

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY 26 APRIL 2024, 10:00AM**

**Virtual Meeting via MS Teams**

**AGENDA**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
10:00	1.	<b>Welcome</b> Welcome, Chairman's Introduction, and Apologies for Absence	<b>For information</b>
10:05	2.	<b>Minutes of RFCC meeting 19 January 2024 and matters arising (Papers)</b> To approve the minutes of the last RFCC meeting and to receive an update on any actions and matters arising	<b>For approval</b>
10:10	3.	<b>Recent flooding incidents (Information Item A)</b> To share reports on, and to discuss, winter weather and flood incidents across the North West in the last quarter.	<b>For information</b>
10:20	4.	<b>FCRM Successes 2023/24</b> To receive an overview of NW FCRM Successes for 2023/24 <i>Presented by EA AFRMs' and LA Officers</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
10:40	5.	<b>Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP) – National programme overview</b> To receive an overview of lessons learned and recommendations from the National FCRIP Programme <i>Presented by Tom De La Rosa, EA Senior FCRM Advisor, Adaptation and Resilience</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
11:05	6.	<b>FCRIP – Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience (CiFR) project</b> To receive an overview of the experience and learning gained from the CiFR project to date <i>Presented by Carolyn Otle, RFCC Member for Communities; Dave Kennedy, EA Senior FCRM Advisor (Cumbria and Lancashire Area) and Emma Simons, Westmorland and Furness Council, CiFR Project Lead, Westmorland and Furness Council</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
11:30		<b>BREAK</b>	
11:35	7.	<b>FCRIP – Our Future Coast project</b> To receive an overview of the experience and learning gained from the Our Future Coast project <i>Presented by Susannah Bleakley, RFCC Member for Coastal Issues and Katie Eckford, Sefton Council and SMP Co-ordinator for the North West</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:00	8.	<b>Report from the RFCC Finance &amp; Business Assurance Sub-group (Papers)</b> To discuss and consider the recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group <i>Introduced by Neville Elstone, Chair of the RFCC Finance &amp; Business Assurance Sub-Group, and supported by Adam Walsh, EA Area FCRM Programming Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&amp;L)</i>	<b>For decision</b>
12:25	9.	<b>RFCC Local Levy Strategy (Paper)</b> To approve the refreshed Local Levy Strategy. <i>Presented by Sally Whiting, EA FCRM RFCC Senior Advisor</i>	<b>For decision</b>

12:30	10.	<b>United Utilities Update</b> ( <i>Information Item C</i> ) To receive an update on water industry and UU activities. <i>Presented by Perry Hobbs, EA RFCC Member for the Water Industry</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:45	11.	<b>NAFRA2 Update</b> To receive an update on the delivery of the second National Flood Risk Assessment (NAFRA2). <i>Presented by Chris Scott, EA FCRM Advisor (GMMC)</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:55	12.	<b>Any Other Business</b>	
13:00		<b>CLOSE</b>	

### **INFORMATION PAPERS**

Info item A	Quarterly Flood Incidents Report	NW RFCC specific
Info item B	Update from the North West and North Wales Coastal Group	NW RFCC specific
Info item C	Quarterly Update from United Utilities	NW RFCC specific
Info item D	National FCRM Update Paper	National EA

### **Future RFCC meetings**

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

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

5 July 2024 (Virtual Meeting)  
4 October 2024 (Virtual Meeting)  
10 January 2024 (Virtual Meeting)

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**North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee  
Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 19 January 2024**

**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 Jane Hugo (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)  
Councillor Richard Silvester (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)  
Councillor Philip Cusack (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)  
Councillor Nick Mannion (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)  
David Shaw (EA Appointed Member – Planning and Design)  
Carolyn Otley (EA Appointed Member – Communities)  
Susannah Bleakley (EA Appointed Member – Coastal)  
Kate Morley (EA Appointed Member – Conservation)  
Neville Elstone, (EA Appointed Member – General Business and Assurance)  
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 O'Hare, Manchester Metropolitan University  
Peter Maynard, Rochdale Borough Council  
Dee Grahamslaw, United Utilities  
Katie Eckford, Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator / Coastal Group Secretariat

**Environment Agency Officers Present**

Ian Crewe, Area Director, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC)  
Nick Pearson, Area Flood Risk Manager (GMMC)  
Mia Hanson, Area Flood Risk Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)  
Sally Whiting, Senior FCRM Adviser (GMMC)  
Adam Walsh, FCRM Programming Manager (C&L)  
Crystal Orton, RFCC Project Manager (GMMC)  
Rachel Harmer, RFCC Secretariat (GMMC)  
Andy Tester, FCRM Programming Manager (GMMC)  
Gary Hilton, Senior FCRM Adviser (GMMC)

**Local Authority Officers:**

Nick Rae, Westmorland and Furness Council  
Alison Harker, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

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David Boyer, Warrington Borough Council  
Matt Winnard, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Sarah Parkinson, Rochdale Borough Council

**Visitors:**

Sharma Jencitis, United Utilities (UU)  
Fiona Fairley, UU  
Tracey Garrett, National Flood Forum (NFF)  
Charlotte Danvers, EA National FCRM Advisor  
Geraint Laidlaw-Wilson, Binnies Environmental Consultancy

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

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting and gave everyone a warm welcome. Adrian received agreement from Members for the meeting to be recorded, for minute writing purposes only.

