in size from the previous programme.
- Around 50% of the number of projects in the capital programme across the NW are now 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 capacity, as evidenced in a recent nationwide Deliverability Confidence Assessment, co-ordinated by the Environment Agency's Portfolio Management Office.

3. Additional capacity being provided by the RFCC

- 3.1. Recognising the scale of the LA capital programme, and the risks around this given resource pressures within LAs, the RFCC saw an opportunity to use its funding to provide additional capacity.
- 3.2. Since 2017 the RFCC has funded five **Local Authority Capital Project Adviser** roles (LACPAs). Their purpose is to support Local Authorities in delivering their FCRM projects including navigating the assurance, approval and grant claim processes that sit within the Environment Agency (EA). The RFCC has approved continued funding for these roles to the end of March 2027 (the end of the current investment programme).
- 3.3. It was a conscious decision to host these roles within the Environment Agency rather than within Local Authorities. This is because it provides:
 - Direct (internal) access to the project assurance and approval routes and personnel involved, both local and national.
 - Direct (internal) access to IT systems, documentation, forms etc.

- Direct access to training, mentoring and support for the individuals in the LACPA roles.
- The ability to be flexible and deploy the resource to support numerous LAs as required.
- Consistency of approach and guidance.

This has proved critical in their effectiveness.

- 3.4. The LACPAs broadly support one partnership each but they have been deployed flexibly based on what projects have been allocated funding in the programme, capacity within LAs, and their need for support. There is a LACPA role for each of the Cumbria and Lancashire partnerships where the number of LLFAs is relatively small. In GMMC Area where there are three LACPA roles supporting 19 LLFAs, there has been a more flexible allocation of the roles to LAs over time, according to where it is needed most.
- 3.5. When the LACPA roles were last reviewed in 2022, the need for a senior co-ordinator role was identified and agreed. The funding for this role was approved for two years initially as a trial, ending in March 2024. This role has become known as the **Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC)**.
- 3.6. The total cost of the LACPA and CPC roles is currently £339k per year (including all on-costs) - £54k per year for each of the LA CPAs and £69k for the Capital Programme Co-ordinator role. This represents less than 8% of the annual Local Levy income.
- 3.7. For wider context, there are a number of additional roles, funded fully or in part by the RFCC, which sit within Local Authorities. There are five Partnership Co-ordinator roles, and the Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator which supports the Coastal Group.
- 3.8. The table below sets out the respective roles of the LA Capital Project Adviser (LACPA) and Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) roles.

Role of LA Capital Project Advisers	Role of Capital Programme Co-ordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting their LA partners to bid for and secure GiA and other sources of funding for projects including use of the PAFS/Power Portal system. • Supporting their LA partners to understand the processes and forms for project assurance and approval, and claiming grant. • Reviewing and providing feedback on project business cases to ensure they are of sufficient quality and then supporting them through the EA assurance and approval processes, either locally (for lower value projects) or at a national level (for higher value projects). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training, developing and mentoring the LA CPAs to enable them to support the LAs they work with. Providing them with ongoing advice, guidance and support as required. • Co-ordination of the resource and support to LAs across the partnerships. • Working to ensure consistency of approaches across the NW and more widely, including developing links with DEFRA Finance and other key partners. • Leading on implementing and embedding changes to processes, to minimise delays to project delivery.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a liaison point with the LA/IDB Grant Admin team to secure approval codes and to enable the drawdown of funding. • Encouraging and supporting ongoing reporting of project progress. • Supporting their LA partners on reporting efficiencies, carbon etc. • Maintaining focus on and momentum of capital project delivery. • Supporting their partnerships to identify and agree Quick Win funding bids, and then to put in place the necessary documentation to draw this down. • Supporting their LA partners to access the EA supplier frameworks where this is appropriate and beneficial. • Supporting reporting on project delivery including partnership Quick Wins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the partnerships and the partnership co-ordinators particularly around consistency and monitoring of project delivery through information and reporting. • Leading the action within the RFCC Business Plan 'RMA capacity building programme', identifying training needs across the NW, and responding to these by facilitating training opportunities.
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3.9. We are currently receiving a number of changes to process or guidance requiring the CPC role to facilitate North West roll out and their application in the delivery of critical Local Authority led flood risk management schemes. Examples of current changes are:

- 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.

4. Review of the Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) role

4.1. Between November and December 2023, the Environment Agency led a review of the CPC role to understand how the role is currently functioning and whether any changes were required. It also fundamentally set out to understand whether there is support across the RFCC for continuation of the role to March 2027, matching the current funding approval timeframe for the LACPA role.

4.2. The review had three key elements of data and opinion gathering:

- 1) Survey (Anonymous MS Forms)

- 2) Targeted interviews (Teams meeting)
- 3) Research on how other RFCCs in England address the same challenges.

4.3. Survey

- 4.3.1. An anonymous survey was issued to members of the RFCC, Local Authority and Environment Agency leads. The survey was written to gather decision-making data, but also to provide opportunities for colleagues to feedback qualitative information on their experiences and views.
- 4.3.2. The survey was composed of 10 key questions.
- 4.3.3. 30 responses were received from a range of organisations which provided a good basis for decision making. The outcome of the survey will be discussed below.

4.4. Targeted Interviews

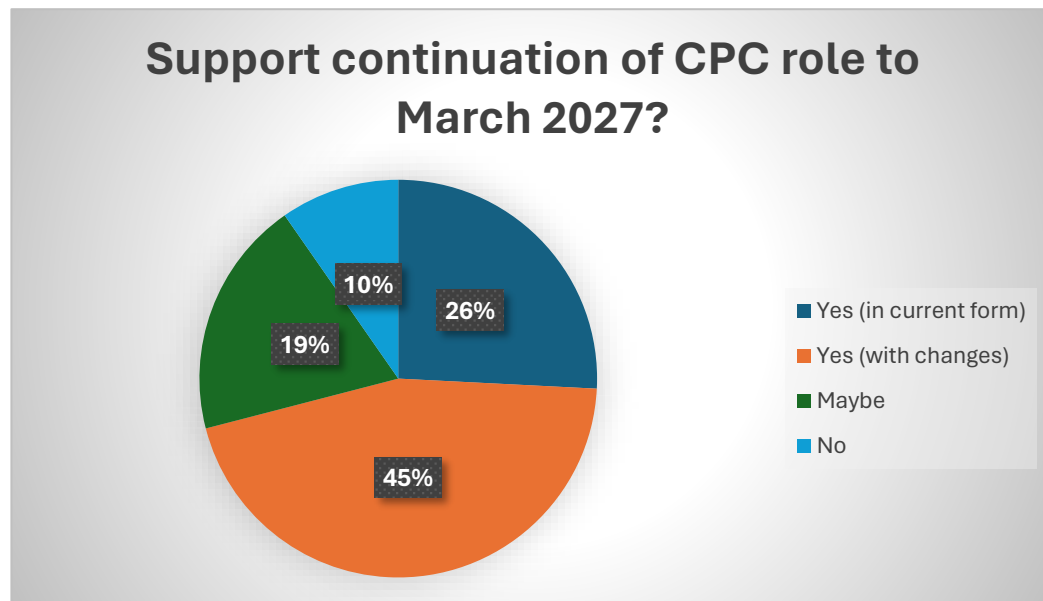
- 4.4.1. The EA's Area Flood Risk Manager for Greater Manchester, Nick Pearson, undertook five targeted telephone interviews with EA and LA staff to gather further detail on how the CPC role is currently functioning. Interviewees were selected as being geographically spread across the partnerships performing different roles all of which would have some interface with the CPC role.

4.5. Research on additional capacity provided to support LAs by other RFCCs

- 4.5.1. Conversations with RFCCs from around England were held to understand how the challenge of providing support to LAs/RMAs was addressed elsewhere – acknowledging that the challenges are not unique to the north west of England.

5. Survey results and further commentary

- 5.1. A fundamental question within the survey asked ‘Do you support the RFCC continuing to fund the CPC role until March 2027, when it will be reviewed along with the LA Capital Project Advisor?’
- 5.2. 71% were in favour of continuation of the CPC role within the survey, and the highest proportion were those in favour with some changes. 10% were not in favour of continuing.



- 5.3. When those surveyed were asked what changes, if any, they would propose to the role, there were a number of themes:
- 1) Increased **visibility** across the north west, including regular attendance at agreed tactical meetings and presentations at RFCC.
 - 2) Clearer role in providing and understanding **training needs** across the north west.
 - 3) Assistance in LAs accessing **partnership funding**.
 - 4) Increased visibility of the **CPC role’s key annual delivery goals**.
- 5.4. The above suggestions are broadly within the role of the CPC set out above, however, it is apparent that work to further clarify the key outcomes of the role would be beneficial. For those who weren’t supportive, they stated that if the role were to continue, increased visibility and transparency of measurable outcomes would be preferable.
- 5.5. The increased visibility is important and clear, but it should also be understood that the role is not designed to have the same day-to-day interaction with Local Authorities as the LACPA role has. The LACPA role has high visibility and, from the results of the

survey, the benefits of those roles are clear to LAs. The lesser visibility of the CPC role doesn't alter the work being done in the background helping delivery of the LA FCRM Capital Programme through co-ordination and mentoring.

- 5.6. More detailed results from the survey are available upon request from NW-RFCC@environment-agency.gov.uk.

6. Targeted Interviews

- 6.1. The five targeted interviews of LA and EA staff were all in agreement of support of continuation of the role and varied between 'yes - in it's current form' to 'yes – with changes'. Feedback included both specific examples of where the role had provided significant added value around delivery and training to suggestions in line with the recommendations of the online survey.
- 6.2. It was also noted that due to ongoing changes within the LACPA role community, the CPC not only provides resilience and continuity but also has capacity to train new staff in the process.

7. Additional capacity similarly funded by other RFCCs

- 7.1. To provide a national context, below is a summary of how some of the 12 RFCCs elsewhere in England use Local Levy to assist delivery of RFCC priorities, including the capital programme.
- 7.2. There is clearly a variable approach although it does demonstrate:
- a) the roles should not be funded directly by the EA due to them principally assisting the delivery of LA-led flood risk management schemes, for which local authorities have powers to deliver
 - b) the acceptance that RFCC Local Levy should/could be used to bolster LAs' capacity to deliver FCRM schemes
 - c) all RFCCs have concluded that they are best hosted within EA Area FCRM departments for reasons explained above.
- 7.3. This is also in the context of a number of EA FCRM teams reducing in size over the next two years, removing any scope to accommodate these roles.

RFCC	Breakdown of Local Levy funded officers by no.				No. of RMA's in Area (LLFA's and District if active)	Are these roles mostly related to capital programme delivery?
	Team Leader (if own team)	Senior Advisor	Advisor	Officer		
Northwest	No	1	5	0	36 (incl districts)	Yes
Trent	Yes	1	3	2	15 LLFAs	Yes
Wessex	Info not available					
Yorkshire	No	1	1		14	Yes
Anglian Central	No	0	3	0	21	
Anglian Eastern	No	0	3	1	15	
Anglian Northern	Info not available					
Northumbria	No	1x Local Levy Programme Advisor Team of Community Engagement Officers 2x Graduate Trainees 1x Nature Based Solutions Advisor 1x Partnership Funding Advisor 1x NWL Environmental Partnership Coordinator			13	Yes, apart from Community Engagement Officers
English Severn and Wye	Yes	1	2	1	10	Yes
South West	Info not available					
Southern	Info not available					
Thames	Yes (2 G6)	2	13	2	54	

8. Recommendations for RFCC consideration

- 8.1. The above exercise demonstrates that a robust review has been undertaken into the NW RFCC Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) role and the question of how and if the role should continue beyond March 2024. Views were sought from a variety of organisations, partnerships and individuals, providing a quantitative base to recommend a way forward.
- 8.2. Whilst the results show that the continuation of the role is not unanimously supported, 90% of responders answered yes (as current or with changes), or maybe. The highest proportion of voters answered 'yes with changes'.
- 8.3. Given the results of the survey, targeted interviews and research into how similar RFCC posts work nationally, this report recommends the RFCC to consider continuation of the role, until March 2027, with a number of key changes. The March 2027 date aligns with both the current end date of the five LACPA posts and the end of the current

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) period, giving confidence in delivery throughout. These are:

- **Visibility** – The CPC role will have clearer objectives regarding visibility to all Partnerships, including regular meetings.
- **Training** – A clear two-way process will be expanded to ensure training needs of LACPAs and RMAs are informed, understood and delivered wherever possible.
- **Funding** – The role will provide guidance to LACPAs and RMAs on funding opportunities for flood risk management projects.
- **Outcomes/Aims** – The role will continue to be hosted in GMMC but a stronger link to the Cumbria and Lancs team will be established via the EA Flood and Coastal Risk Managers.

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, with the above changes.

NORTH WEST RFCC FINANCE & BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING 5 JANUARY 2024

North West RFCC Business Plan Year 2 Progress report

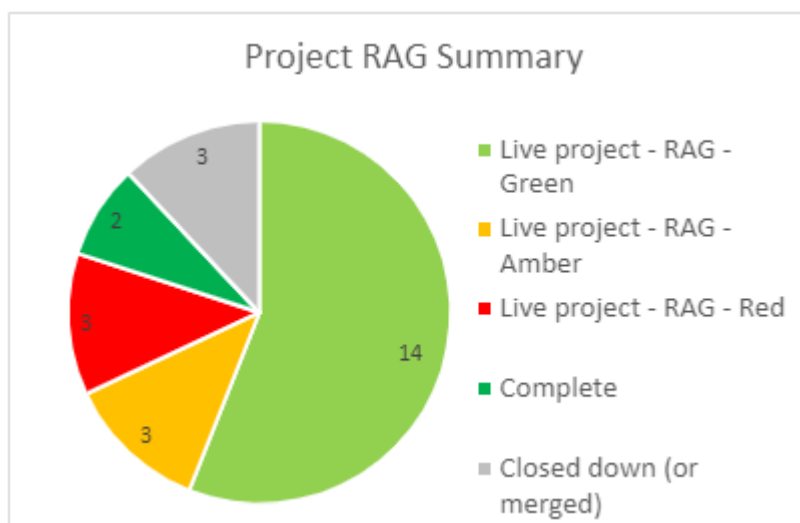
1. Overview

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the projects within the RFCC's Business Plan, and to seek the RFCC's approval on the 2024/25 programme and Local Levy investment.
- 1.2. 2023/24 has been the second year of the plan. There are still 3 months until year-end, but we have a good view of progress and spend forecasts for 2023/24, and investment needs for 2024/25.

2. Progress summary

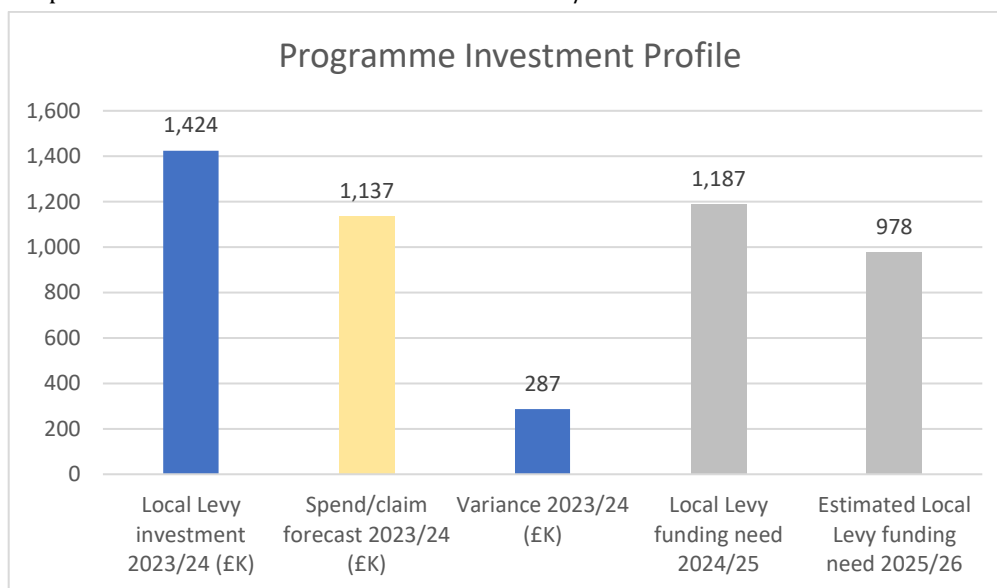
- 2.1. Good progress continues to be made with several projects now complete and most now actively in delivery.
- 2.2. Of the 25 projects adopted as part of the RFCC's Business Plan since April 2022, 20 are currently live. Two projects have been completed or funding has come to an end, one was closed down as no longer desirable to progress, and two were merged.
- 2.3. Of the 20 live projects, 14 are currently rated Green (good progress), three are rated Amber (issues constraining progress), and three are rated Red (not actively progressing currently).
- 2.4. Two of the projects (rated Green) are almost complete and in the final stage of knowledge sharing. One of the projects which is not progressing (rated Red) is proposed for close down as part of this report.

Graph 1 Progress status of Business Plan projects



2.5. The RFCC approved Business Plan investment in 2023/24 of £1.424 million. The latest most likely spend forecast is around £1.14 million. This represents an underspend this year of around £300K.

Graph 2 Business Plan Investment Profile to 2025/26



2.6. The tables below show how progress and investment breaks down across the Business Plan Ambitions.

Table 1 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 (or merged)
Accessing investment and funding	5	1	1	2	0	1
Building community resilience	5	4	1	0	0	0
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	4	2	0	1	1	0
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	6	4	0	0	0	2
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	3	1	0	1	0
	25	14	3	3	2	3

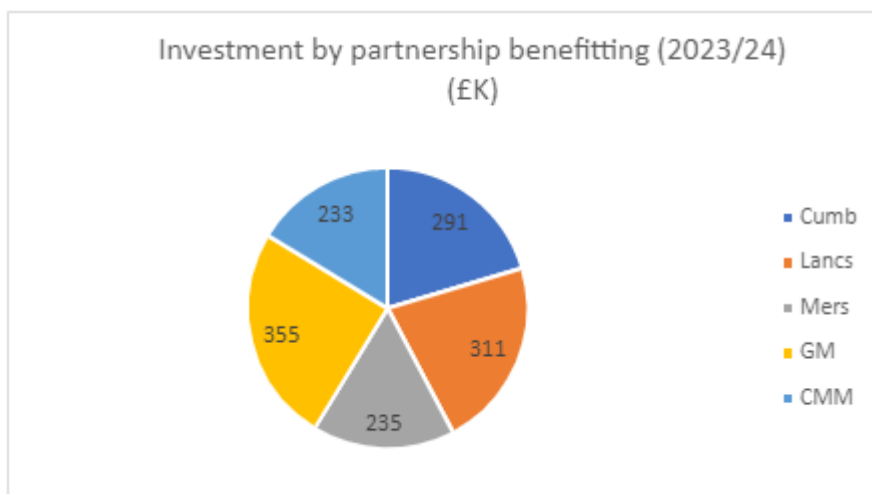
Table 2 Investment profile by Ambition

Ambition	Local Levy investment 2023/24 (£K)	Spend/claim forecast 2023/24 (£K)	Variance 2023/24 (£K)
Accessing investment and funding	220	65	155
Building community resilience	250	310	-61
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	111	55	56
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	224	127	97
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	619	579	40
	1,424	1,137	287

2.7. Sub-regional partnerships are each taking a lead role for one of the ambitions, selected to align with sub-regional flood risk challenges. Many of the projects are cross-cutting and benefit all sub-regional partnerships equally. Projects delivering physical or community interventions may benefit the lead partnership more directly than the others. However even in these cases, the RFCC has reinforced the essential need for new learning, tools and products to be transferable, and transferred, to all North West partnerships where relevant.

2.8. The graph below shows the breakdown of the investment made available for 2023/24 across the sub-regional partnerships taking account of the % of the benefits of each project they are likely to receive. A detailed breakdown of assumptions and calculations can be made available on request from the BP Programme Manager.

Graph 3 Estimated partnership benefit share of investment (2023/24)



2.9. A full project level breakdown of progress and spend forecast is provided as Appendix A. Appendix B is the latest quarterly report from the Wyre Natural Flood Management (NFM) Community Interest Company project (RFCC Business Plan ID2.1).

3. Action for close down

ID2.2 Project RAINCOAT

- 3.1. In January 2023, the Finance Sub Group heard from Project RAINCOAT, an urban sustainable drainage (SuDS) retrofit programme on publicly owned estate, primarily schools, in Greater Manchester. This would trial an innovative green financing mechanism bringing together private and public sector partners/contributors. The project requested some Local Levy investment from the RFCC over a number of years. The RFCC gave their in-principle support to a contribution of £50K for one year, with ongoing investment to be considered further, and subject to working up suitable contractual arrangements.
- 3.2. Following this, the IGNITION project from which Project RAINCOAT had emerged, lost its key resource and despite some ongoing conversations between the key partners within Greater Manchester, this particular initiative has not progressed to put those contractual arrangements in place. The £50K contribution for 2023/24 was not formalised and no further request from the project is now expected. This action should therefore be closed down as part of the RFCC's Business Plan.
- 3.3. The Wyre NFM Community Interest Company initiative in Lancashire (Business Plan project ID2.1) which is similarly testing a green financing mechanism, is being implemented and is ongoing.

4. New areas of focus and potential action in 2024/25

- 4.1. The RFCC sees the Business Plan as a living initiative and, as Members will have observed, there have been new projects introduced and supported by the RFCC since it was first introduced.
- 4.2. There are a couple of areas which have either been raised by Members in recent months, or which have received increased attention through national developments, which the RFCC may wish to consider for some focussed action and investment through the Business Plan during the course of 2024/25. Scoping of what activity would be appropriate is needed before these can be formally adopted as projects within the Business Plan. The areas proposed for further consideration and development are:
- 4.3. **Peatland restoration** - While there has been action and investment in peatland restoration through a relationship with Moors for the Future in the south Pennines, there is clearly more opportunity across the wider North West. Members have expressed a wish to understand the scale of both current activity and future opportunity for the RFCC being involved in wider scale peatland restoration. Some initial collation of this information has started and will be brought back to the Sub Group and RFCC in due course.
- 4.4. **Surface water flood risk** – This is becoming an even greater priority with real impacts being observed in recent storm events across the country, and reflected in the publication of the second National Infrastructure Assessment focussing on surface water flooding. Over 300,000 properties in England are currently in high surface water

flood risk areas, compared with 240,000 at risk from river and coastal flooding, which could increase to 600,000 properties over the next three decades. There is a need for more joined-up, targeted governance and funding across risk management authorities to reduce the amount of run-off entering drainage systems and to expand the capacity of those drainage systems. There is an opportunity to take more focussed action on surface water flood risk through the Business Plan. What action is appropriate at strategic partnership level should be considered in more detail during 2024/25.

5. Proposed investment for 2024/25

- 5.1. The proposed Local Levy investment in Business Plan actions in 2024/25 totals £1,187K. This is a slightly reduced sum compared with the previous two years, now benefitting from greater clarity about available capacity and investment needs. This is summarised by Ambition in Table 3 and by project in Table 4 below.

Table 3. Proposed 2024/25 investment by Ambition

Ambition	Proposed Local Levy allocation 2024/25 (£K)
Accessing investment and funding	70
Building community resilience	250
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	42
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	231
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	594
	1,187

Table 4. Proposed 2024/25 investment by project

ID	Project title	Proposed Local Levy allocation 2024/25 (£K)
1	Potential investment and partner map	25
2.1	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms – Wyre CIC	45
2.2	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms – Project RAINCOAT (PROPOSED FOR CLOSE DOWN)	0
3	Assessment and valuation of wider benefits of flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes	0
5	The Flood Hub	115
5A	The Flood Hub – National expansion to other RFCCs	0
6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	10
7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	124.55
8	Flood Poverty Project	0
9	Whole catchment approach – GM IWMP Learning	0
9A	NFM partner support funding – Mersey Forest	30
19	NFM project (Cumbria)	0
20	Land mgt and flooding engagement (inc conference?)	12
10	Evidence gathering – Climate resilience within planning and development	0
12	Action campaign – Paving over front gardens	86
4/13	Collaborative approach to asset maintenance and management / Data sharing and mapping of flood risk and drainage assets	145
21	Highway SuDS Design Guide	0
15	Risk management authority capacity building programme	25
16	Additional capacity (to support the RFCC, partnerships and risk management authorities)	569
17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - development	0
18	Creation of new RFCC Sharepoint site	0
		1,187

Appendix A – Full project progress report

Appendix A	RFCC Business Plan – Project Updates
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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Proposed Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)
ACCESSING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING							
ID1	Investment mapping feasibility project	Amber	<p>This feasibility project is looking 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.</p> <p>Consultants (Jacobs) have been procured via GMCA and project initiation is almost complete. The amber rating is due to some slippage during the procurement phase but this is now essentially resolved and work is starting.</p>	75	20	25	0
ID2.1	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms - Wyre Catchment CIC	Green	<p>Adrian Lythgo currently represents the RFCC on the Project Board and receives Qly update reports.</p> <p>The latest report from the project (November 2023) is provided as Appendix 3 to this paper.</p>	45	45	45	45
ID2.2	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms - Project RAINCOAT	Red (Proposed for close down)	<p>Due to loss of a key resource from the project, and challenges around aligning investment source timeframes between partners, this project is no longer progressing and the action is proposed for close down as part of the RFCC's Business Plan.</p>	0	0	0	0

Appendix A – Full project progress report

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.	0	0	0	0
BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE							
ID5	The Flood Hub	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October and November continued to see significant growth in pageviews and users. October was the busiest month to date with a staggering 54,182 pageviews and 36,244 users. November saw 35,970 pageviews and 20,411 pageviews, the second busiest month since the launch of The Flood Hub in November 2018. 251 websites that link to The Flood Hub. Community and Property Flood Resilience (PFR) sections reviewed this quarter and 6 new resources added to the Knowledge Hub including two focussed on landowners and farmers in the agricultural sector, and a PFR case study. Low Crosby GCSE case study that was launched at the start of September in partnership with Geography Southwest and the EA, has been entered into the ‘Secondary and beyond’ category of the Geographical Association’s (GA) Publishers’ Awards Ten of the FCERM scheme sections have seen updates in the last quarter. Social media campaigns run including ‘Community Flood Resilience’. A new campaign #12DaysofFloodResilience is planned for December and ‘Your Role in Managing Flood Risk’ is being developed for January. 	115	115	115	115

Appendix A – Full project progress report

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. This has started but is progressing slowly.	0	0	0	0
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. A social media comms campaign on coastal flooding and erosion was run in the last quarter.	10	10	10	10
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	Green	This quarter, Newground have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported 91 members of the public Supported 9 elected members. Supported risk management authorities (EA, LAs and UU) by providing support and advice to the community at engagement/drop-in events for Irwell Vale, Great Sutton, Maghull, Billinge, and Sankey, as well as visiting a primary school in Cheshire to provide advice on PFR. Received and dealt with 44 Flood Hub website enquiries, some with further emails and phone calls for advice, support and guidance. 	124.55	124.55	124.55	124.55
ID8	Flood Poverty Project	Green (Almost complete)	Work is substantially complete. Findings report currently being finalised. Remaining focus is on sharing learning including a presentation at the January RFCC meeting (deferred from October).	0	60.5 (prior yr alloc)	0	0
MANAGING WATER AT CATCHMENT SCALE WITH NATURE							
ID9	Whole catchment approach - GM IWMP Learning	Green (Almost complete)	An additional commission was 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	30	16.57	0	0

Appendix A – Full project progress report

			transferable learning more widely. Work is complete. Remaining focus is on sharing learning.				
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.	30	30	30	30
ID19	NFM project delivery (Carryover)	Complete	Forest Hills (£30K) was completed in 2022/23. Smithy Brook (£9K) project completed in August 23.	39	8.8	0	0
ID20	Land management engagement	Red	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.	12	0	12	5
ACHIEVING CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE							
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 is underway, to be completed in January 2024.	50	0	0	0
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. The tender process to secure a garden designer is now complete and garden design will get fully underway in January.	54	52	86	54
ID4/13	Data sharing and mapping of flood	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	100	55	145	0

Appendix A – Full project progress report

	risk and drainage assets		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 now actively underway with Phase 1 almost complete, being delivered by consultants Arup.				
ID21	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.	20	20	0	0
INCREASING RMA CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION							
ID14	Local authority capital project delivery challenges	Complete	Project considered complete as a specific Business Plan action. Ongoing activity is now through the LA Capital Project Advisers and ID15 (Capacity Building Programme)	0	0	0	0
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 in 2023/24. Training sessions have been run in NW on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying and recording efficiencies Developing Quick Win projects Changes to the programme outcome reporting measures (such as properties better protected). Ad hoc training by LA CPA's on use of Power Portal to report progress and profile expected claims. LA CPA support with PAFS (system) as needed, especially around the time of the annual programme refresh. 	50	0	25	25

Appendix A – Full project progress report

			Links have been developed with other areas across the country to share training and learning opportunities including sessions on partnership funding. 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 – all five roles filled and ongoing. LA Capital Project Advisers – all five roles filled and ongoing. Capital Senior Co-ordinator – see separate paper. Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator – role ongoing.	569	554	569	569
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.	0	25 (prior yr alloc)	0	0
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.	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX B
WYRE CATCHMENT NFM PROJECT
NOVEMBER 2023 REPORT



Wyre Catchment NFM Project

Wyre River Solutions Limited - Progress and Delivery Report

Wyre Catchment CIC, Board Meeting – November 2023

Wyre Catchment CIC										
Status of delivery plan CAPEX budget		Q2 2023/24								
Options	Units	Interventions delivered and in ground	Interventions at contract stage	% of target	Budgeted capital cost per unit	Budget CAPEX delivered and at contract stage	Contracted full 3 year target (units)	Budget CAPEX full 3 year target (ex VAT)	Value of works delivered (ex VAT)	
Small Leaky dams	No of dams	220	607	96.7%	£71	£58,579	855	£60,562	£15,583.26	
Large Leaky dams	No of dams	89	294	44.8%	£119	£45,481	855	£101,531	£10,568.75	
Ponds and scrapes	Ha	0.6	0.8073	23.5%	£15,563	£21,901	6	£93,375	£9,337.50	
Low level earth bunds	Meters	15	176	19.1%	£63	£11,938	1,000	£62,500	£937.50	
Banked hedges	Meters	3150.6	5166	83.2%	£21	£176,381	10,000	£212,083	£66,818.97	
Floodplain reconnection	Meters	0	1185	118.5%	£79	£93,812	1,000	£79,167	£0.00	
Peat restoration	Ha	1.29	4.46	38.3%	£4,792	£27,552	15	£71,875	£6,181.25	
Intensive Grass (silage) to Rough Pasture	Ha	0	3	100.0%	£208	£625	3	£625	£0.00	
Permanent Pasture to Rough Pasture	Ha	0.62	0	100.0%	£208	£129	1	£129	£128.96	
Riparian buffer strips	Meters	1075	4926	42.9%	£8	£46,758	14,000	£109,083	£8,376.03	
						£483,156		£790,931	£117,932.23	
CAPEX budget drawn down and paid to WRSL			WRSLi01-01	28 June 2022	£	100,000.00				
			WRSLi01-02	27 October 2022	£	100,000.00				
			WRSLi01_03	12 October 2023	£	100,000.00				

Table 1 Table one outlines the total number of interventions delivered and at contract stage, the percentage of the target achieved and the CAPEX cost of those interventions.

Progress Report

Progress Narrative and Risk Assessment:

The project has continued to progress during Q2 of 2023/24. The installation of leaky barriers at Hare Appletree Farm and Wyre Farm has continued, with additional peat restoration works taking place at Hare Appletree and Sturzaker House Farms and the installation of ~660m of riparian buffer strip at a site on the river Calder. A focus of the work has been on developing works for the latter months of Year 2. Both Yates Farm and Fell End Farm have now signed their contracts for works and we have worked closely with two new landowners (Wyresdale Park and Salisbury House Farm) to develop contracts for prompt delivery, allowing us to reduce the risks posed by hold ups with other contracts in the project. A number of smaller contracts are also at signature stage for delivery in 2023/24. The most positive news is that Abbeystead Estate are now able to sign their contract for Far Barn, following agreement by their trustees. This will allow works to begin as soon as possible and should allow for signing of additional contracts at other holdings on the estate in the near future.

Following development works with the Forest of Bowland AONB and partners, a bid was submitted to DEFRA for delivery of peat works at Black Clough. Funding from the Wyre NFM project will be used to support the delivery of the works, allowing the project to lever 75% co-finance for the work. It has now been confirmed that this bid has been successful and that works will take place in Winter 2023/24. The land concerned is owned by Abbeystead Estate, so the CIC will hold an agreement with Abbeystead Estate for the works. This will allow for delivery of 15ha of peat works this winter, in addition to the 1.29Ha that has been delivered at other sites. This fits within the allowable tolerances for delivery of peatland restoration of 10-20Ha.

Monitoring Update

On the 27th of September the 2nd and final monitoring site was set up at Far Barn on the Abbeystead Estate. Following advice from Abbeystead Estate that they would be signing their agreement, it was agreed with the estate that monitoring equipment would be installed immediately to allow for the creation of a baseline at the site, prior to the delivery of the works. Initial data from the Hare Appletree site, shows a reduction in level of around 13.6% during a rain event in mid-August. Further analysis of recent rainfall events will be undertaken when conditions are appropriate for the removal of dataloggers from the watercourse.

Expenditure Forecast – Q4 – 2022 23

Table 2 Table two shows the expenditure forecast for Q3 2023 2024.

Q3 Projection 2023_24									
Options	Target Ha	Units per ha		Cost Per Unit ex VAT	Total Contracted Units	Total Delivered Units	Units for delivery in next quarter	Total contracted units remaining for delivery	Total CAPEX Forecast Q3
Small Leaky dams	9.0	95	No of dams	£71	607	220	150	457	£10,624.95
Large Leaky dams	9.0	95	No of dams	£119	294	89	100	194	£11,875.00
Ponds and scrapes	6.0	7	Ha	£15,563	0.8073	0.6	0.3	0.5073	£4,668.75
Low level earth bunds	10.0	100	Metres	£63	176	15	0	176	£0.00
Banked hedges	10.0	1000	Metres	£21	5166	3150.6	2253	2913	£47,782.37
Floodplain reconnection	10.0	100	Metres	£79	1185	0	0	1185	£0.00
Peat restoration	15.0	1	Ha	£4,792	4.46	1.29	0	4.46	£0.00
Intensive Grass (silage) to Rough Pasture	1.0	1	Ha	£208	3	0	3	0	£624.99
Permanenant Pasture to Rough Pasture	1.0	1	Ha	£0	0	0.62	0	0	£0.00
Riparian buffer strips	7.0	2000	Metres	£8	4926	1075	2229	2697	£17,367.61
								Total	£92,943.67

Sellers at Contract Stage

Table three shows the sellers which are currently at contract stage, there are currently 9 holdings at this stage, with a wide range of interventions to be delivered across them.

Table 3 Table three outlines the sellers which are at contract stage. This includes those which have signed contracts, which are still subject to revision.

	Far Barn	Wyre Farm	Hare Appletree Farm	Low Moorhead Farm	Tills Farm	Yates Farm	Hare Appletree House	Calder Vale	CoT Agreement 2
Options									
Small Leaky dams	127	6	34	34	46	60			
Large Leaky dams			14	21	57	81			
Ponds and scrapes	0.3			0.0185				0.058	
Low level earth bunds				25					
Banked hedges	320			246	351	1274	56		228
Floodplain reconnection	180	30							
Peat restoration									
Intensive Grass (silage) to Rough Pasture	3								
Permanant Pasture to Rough Pasture									
Riparian buffer strips				472		1233		0	

	Fell End Farm	Westfield House	CoT Agreement 3	Catshaw Farm	Eccles Farm	Swainshead Hall	Salisbury House Farm	Wyresdale Park
Options								
Small Leaky dams				8	55		159	78
Large Leaky dams	30						31	60
Ponds and scrapes					0.0441			0.3867
Low level earth bunds					67		84	
Banked hedges		279	96	788	853		538	137
Floodplain reconnection							235	740
Peat restoration								4.46
Arable to Rough Pasture								
Intensive Grass (silage) to Rough Pasture								
Permanant Pasture to Rough Pasture								
Riparian buffer strips	222	327		176		447	1380	

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**19 JANUARY 2024****NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT**

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

A Happy New Year to RFCC members and FCERM partners, 2023 has been a year of positive action and delivery towards building a better future for our coastal communities through greater participation, improved understanding and reducing risk by building resilience and improving infrastructure. This is being led by the Shoreline Management Plan Refresh SMP_R and the launch of the SMP Explorer this month which I hope members will fully embrace. In particular RFCC members support is requested in rolling out the SMP Explorer to coastal risk management authority RMA Councillors. It is proposed that this should be led through individual coastal group members within their own RMAs to allow ownership and choice.

At the [opening address](#) at December's COP 28, King Charles III warned that *"unless we rapidly restore and repair nature's economy based on harmony and balance, which is our ultimate sustainer, our own economy and survivability will be in peril."*

COP 28's positive outcomes included the setting up of a loss and damage fund for poorer nations and a commitment to transition away from fossil fuels. However overall global emissions continue to rise against the requirement of a 40% decrease if we are to meet the 1.5 degree commitment of the Paris Agreement. At the current emissions level, the [Global Carbon Budget team](#) estimates a 50% chance that global warming will exceed 1.5°C in about seven years.

The [Global Tipping Point report](#) 2023 identifies [10 key messages](#), requiring a wake up call before it is too late, where the consequences of tipping points could escalate to threaten the breakdown of economic, social and political systems. However, the report identifies triggering positive tipping points through concerted and coordinated action, *"which may even be triggered by relatively small groups with targeted action"*. The report also calls for greater understanding to support governance and decision making.

The consequences of "low level" climate change have been experienced during 2023, with extreme storms and temperatures. Coastal management has been at the forefront of the UK's national news with erosion, landslips and council's left with difficult economic and social decisions. These outcomes of negative tipping points through climate change are clearly seen, requiring ingenuity, bringing public, private and NGO partners together to drive transformation required for positive action in harmony with nature. The core values of the Our Future Coast Innovation project.

The coastal community is embracing this call to action through helping to deliver the [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#) and improving the understanding of coastal risk through [SMP \(Refresh\) mapping](#), by updating the [National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping \(NCERM\)](#) and playing an active role in developing the [Flooding from Rivers and the Seas](#) mapping. All to be launched in 2024, a real positive year of action awaits us.

National Coastal News

July 2023

Aerial footage captured by a drone has revealed the extent of a massive landslip on Dorset's Jurassic Coast. The collapse happened overnight on 20 July at Seatown Beach, near West Bay, along the same section of coastline as another landslip in 2021.



October 2023

Ongoing flooding in a Cornish coastal town after the early high tide.



November 2023

Storms in November 2023 battered the cliff face again and saw a 100 metre section of road fall onto the beach below, leaving homes and several vehicles stranded. Great Yarmouth Borough Council, with the permission of the owners, has ordered the demolition of five homes after they were found to be structurally unsafe.



December 2023

Huge landslide on Isle of Wight sees around 20 homes evacuated just two weeks before Christmas.



You may be thinking this isn't applicable to the North West – you're right, it is not, but there are lessons we can learn from these experiences from across the country and we collectively can start planning and adapting to these future risks and hazards.

SMP - Refresh: Progress Update

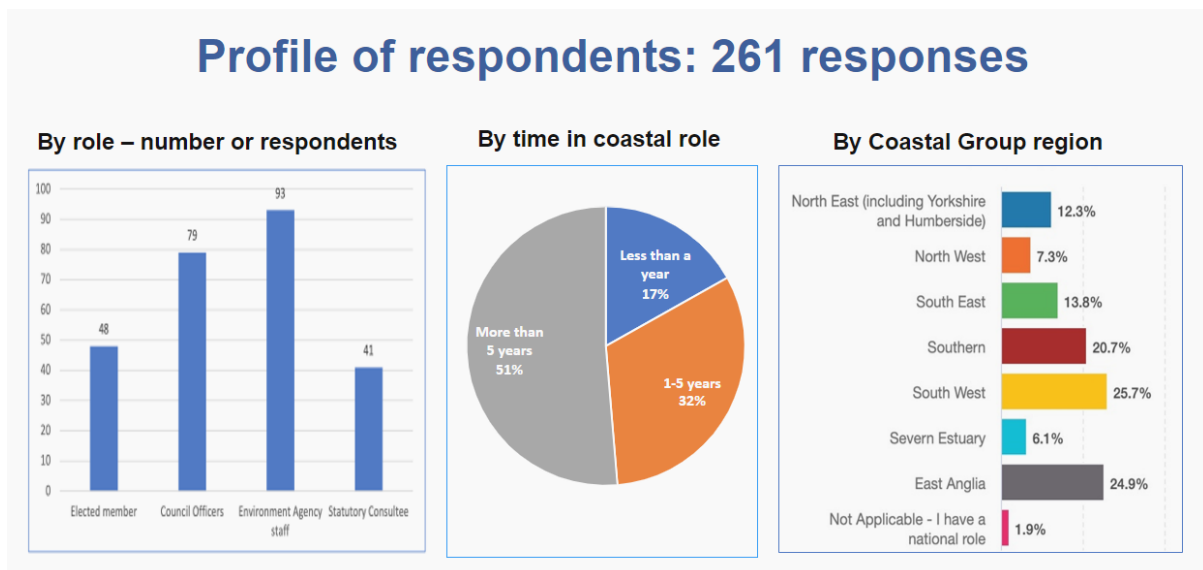
So how are the North West North Wales Coastal Group supporting communities at risk of future coastal flooding and erosion?

We are working together to increase awareness of coastal hazards by improving planners and elected members understanding of coastal risk products and shoreline management plans.

Work Package 7 - improving the interface with the planning system.

We have been assisting the Environment Agency in surveying local planners and elected members working in coastal local authorities to help baseline understanding and use of coastal risk products and Shoreline Management Plans (SMP).

Firstly, a big thanks to those who completed and shared the survey. Nationally we had a total of 261 responses. In the North West we had 13 responses from the Coastal Group including 1 from an elected member.



The Environment Agency's national coastal team will use the results to help inform us plan and prioritise the next phase of the SMP improvement work. It will also help us evaluate the impact of this work the EA and the coastal group have been doing to refresh shoreline management plans and improve their use by coastal decision makers and planners.

The views of elected members are very important to us, and you can help support your coastal communities in understanding how the coast is changing and the action that is being taken to manage the increasing risks from sea flooding and coastal erosion.

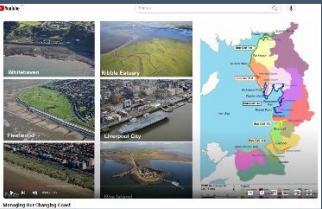
Work Package 8 – updating the Shoreline Management Plan action plans.

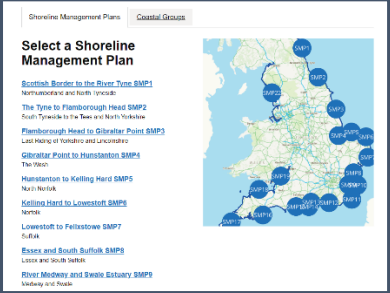

- The Coastal group have been making improvements to the NW SMP by refining the actions in the SMP action plan.
- The yearly update of SMP Action Plan and policy information was submitted in October 2023 and these updates coincided with the improvements and amendments required for the SMP Explorer website launch (work package 10 below).
- Next steps:
 - identify future actions,
 - establish triggers for policy transitions,
 - Prioritise and support SMP policy changes.
 - identify additional future monitoring requirements to support SMP delivery.

Work Package 10 – SMP Explorer Launch!

The Environment Agency and coastal groups have been improving the access to Shoreline Management Plans through the development of a new digital tool called Shoreline Management Plan Explorer (SMP Explorer).

- SMP Explorer will be **launched early in 2024**.
 - Please register your interest for the launch day webinar on 30th January: [Registration form](#)
 - From January it will host SMP policy information.
 - From Summer it will host National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM) Data and the new National Assessment of Flood Risk (NAFRA2).
- This will make all Shoreline Management Plans easier to understand and access.
- This will help pave the way for well-informed discussions about the future of the coast.
- The aim of doing this is to:
 - Help make the SMP management approaches more accessible, consistent, and well understood.
 - To increase use of SMPs and NCERM data across a range of stakeholders including Coastal Managers, elected members, Local Authority Planners, landowners as well as communities at risk.
- SMP Explorer is aimed at coastal managers and planners, but it will also be accessible to members of the public.
 - New resources are now available to support coastal Practitioner and members in getting ready for SMP Explorer going live, and in local conversations you may be having. They include:

	What is it?	Who is it for?	Where can I find it?
<p>Elected members pack</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>What you can do</p> <p>Shoreline Management Plans should include management approaches that avoid damage to protected sites. Where damage cannot be avoided, there is usually a legal requirement to re-create similar habitat elsewhere. This is to avoid the ongoing deterioration of coastal habitats. Habitat restoration is also an important driver in considering management options and changes to Shoreline Management Plans. Regional Habitat Compensation and Restoration Programmes can help identify where habitat can be created.</p> <p>Adaptation might involve working with nature to protect our coasts. Many of these approaches have been tested and there is evidence of how to fund and develop them. They can provide opportunities for local communities, tourism and the economy, as well as benefiting the natural environment.</p> <p>As an Elected Member you can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote the coast as a great social, economic and environmental resource • make contact with the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Conservation Member to find out how they are promoting and supporting the use of nature-based solutions • promote the use of nature-based solutions on the coast particularly where current SMP Policies are uneconomic • help other departments in your council to understand more about the use of nature-based solutions and to get involved in using them </div>	<p>Three written briefings and a summary presentation to support coastal practitioners in briefing elected members on what SMPs are and the role elected members can have in supporting communities living with a changing coast.</p>	<p>Elected members and local authority officers</p>	<p>Elected members pack</p>
<p>SMP Explorer user guide video</p>	<p>Video explaining how to use SMP Explorer</p>	<p>Coastal group members including Environment Agency and local authority coastal managers, practitioners, planners and RFCC chairs and coastal members.</p>	<p>SMP Explorer user guide.mp4 (sharepoint.com)</p>
<p>'Managing our changing coast' presentation</p> 	<p>Explains the role of Shoreline Management Plans in managing flood and erosion risk in England. It gives a summary of work to date, what we're doing now and what we're doing next.</p>	<p>Can be used by EA, local authorities, and coastal group members to</p>	<p>Managing Our Changing Coast - YouTube</p>

<p>SMP Explorer Go Live webinar!</p> <p>Registration Form</p> 	<p>The webinar will introduce the functionality of SMP Explorer so they can advocate its use to local planners and elected members</p>	<p>Targeted at coastal group members including Environment Agency and local authority coastal managers, practitioners, planners and Regional Flood and Coastal Committee chairs and coastal members</p>	<p>Registration form SMP Area: SMP 22 Great Ormes Head to Scotland</p>  <p>SCAN ME</p>
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NCERM2 risk mapping.

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

The new erosion risk mapping (NCERM2) will provide a comprehensive update of national erosion projections, to be launched in Summer 2024.

NCERM2 will:

- provide the most up to date national picture of coastal erosion risk for England.
- include climate change impacts on coastal erosion.
- provide a new visual dataset to be used by coastal practitioners, planners, and decision makers.
- be accessible to the public and help them understand coastal erosion risk.
- be hosted on Shoreline Management Plan Explorer.

National Assessment of Flood Risk

The Environment Agency will produce a new national assessment of flood risk that will help places better plan and adapt to future risks from flooding from rivers, the **sea** and surface water ([National FCERM Strategy, 2020](#)).

NAFRA2 will:

- provide the most up to date national picture of flood risk for England
- provide the single source of data for all national products
- provide greater accuracy and precision
- include climate change impacts on coastal flooding
- The Publication of the National flood risk assessment 2 (NaFRA2) and erosion (NCERM2) data will be synchronized.

SMP - Refresh:

The coastal group is undergoing a health check. We would like to look at how we can make the Coastal Group better at supporting partners with their coastal management duties. We are exploring how we can better align the goals of the coastal group and regional monitoring programme with the goals set out in the national FCERM strategy, the RFCC business plan, coastal risk management Strategies and actions set out in the SMP.

We have circulated a survey to help gauge the views of the group members and improve how the coastal group can support its members. The purpose of completing the questionnaire is to identify areas in which the Coastal Group needs strengthening. Understanding how the Coastal group is currently performing will be the first step in our improvement journey.

The results from the questionnaire will form the basis of our Coastal Group Action Plan that will outline how we can improve performance and strive to achieve better partnership working.

SMP task group update

The 5 strategic task groups that have been set up under the SMP-Refresh have been successful in bringing together wider partners to challenge the way we are working on the coast. We are looking for some new Task Group leads to help establish relationships and develop the important work carried out on the North West coast.

Protected Sites task group

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

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

Coastal Evidence task group

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

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

Communications & Engagement task group

We would like to explore how we can better use of the NW NW Coastal Group Website to share and disseminate information more widely.

Lead: Vacant – please get in touch if you would like to be involved.

Coastal Infrastructure task group

A detailed database of key infrastructure contacts across the NW area has been produced. A series of consultant supported local projects are running across England. The project in the NW is focusing on engaging with Infrastructure Providers, regulated Industries, and larger landowners. A workshop was undertaken on 1 December and we are looking at running another workshop in the new year with the intention to invite colleagues from infrastructure organisations across the North West.

Lead: Vacant – please get in touch if you would like to be involved.

Our Future Coast

It's been a busy year for the Our Future Coast innovation project and we are already accelerating into 2024 with some positive stories to tell of how we are working with Our Communities and Nature to build resilience and meet future challenges.

Engaging Our Communities

During 2023 we've opened meaningful conversations with a range of stakeholders across the 14 sites, bringing together communities, and coastal practitioners to find solutions to complex coastal challenges across the North West. The journey so far has been extremely rewarding and we've learned so much to help bring the solutions forward. Collaboration, understanding and building trust are certainly key to tackling problems which have been on the 'difficult' pile for too long.

Through our partnership of Coastal Local Authorities, Government Organisations, NGOs and private companies we have engaged with over 1500 people at task groups, design committees, engagement events, presentations, community drop ins & citizen science events in 2023.

Monitoring and Research

We have worked with Marlan Radar Deployments across 5 sites, collecting geomorphological data including elevation, currents, waves and sediment movement to inform how the coast is evolving. The Radars have also captured a significant amount of useful data which we are working with universities across the region to interpret and share with coastal colleagues and communities.

Sharing Good Practice

The OFC team have presented to national and international audiences including the Coastal Practitioners conference, Flood and Coast, FCRIP F2F, Saltmarsh Specialist Forum and the UK Coastal Research Conference. We are looking forward to further opportunities to raise issues and pass on learning at several conferences during 2024.

Working in Partnership

Following the Grange Conference in March, we held a partnership workshop in November, which updated partners on key topics including: Alternative Finance Mechanisms, Future Funding opportunities, North West Coastline Historical Changes Project, an update from the site leads and Working with Data. The workshop culminated in round table discussions looking at: Research and Monitoring Needs, Challenges and Support Needs and Opportunities and Learning

Key Updates

- Project Manager Recruitment – Interviews held, and position offered. We look forward to welcoming the new project manager in the New Year!
- October's Board Meeting – Accelerated spend approved and project manager recruitment process decided.

Training in 2024

- We are working with Natural England to arrange a day's training to better understand the Habitat Regulation Assessments and consenting process.
- We're holding a Lunch & Learn session to dive into the concept of co-design. We'll be hearing about Hest Bank and learning how co-design can be incorporated into other sites.

Our Future Coast team:

- Susannah Bleakley, Comms and Engagement Lead, Susannah@SBleakley.com
- Joseph Earl, Engagement Officer North hosted by Morecambe Bay Partnership, Joseph@morecambebay.org.uk
- Nicola Parkinson, Engagement Officer South, hosted by Lancs. Wildlife Trust nparkinson@lancswt.org.uk

Coastal Issues

Joint EA/Defra R&D: Future research of interest includes:

- Joint probability guidance review,
- Bimodal waves,
- Communicating climate change information,
- Mental health costs of coastal change,
- Enhancing the use of digital technologies in FCERM applications, and
- Building understanding of natural coastal protection by gravel barriers in a changing climate. Further details on application.

Environment Agency's Flood and Coast Excellence Awards 2024 are now open, with a closing date of 31 January 24. To submit an entry please use the [online platform](#).

Carl Green - Chair North West and North Wales Coastal Group

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

January 2024 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 United Utilities Water (Uuw) Flood Risk Partnership Manager (FRPM) has agreed with the Chair to produce a quarterly report to better inform the Committee of any United Utilities Water 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, if you have any queries, please contact the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) team at DWMP@uuplc.co.uk.

2. Flooding Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 28 September 2023 and 17 December 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	7	0	0
Merseyside	2	3	0	0
GMCA	0	7	0	0
Lancashire	14	49	0	0
Cumbria	2	18	0	1

3. United Utilities Water Business Plan for 2025–2030

Early October saw the publication of our business plan for 2025–30 which sets out our ambition to build a stronger, greener and healthier North West for everyone. We've built a plan for the next five years which has been shaped by, and adapted to meet, the diverse needs of the North West.

We've been listening to customers and communities right across our region to understand what really matters. What's clear is that we need to improve services for customers and the environment. That's why we're proposing the largest investment in water and wastewater infrastructure in over 100 years.

We have also produced five county summaries, one for each area of the North West, detailing the local challenges and opportunities, the proposed investment programme, and the benefits it delivers. This approach means we can identify the right solutions and develop tailored outcomes which deliver for local people and the needs of the environment.

We anticipate feedback on the proposed plan in April 2024, with Final Determination in December 2024.

You can find out more about our business plan on the corporate website (<https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/our-business-plan-submissions/our-business-plan-submissions-for-2025-2030/>).

4. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

Between November 2023 and February 2024, we are working alongside other water companies and the regulators (Consumer Council for Water (CCW), Environment Agency, Defra and Ofwat) to inform what the next iteration of the DWMP (cycle 2) may look like over the course of six workshops. The timetable of the workshops is shown below:

Workshop Title	Date
✓ Aim of the DWMP	09/11
✓ Planning objectives	21/11
✓ Stakeholder engagement	05/12
RBCS & BRAVA	09/01
Options development and programme appraisal	23/01
Adaptive pathways and next steps	01/02

The workshops are typically broken down into two sessions; reflections on cycle 1, and what can be improved for cycle 2.

As part of the stakeholder engagement workshop, we invited stakeholders to take part in an online survey between 1 November and 24 November 2023. The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding about which parts of the DWMP were deemed useful, which areas organisations have benefitted from, and how the DWMP can be improved for the next and future iterations, to ensure that we are maximising the benefits from the plan and how it interacts with other related plans in the region. We received 11 responses in total and an overview of the feedback is shown on page 3.

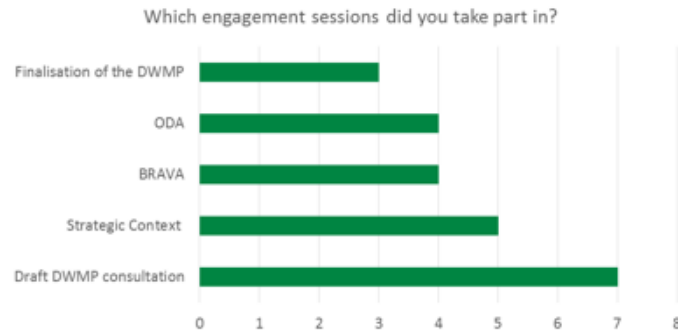
On 7 December, Mike Clough, United Utilities' DWMP manager presented at this year's CIWEM Urban Drainage Group (UDG) Conference in Birmingham. This was a joint presentation with Severn Trent Water, highlighting the challenges of cycle one plus opportunities for the future cycles of the DWMP. Ofwat and the Environment Agency also presented on the day sharing their reflections of the first iteration of the DWMP, and emerging thoughts on what it could become moving forwards.

DWMP Cycle 2 Stakeholder Survey Results

Total number of participants: 11



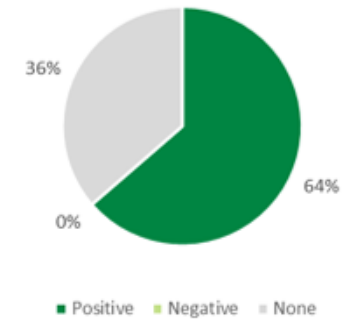
64% of participants have taken part in at least one engagement session



91% of participants have read at least one DWMP document



64% of participants think that the DWMP has had a positive effect on partnership working



Level 2 Plans: "Overall the documents set your stall out for investment and works which is good, but there are gaps in some places."

"More iterative feedback process. Greater focus on outcome delivery."

"The Strategic context was useful to understand what the drivers for change are and how they may align with work that we are undertaking."

"There was for me too much jargon in the document - it all looks impressive but I think all water companies have not been focused fully on what the public expect water companies to deliver."

"It was useful to get a better understanding of UU's operating environment - i.e. the constraints and competing factors that have to be considered in order to come up with a balanced programme."

Appetite in Cycle 2 for bespoke engagement with nature conservation NGOS e.g. Wildlife Trust and RSPB, and Manchester City Council

"Perhaps remove even more of the technical information and have this available separately rather than in the main documents."

"Streamline as there is a bit as there's a fair bit of repetition in some documents."

"The workshops were useful, better opportunity to integrate and discuss with stakeholders."

5. Place-based Planning

Place-based Planning (PBP) 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. PBP 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. United Utilities Water 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 PBP activities can be found - <https://collab-uu.co.uk/place-based-planning/>.

5.1 Upper Mersey catchment update

The sub-catchment groups have continued to meet, though the frequency of each has varied, partly due to the capacity and availability of stakeholders. Where a group is active, there is an associated action tracker and objectives, that can be shared on request.

In summary:

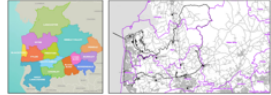

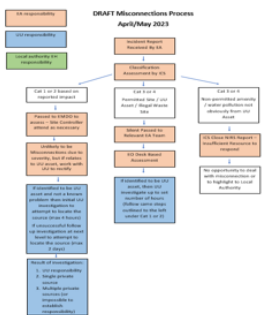
- **River Tame** – The PBP group has not met since the conclusion of the pilot, however the operational group (chaired by Mersey Rivers Trust) has met bi-monthly to progress local actions. There is an overlap of stakeholders on the PBP and operational group, so next steps is to streamline group attendance and finalise River Tame objectives;
- **River Dean/ Bolin** – The PBP group has been convened regularly by the National Trust through their Cheshire Landscapes project, which has been supported by Binnies;
- **Micker Brook** – The PBP group is convened by United Utilities Water and has met monthly to progress actions that will support the delivery of the three 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 the Mersey Rivers Trust);
- **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; and
- **Sinderland Brook** – This PBP group has been delayed in part from awaiting the development of the Sinderland Strategy which the Environment Agency were looking to progress. The next step is to explore whether Sinderland Brook is subsumed into the developing South Manchester Urban Brooks (SMUB) group (as the geographies overlap). The SMUB group were hosted by the Integrated Water Management Plan (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).

5.2 Wyre catchment update

The **Fylde Hub**, as part of the Natural Course programme, draws to a close in March 2024 with the final phase of the project focussing on lessons learnt and next steps. Partners including United Utilities Water, Natural England, Environment Agency, Wyre Rivers Trust and Ribble Rivers Trust held a session in December 2023 to analyse the effectiveness of the hub.

A final report will be available in due course, but it was collectively agreed that the four work streams selected, following a gap analysis, were the right areas of focus. If time and resources allowed, then it was felt further topics would have been added to the project including Invasive Non-Native Species.

Workstreams summary

<h3>Nature Based Solutions</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a Place Based Plan for Marton Mere Nature Reserve and surrounding area. Engagement with local authorities.  <p><small>April 2023: Review of the current status of the Wyre catchment and the challenges being met:</small></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Quality: Risk of pollution from roads, residential, agricultural and discharge from both north and south is an all-increasing on the water quality of the catchment. This can be improved on water quality and water quality. Water Quantity: This area is predominantly flat. The flat topography alongside the increase in urbanisation and non-permeable surfaces means a number of communities are at risk of flooding resulting which is also being exacerbated by climate change. Sources of flooding include coastal, flood and surface water. In addition to damaging homes and businesses, floods disrupt road networks and increase the amount of pollution entering a watercourse. Wetland Degradation and Physical Modification: Development and agriculture has led to a loss of habitat for native wildlife species. Many watercourses have been physically modified, channels have been deepened and narrowed. These changes have led to a reduction in the amount of water being held in the catchment, resulting in lower biodiversity and water can often present for longer. A continued increase in development across the area is reducing the presence of habitat for native wildlife species and increasing the presence of non-permeable surfaces. Social Disruption: This area has a history of significant social deprivation. In the 2020 Index of Multiple Deprivation, national water catchment was ranked the most deprived lower local authority in England on the basis of average sixth income, plus seven other measures, including income, health, local concentration and the percentage of people on a... 	<h3>Farmer Engagement</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farmer/Agriculture sub working group formed consisting of EA, UU, Wyre and Ribble Rivers Trusts and CSF from NE. Centred on soil health and diffuse pollution from agriculture. Hosted two farm cluster sessions on Slurry Grants and Farm Inspections in Nov 23 
<h3>Misconnections</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workshop held to map the misconnections process across involved organisations 	<h3>Data & Monitoring</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £200K secured from EA to carry out monitoring on the Wyre Estuary (By Wyre and Ribble Rivers Trusts). Representation on the Turning Tides Steering Group and fed into discussion on next steps for the partnership.
<h3>Early Learnings</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent facilitation alongside clear work stream/action owners can allow for maximum participation and momentum to be gained. Be realistic with ambitions considering time and resources Define the purpose early Local authority engagement – consider carefully how and when to engage with local authorities 	<h3>Next Steps</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of lessons learnt and achievements of the Hub Natural Course Final Reporting The Hub has influenced the development of UU's Place Based Planning Approach which is continuing across all 5 counties of the North West. How do the hubs fit with this?

5.3 Eden catchment update

The Eden Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) project is progressing at pace with a number of work streams focussing on the following:

- Demand and Supply side trade event to be held in February;
- Draft Business plan to be reviewed at next board meeting in February;
- Stakeholder engagement plan agreed with new stakeholders identified;
- Draft trade dissemination handbook to be reviewed in January; and
- Alignment with the Cumbria Water Governance role – see below.

Progress continues with Shap Flood Alleviation Scheme with the remaining United Utilities Water network CCTV surveys being finalising to determine infiltration points in the network. The results will feed into the modelling to inform the final design and determine delivery timescales.

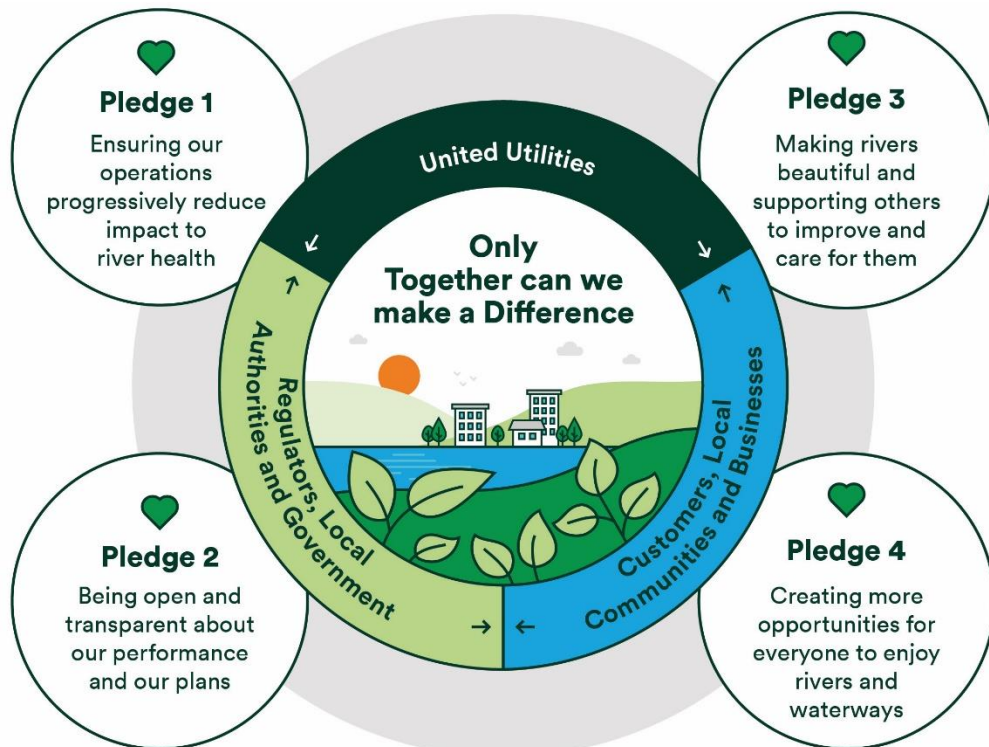
5.4 Cumbria Water Governance

Positive discussions continue following the identification of a potential additional funding partner. It is hoped that a decision will be made early in 2024.

6. Better Rivers Project

We are investing significantly to reduce the impact that wastewater has on the natural environment and our long-term ambition is to eliminate pollution incidents. We want to demonstrate how we are addressing concerns regarding storm overflows and making our contribution to improving river health.

Our Better Rivers initiative was established in March 2022 with a four-point plan setting out our commitments to improving river health as shown below:



We are determined to build a coalition of the willing to improve the region’s river water quality and catalyse action from many parties. At the heart of this will be addressing surface water management at scale and securing continued investment in effective end-to-end wastewater management is necessary to improve river water quality. This programme sets out our ambitions for the next three years and beyond.

A key element to improving storm overflow performance is to understand when they operate. By the end of 2023, 100% of storm overflows are monitored by event duration monitoring (EDM).

Additionally, we are currently developing a near real time spill reporting portal, and we are working collaboratively with Yorkshire and Northumbrian Water to have consistency across our portals. The portal is expected to go live in due course.

More information can be found on our corporate website

(<https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/responsibility/environment/reducing-pollution/storm-overflows/our-commitments-to-river-health/>).

7. Green Recovery Funding

We continue to focus our efforts in delivering the sustainable drainage system (SuDS) schemes via external collaborative partnership approaches and identifying the most efficient route to identifying opportunities internally for further SuDS, natural flood management (NFM) and hybrid schemes. The project has now investigated in excess of 80 applications from both internal and external sources. The scheme deadline will remain open, and we are still receiving potential external and internal schemes to review for the green recovery benefits criteria.

Eleven schemes have been awarded funding with a further two schemes pending approval January 2024. The schemes in flight will have an average United Utilities Water contribution of 38% and provide a partnership contribution rate in excess of £22 million offering an average 26% water volume difference in the areas the SuDS have been installed. In addition, the schemes are expected to achieve a £43.3 million natural capital benefit for the North West.

The schemes under delivery currently include major public realm improvements in Oldham Town Centre which include raingardens, tree pits, permeable pocket parks and recreational parks with cycle ways to connect the access round the town centre. Work is being undertaken through the council framework providers, with hard landscaping already in place and planting season pending.

West Street, £441k



Working in collaboration with external third parties continues, with an additional two schemes close to being agreed as part of the funding criteria for Green Recovery.

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. We currently have one scheme in outline design which has potential to be implemented. This scheme will enable us to learn the process for retrofitting raingardens and pocket parks in the public highways to improve the surface water run off issues in the area. Although there is still some distance to go before we can obtain agreement for a detailed design and delivery plan, we are hopeful this scheme will move forwards to the next stage.

8. Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP)

The IWMP team are now well into the implementation phase (September 2023–March 2024), which is deploying the people and processes developed over the last 12 months, against the seven workstreams below. 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.

Two of the workstreams have gained significant momentum over the past months; the Living Integrated Opportunities Programme (LIOP) and the Digital Platform.



The LIOP aims to join opportunities up that align spatially, driving investments and solutions that deliver better value compared to traditional solutions, leveraging funding from other sources where there is an alignment in objectives and by challenging delivery to be more efficient. We are currently progressing 5 clusters jointly with wider stakeholders such as local councils and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), with an aim to identify opportunity to add more value.

The clusters are in Wigan, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside and the outcome of whether further value can be delivered by integrating will be known by end of March 2024.

The Digital Platform workstream is focussed around creating an online environment that facilitates integrated planning between partner organisations, by supporting collaboration and visualisation of their capital investments and allow joint opportunities to be identified, monitored, evaluated and transparent to wider stakeholders. The data we bring together and analyse within the digital platform will enable opportunities from partners, and in the future other stakeholders (including communities), to be understood and visible. The tools will be developed with transferability in mind to other areas of the region and country to enable other organisations to benefit. The digital tools will also consider longevity and sustainability.

To support the creation of the digital platform, United Utilities Water are in the process of submitting an Ofwat Innovation Fund bid. This funding process is a £200 million innovation fund to grow the water sector's capacity to innovate, enabling it to better meet the evolving needs of customers, society and the environment. The fund is designed to complement Ofwat's existing approach to innovation and to help deliver against Ofwat's strategy which highlights the role of innovation in meeting many of the challenges the sector faces. The timelines for the Innovation Fund are shown below.

Ofwat Innovation Fund timeline

- 15 December 2023 – 3-minute pitch submission;
- 3 January 2024 – Bid submission;
- April 2024 – Winners announced;
- June 2024 – Funding released.

9. RFCC Action 9 Update

This action was completed 31 October 2023 and the outputs are scheduled to be shared with the NW RFCC on 20 January at the next meeting.

Since the knowledge share materials were created, they have been shared with:

- Liverpool City Region CA and stakeholders;
- Institute of Water Northern event and [magazine](#) (page 22); and
- CIWEM Urban Drainage conference.

Further dissemination has been considered, and thoughts on the below are welcomed to ensure the materials are visible and used by others.

- Outputs shared directly with RFCC members post 20 January via RFCC sharepoint;
- Presented at a NW Coordinator meeting;
- Shared with colleagues wider in partner organisations; and
- Uploaded on to the Flood Hub for wider access.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING

19 JANUARY 2024

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Customer service line **03708 506 506**
Incident hotline **0800 80 70 60**

Floodline

0345 988 1188

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1. Flooding update and our flood services

Flood events

Storms Babet and Ciarán

- During October and November, storms Babet and Ciarán brought flooding to many parts of the country. We estimate that sadly 2,300 properties flooded, while 139,000 properties were better protected by flood and coastal risk management schemes.
- Storm Babet brought significant flood impacts in Scotland, and subsequently much of the Midlands, East Anglia, south Pennines, Northumberland received over the whole-month average rainfall. Subsequently Storm Babet led to major Incidents being declared in South Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire Nottinghamshire. The Emergency Operations Centre & National Flood Response Centre were active.
- Storm Ciarán was a severe Atlantic autumn storm, which brought typical strong winds along the South Coast and English Channel, and further significant heavy rainfall. Major Incidents were declared in Hampshire, Avon and Somerset and Dorset. Emergency Operations Centre activated. At West Bay in Dorset, a section of cliff collapsed into the sea. In Surrey, storm Ciarán caused a power outage and tide locking that impacted water treatment plants.
- We have been inspecting assets that may have been impacted by the recent storms. Over 2,200 inspections have been undertaken by Environment Agency inspectors and supply chain partners to date. If the performance of an asset is reduced, then action will be taken to ensure that flood risk continues to be effectively managed until the asset meets the required condition.
- On 25 October 2023, the government [announced support](#) to communities impacted by flooding, to help them recover from the impact of Storm Babet.
- The extensive flooding across England led to more than 750 warnings and alerts being issued, including 5 severe warnings where there was the highest risk.
- During storm Babet our Flood Warning Service and the Floodline recorded their busiest day ever. More than 5,500 new users registered for warnings and almost 400,000 messages were sent in a single day. In total it delivered almost 800,000 messages in total. Floodline received over 1800 agent-calls on one day.
- Our Targeted Flood Warning Service provides flood warnings to organisations with interests in high numbers of locations. Organisations range from Emergency Services, local authorities and utility companies to housing associations and commercial companies. The service currently holds details of over 100,000 locations. During Storm Babet over 15,500 email warnings were issued to organisations.
- The [Check for Flooding service](#) on GOV.UK allows web users to check their live flood risk at their chosen location. The service logged over 2 million visitors and received over 1.2 million click-throughs from Google.
- Our Rolling Brief Flood Map was also successfully trialled during Storm Babet. This automatically displays the properties protected and flooded data, provided live from the Area Incident Rooms, into the Incident Management Toolbox, but is dependent on the Areas providing the most up to date information.
- The next warning service will be in development next year and will build on the great warning service we proudly offer now. We're also creating new tools to help our staff to respond better to these incidents.

Storms Babet and Ciarán and informing our stakeholders and partners

- Throughout both storms we kept our stakeholders (for example NFU, ADA, National Flood Forum, water companies, RFCCs) informed of the situation both at an area and national level. Our area teams were on the ground informing and supporting local communities and partners. Nationally, as well as being part of the wider government led incident team, we kept our stakeholders and partners fully informed.
- We briefed our national stakeholders with updates on the latest situation (flood warnings, areas impacted, properties flooded/ protected), our response and the flood outlook.
- On 24 October 2023 Alan Lovell and Chief Executive Philip Duffy hosted a parliamentary reception, updating Members of Parliament on the response to flooding from Storm Babet, and the Environment Agency's progress against other organisational priorities.
- On 14th November 2023 Julie Foley briefed the 'Floods All Parliamentary Group' at the House of Commons on our response to Storms Babet and Ciaran.
- The event was an opportunity for MPs to engage with the Environment Agency's senior leadership on flooding, water resources, agriculture and waste crime. Minister Pow briefly spoke, recognising the importance of the close working relationship between MPs and the Environment Agency, particularly during incidents.
- On 1 December 2023 Philip Duffy is hosting a roundtable discussion with leading partners on the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy for England. The roundtable will focus on how we collectively embed resilience and adaptation to flooding and coastal change, successes so far and the challenges to overcome to truly realise the Strategy's ambition of "A nation ready for and resilient to flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100.
- Julie Foley has also been interviewed by Countryfile for a piece they are doing on the impacts of the flood events on farmers in December.

Flood services

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

- Our annual national flood awareness week - Flood Action Week – took place w/c 20 November 2023. Through media and social media, we encouraged the public to prepare by checking their flood risk and sign up to flood warnings and highlighted the impact from the recent storms.
- We also encouraged the public to look at their longer-term resilience through property flood protection measures. This builds on our joint property flood resilience (PFR) consumer awareness campaign ("[Be Flood Smart](#)") with Flood Re, launched in May 2023.
- 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](#).
- In January 2024 the second year of hyperlocal flood action campaign pilots will launch in Sheffield and Weston-Super-Mare.



GOV.UK - Flood Content Improvement Project

- Our [GOV.UK pages](#) which provide invaluable advice to those at risk from flooding have been overhauled. The content has been restructured and rewritten to make it easier to find, accessible and meaningful. The content now includes:
 - An easy to follow, accessible format flood plan.
 - Simpler, more logical information on how people can prepare for, respond to, and recover from flooding.
 - New links to community resilience partners such as the British Red Cross.
 - Clearer links to key services, such as check for flooding and check your long-term flood risk.
- Only 64% of those at flood risk know what actions to take to protect their homes from flooding and only 22% moved possessions after receiving a warning. We want more people to be prepared for flooding, stay safe during a flood and recover quickly after a flood has happened.
- During the [Improving Access to Flood Digital Services](#) project discovery, many issues with our current flood content were identified, including: Content dispersed and duplicated across flood services and gov.uk guidance; differences in language used to talk about flooding across services and gaps in understanding between us and our audience; an inconsistent approach to reviewing content over time.

Contact: natalie.smithson@defra.gov.uk or emma.thomson@environment-agency.gov.uk

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. By April 2024 we forecast that we will have delivered protection for around 90,000 properties.
- We have also delivered many wider benefits, including 12 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 are forecasting that we are likely to deliver in the range of 200,000 properties better protected by 2027.
- This year HM Treasury agreed that we could switch £25m from capital to resource funding to invest in asset management. This will include direct asset maintenance across the country to support improving asset condition.
- In September 2023 the Secretary of State [announced](#) a £25m new programme to mainstream nature-based solutions to flood resilience working in partnership with farmers,

landowners, environmental groups and local authorities. This is from the £5.2 billion 6-year Flood and Coastal Defence Investment Programme. The Environment Agency will lead the set up and delivery of this fund. The fund closed for applicants on 10 November 2023 and over 200 applications were received.

- The capital programme annual refresh process continues to progress. The Regional Flood & Coastal Committees undertook their local choices during Autumn. This ensures that local priorities are considered. In addition, we have taken an additional deliverability assessment with our local teams, Risks Management Authorities and supply chain. This will help increase deliverability confidence for the remainder of the programme.

3. Delivering the FCERM strategy and roadmap

- Together with our partners, we are continuing to make good progress against the commitments outlined in the [FCERM Strategy Roadmap](#). The Roadmap successes at the end of Q2 for 2023/24 are:

Ambition 1:

- The 25 project teams from the [resilience programme](#) have completed reports to address Defra's flood and coastal risk policy challenge areas (on sustainable growth, sustainable drainage and sustainable land use).
- The Second edition of Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes (FCIP) [Horizons eMagazine](#) was published in November 2023. This edition shares insights into our innovative approaches to flood and coastal resilience.
- With Defra, we announced a new [£25 million programme](#) to mainstream nature-based solutions to increase flood resilience. The expressions of interest process is now closed.
- As part of the [£200 million flood and coastal innovation programme](#), we expanded the [Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme](#) to include additional, smaller projects in Bude, Cornwall; Charmouth, Dorset and; Swanage, Dorset.
- The Environment Agency and coastal authorities are working together through Coastal Groups to better understand the awareness and use of coastal flood and erosion risk products and Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) in England. We ran a survey in October, for 3 weeks, which will help us to inform the communication and engagement for the launch of SMP-Explorer in the new year.

Ambition 2:

- We worked with the PFR Roundtable and CIWEM and used behavioural insights findings on PFR to enhance and signpost online content. This ensures home and business owners receive the information they need to make decisions on making their properties more resilient.
- We [published](#) a streamlined approach to developing and funding business cases for Property Flood Resilience (PFR) projects. This will enable more PFR projects to be completed, improving the resilience of hundreds more properties to flooding. Guidance notes and templates are hosted on the new [PFR Sharepoint site](#).
- With Flood Re we continue to promote greater consumer awareness of the benefits of PFR measures through the [Be Flood Smart](#) campaign. We are developing a new PFR supplier framework for the end of 2023.

Ambition 3:

- We developed and rolled out a new, broad based Graduate Training Scheme, to complement existing Graduate schemes in civil, mechanical and electrical engineering. The first intake of 40 graduates on the scheme was achieved in September 2023.
- Between the 20-26 November, we ran our annual [Flood Action Week](#), which aims to increase awareness of the risk of flooding and what to do to prepare. With many parts of the country being affected by flooding in recent weeks, it has never been so important for people to understand the risks it can pose to their home or their life. Over 100 partners supported the campaign last year.

Contact: FCERMstrategy@environment-agency.gov.uk

Strategy updates

Shoreline Management Plan Explorer

- In January 2024, a new digital tool called Shoreline Management Plan Explorer (SMP Explorer) will be launched. This will make Shoreline Management Plans easier to access and understand. This has been a collaboration through Coastal Groups.
- SMP Explorer is aimed at coastal managers and planners, but will also be accessible to members of the public. We have been working with coastal groups to develop communications products to support the launch of SMP Explorer.
- In late January 2024 we will be holding a “Go-Live” webinar which will be targeted at coastal group members including Environment Agency and local authority coastal managers, practitioners, planners and Regional Flood and Coastal Committee chairs and coastal members.
- We are updating the National Coastal Erosion Risk Map which will be published on SMP Explorer in summer 2024.

Contact: Eleanor.blundell@environment-agency.gov.uk

The National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping

- The National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping is being updated in collaboration with coastal local authorities and Coastal Groups.
- We have used evidence from historic mapping, the National Coastal Monitoring programme, national and local authority data to provide the most up to date national picture of coastal erosion risk for England.
- The new erosion predictions will be easier to understand, simple to view and will include climate change predictions for the first time. To do this we will:
 - Publish polygons showing the areas at risk of erosion by the years 2055 and 2105. These dates are taken from the Shoreline Management Plans which provide a long-term management approach for the coast.
 - Show the increased risk of erosion from rising sea levels and increasing pressure on coastal defences in the climate change scenarios.
 - Erosion data will be published on the new SMP Explorer online tool in Summer 2024.

Contact: nick.hardiman@environment-agency.gov.uk or ben.meredith@environment-agency.gov.uk

Biodiversity net gain

- From January 2024 under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990), government's new requirement for developers to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) will apply to FCRM schemes requiring planning permission.
- Prior to this, on 29 November 2023 Defra published [guidance and draft regulations](#) to help developers, land managers and planning authorities prepare for the implementation of BNG. On 30 November 2023, the government laid the first of the [BNG regulations](#) to be considered and approved by parliament.
- From 19 December 2023, the Environment Agency's new guidance, aimed at colleagues delivering FCRM projects, is available to Environment Agency project teams, risk management authorities and framework suppliers on a newly created BNG area at [Biodiversity Net Gain BNG in FCRM Projects](#), on the [Supporting Flood and Coast Projects - Home Page \(sharepoint.com\)](#) site.
- You can keep up to date with the latest BNG news on this [Defra blog](#) and [Natural England blog](#).

Flood Resilient Communities: WWT's Expanding Role

- On 23 October 2023, the WWT [published a blog](#) on their role and actions in the [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management \(FCERM\) Strategy Roadmap](#). It explains the WWT's important role within the Roadmap, working alongside the Wildlife & Countryside Link. Their 3 areas of work within the Roadmap are to:
 - Investigate the links between natural flood management (NFM) and climate change resilience.
 - Report on the links between community engagement and levels of NFM scheme success.
 - Look at how NFM drives other benefits of wetland creation such as those for biodiversity.

4. Working with FCERM stakeholders: September – December 2023

National infrastructure assessment published

- The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) published their [second National Infrastructure Assessment](#) on asset management and climate resilience on 18 October 2023. Caroline Douglass attended launch event.
- We responded to a questionnaire on the publication, which focussed on the chapter on "Improving resilience and the environment".
- The NIC wanted to understand what infrastructure asset operators know about the costs of maintaining their existing assets despite climate change related risks by 2050.
- The NIC assessment makes a number of recommendations to the government at national level on what it needs to do to prepare the UK's infrastructure for future climate change.
- As part of this, the NIC restates its calls for increased investment in infrastructure to reduce the risk of coastal, river and surface water flooding.

National Audit Office study of resilience to flood risk published

- The National Audit Office (NAO) report on value for money in FCRM was published on 15 November 2023.
- The report's findings carry some positive recognition as well as criticism of Environment Agency progress against the capital programme and maintenance of our flood assets, in a way that optimises value for money and weakness in the quality of our data.

- The report also highlights the need for long term milestones beyond 2026 to meet the ambition of becoming a more resilient nation and the current gap in partnership funding contributions.
- A communications handling plan was prepared, including messaging, which we shared with our Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Chairs. We took a reactive approach to the report publication.

Public Accounts Committee – flood defences

- On 27 November 2023 Environment Agency Chief Executive Philip Duffy gave evidence to the [Public Accounts Committee](#) on the subject of flood defences.
- Philip recognised the impact flooding can have on communities and what must be done to protect them, including the importance of getting people at risk signed up to flood alerts. He also laid out the Environment Agency's role in delivering the government's £5.2 billion flood defence programme, generating even better flooding data, and working with local authorities to create more resilient places.
- Philip spoke alongside Tamara Finkelstein, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), David Hill, Director General for Environment at Defra, and Caroline Douglass, Executive Director for Flooding and Coastal Risk Management at the Environment Agency.
- You can watch the meeting here: [Parliamentlive.tv - Public Accounts Committee](#)

Environment Agency's Flood and Coast Excellence Awards 2024 now open!

- The prestigious Flood and Coast Excellence Awards launched in early December 2023. They provide a fantastic opportunity to promote recent work and innovations happening across the flood and coastal community.
- The awards are open to organisations, contractors and community level initiatives who help to create a thriving and resilient nation both in the UK and internationally. There is also an award to recognise the achievements of early career professionals.
- The 7 categories for 2024 are:
 - Climate Resilient Places
 - Climate Resilient Blue and Green Infrastructure
 - Climate Resilient Built Environment
 - Community Action
 - Digital Excellence
 - Innovation and Resilience
 - Early Career Professional
- To submit an entry please use our [online awards](#) platform.
- The Women in FCERM awards will also be launching their 3 award categories, which will be presented during the ceremony. For more information please visit their [website](#).
- The deadline to submit nominations is on Wednesday 31 January 2024. All the guidance and criteria for each category is available on the website.

Contact: [Natalie Fortune](#), FCRM External Affairs team

5. International: September – December 2023

225th anniversary of Rijkswaterstaat

- At the end of October 2023, Caroline Douglass led the Environment Agency delegation from FCRM and Local Operations teams to an international symposium in the city of Delft in the Netherlands to mark the 225th anniversary of Rijkswaterstaat (part of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management).
- Our partnership with Rijkswaterstaat the cornerstone of our FCRM international engagement having signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with them in 2016. The MoU includes cooperation on: levee and dam safety and coastal flood and erosion risk engineering techniques.
- Caroline provided a keynote speech at the event, sharing reflections on the longstanding partnership and partnership between the two organisations as well as with wider organisations including the US Army Corps of Engineers and other European partner organisations.
- Environment Agency colleagues participated in a number of field visits during the three-day symposium as well as presenting on a broad range of topics including resilient coastal cities, asset management, extreme river events and nature-based solutions.

6. FCERM publications and announcements: September – December 2023

Flood and coastal innovation programmes

- Our second issue of [Horizons eMagazine](#) was published in November. This magazine shares insights into our innovative approaches from our Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Innovation programme (FCIP) including our: Adaptation Pathway Pilots; Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme; Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme.

Environment Agency newsletter

- The [third edition](#) of the Environment Agency Newsletter was published on 30 November 2023. This 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.
- This latest edition has a foreword by Caroline Douglass reflecting on winter preparedness, on the back of our response to storms Babet and Ciaran. You can sign up to the newsletter [here](#). Please share this through your networks and encourage others to subscribe.

Commented [MA1]: Link and new date added

New Innovation Supplement

- The seventh issue of the [Current Innovation Supplement](#) is now available. This issue features a range of projects around the country that are helping to reduce both cost and carbon.
- Together we are implementing an 'open innovation' approach, purposefully sharing, and collaborating on innovation across organisational boundaries. This supplement is a great example of that.
- The next full edition of Current magazine will be released in January 2024. To subscribe, please [click here](#).

Contact: elliott.furniss@defra.gov.uk Communications Manager – FCRM Capital Programme

7. Other publications and announcements: September – December 2023

New national guidance to be produced for flood Investigations - Section 19

- Defra has launched a new project to produce national guidance on post-flood investigations (known as Section 19 investigations), which JBA Consulting is supporting.
- The new guidance will be developed with input from lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) to produce a document that assists them when they are investigating and reporting on all types of flood incidents.
- The guidance may also assist other parties in understanding flood events. The project is being shaped through a technical Steering Group who will ensure that outputs reflect the views and experiences of the risk management authorities (RMAs) and the needs of users of flooding data and other interested parties.
- We would like to advise RFCC chairs that this project has commenced and that we will be reaching out to RMAs and all LLFAs in England, as well as other flood risk stakeholders as part of the project. A survey requesting participation from LLFAs and other RMAs will be shared shortly via the RFCC correspondence email.

Contact: Section19@jbaconsulting.com

8. Flood scheme openings and updates: September – December 2023

Pebble Mill flood risk management scheme – Birmingham

- In October 2023, work began to build a [new £2million flood risk management scheme](#) to better protect homes from flooding in the Pebble Mill area of Birmingham.

Lowdham flood storage reservoir – Nottinghamshire

- Also in October 2023, work began on a [£26 million flood storage reservoir](#) to better protect homes and businesses in the Nottinghamshire village of Lowdham from flooding.

River Tees Tidelands project

- In November 2023, a ground-breaking set of [projects worth £23 million to help the River Tees Estuary](#) adapt to climate change, restore valuable habitat for internationally important wildlife and reconnect the river's tributaries officially launched.
- In total, Tees Tidelands aims to create over 50 hectares of mudflats, saltmarsh and other valuable estuarine habitats, as well as reducing flood risk for homes and businesses, now and into the future.

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](#); Follow on [LinkedIn](#); Follow on [Instagram](#)

FCRM External Affairs team

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December 2023

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

19 JANUARY 2024

RFCC MEETING DATE FOR JANUARY 2025

Recommendation: The North West RFCC is asked to consider and approve the proposed meeting date for January 2025.

1. At our October 2023 meeting we agreed the following dates for 2024 RFCC meetings:

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)
2. The window for our January 2025 meeting has now been provided and the date of Friday 24 January 2025 has been proposed.
3. The Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed meeting date for January 2025.

North West Regional Flood And Coastal Committee

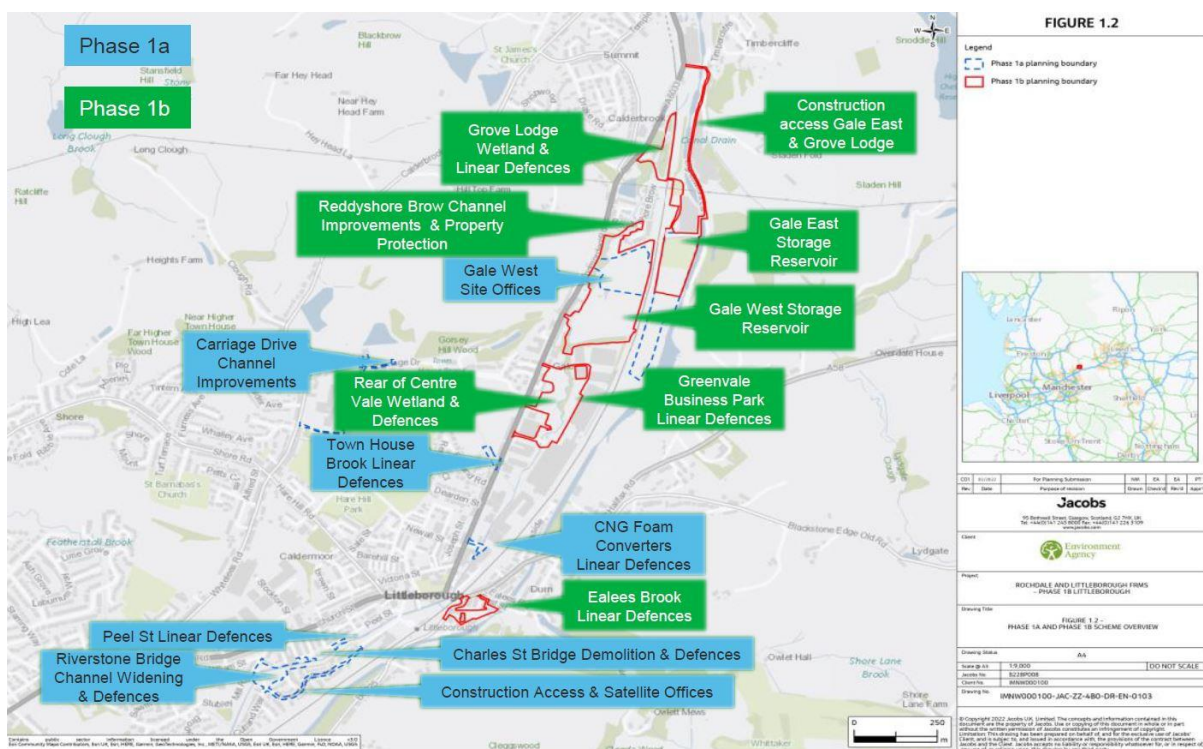
19 January 2024

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 2027), Phase 2 Rochdale (due for completion in 2030).

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



Photo: windy rands!



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 was completed in December 2023, with just seeding of the bare earth to be completed in the Spring. The photos below illustrate the work that has been required as part of this phase and the completed works.

INFORMATION ITEM E



INFORMATION ITEM E



For Phase 1b Littleborough, Planning has been approved and the full business case is in the process of being approved. Construction is planned to start in March 2024 and this phase is estimated for completion by 2027.

INFORMATION ITEM E

Phase 2 Rochdale will be delivered through a separate business case with the scheme's construction estimated to be complete by 2030.

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 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](#)