Members were advised apologies had been received from Councillor Tricia Ayrton, who had wanted to welcome the Committee to Rochdale in person, but in light of the recent passing of Tony Lloyd MP, who was a close friend, she had submitted her apologies. Adrian Lythgo reflected that Tony Lloyd enjoyed huge respect both locally and nationally, and he invited Councillor Cusack to say a few words. Councillor Cusack advised he had known Tony for many years, who has been a great friend of Salford Council and was a personal friend of the former Mayor of Salford, Ian Stewart. Tony was born in Greater Manchester and was important to Greater Manchester, starting as a Councillor in Trafford, then MP for Stretford, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester, then interim Mayor for Greater Manchester, before becoming the MP for Rochdale. Members heard he was always interested in people and had time for everyone. He was a caring politician and always determined to represent everyone in his constituencies and was a true man of the people. Adrian thanked Councillor Cusack for his words.

Adrian advised apologies for the meeting had been received from Councillor Daniel Barrington and Councillor Ian Moncur, both from the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership; Paul Barnes (EA RFCC Appointed Member – Agriculture); Chris Findley (EA Appointed Member – Development and Sustainable Investment); Councillor Tricia Ayrton (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Karen Shore (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Stewart Davies (EA Board Member); Fiona Duke (EA Area Flood Risk Manager for Lancashire), Carol Holt (EA Area Director for C&L) and Laura Bigley, Lancashire County Council.

Members received and approved two correctly nominated substitutions for Members:

- Anthony Morley in place of Councillor Daniel Barrington

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- Councillor Jane Hugo in place of Councillor James Shorrocks

Adrian advised the recent National RFCC Recruitment round has now finished. Carolyn Otley was welcomed back, who will continue her second term on Committee as EA appointed member for Communities. Two new appointments were welcomed – Kate Morley, the new RFCC EA Appointed Member for Conservation, and Susannah Bleakley, the new RFCC EA Appointed Member for the Coast.

Ian Crewe, lead EA Area Director for the NW RFCC, was welcomed to the meeting, along with guest speakers for the day: Fran Comyn, Paul O'Hare, Dan Bond, Dee Grahamslaw and Katie Eckford.

A warm welcome was given to Sharma Jencitis, Fiona Fairley, Tracey Garrett, Charlotte Danvers and Geraint Laidlaw-Wilson, all here as meeting observers.

Adrian referred Members to his quarterly Chair's Update paper, shared with Members on 15 December, and highlighted the update had covered two storms and since then we have had Storm Henk. He reflected that while there has been a lot in the news about the extent of flooding in this, the wettest winter on record, there has not been a strong connection to climate change made in the media and national debate. Adrian recognised this is something that will be being discussed in the sub regional partnerships. Adrian noted the recent weather has not affected the North West as much as other parts of the country this winter.

No Declarations of Interest have been received.

**24 (02) Minutes of the RFCC Meeting held on 20 October 2023 and actions and matters arising**

The Committee were asked if they have any comments on the minutes of the last meeting and there were none. Councillor Giles Archibald proposed and Councillor Richard Silvester seconded the minutes of the October 2023 RFCC meeting. The minutes of the 20 October 2023 RFCC meeting were approved by the Committee.

On matters arising:

1, Members received confirmation that there is interest earned on Local Levy balances which are added at the start of the year. Further information is being sought on this and will be reported back to Members.

2, Biodiversity Net Gain - Carl Green wished to correct an erroneous reference to the Cumbria Innovation Flood Resilience project working specifically on peat beds – the reference was intended to be to the Wyre NFM project.

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3, Surface Water Management - Members were advised that more details on this will be provided in due course and in terms of the specific question asked by Councillor Giles Archibald this information will be brought together.

**24 (03) Recent Flooding Incidents**

Adrian Lythgo referred Members to the report provided on flooding in the last quarter. He remarked on the limited amount of flooding experienced in the North West compared with other parts of the country, down to a combination of luck with weather impacts, interventions overseen by the Committee, and operation of RMA assets. However there has been some internal property flooding, mostly occurring in Cheshire West and Chester this quarter, along with considerable infrastructure affected in Merseyside and other places.

He provided Members with the opportunity to comment on any flooding in their areas, or nationally. There were no further comments.

**24 (04) Flood Poverty – Project Findings and Recommendations (RFCC Business Plan Action ID8)**

Adrian Lythgo welcomed Fran Comyn and Paul O'Hare to the meeting, here to provide Members with the summary findings from this project, funded from Local Levy through the RFCC's Business Plan, and to help to translate these into new approaches and shared learning for all.

Paul advised that his role in the project is primarily around monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of findings. In his presentation Paul covered:

- An outline of the broad approach to the project
- Desk-based review and the large amount of emerging research around the link between disadvantage, other aspects of disadvantage and flood hazard
- How flood hazard maps across our communities
- Social vulnerability map - heat maps to show where flood hazards intersect with other dimensions of vulnerability, so in this case for people living in lower social economic conditions.
- Two questionnaires resulting in 103 responses. Paul gave thanks to Sarah Parkington and to the National Flood Forum (NFF) for their help with this work.
- Two workshops, four focus groups, and 28 qualitative interviews
- How the Flood Poverty project has started to build the links to explore through the Resilient Roch project being funded through the national FCRIP (Flood Coastal Resilience and Innovation Programme) programme.
- Links to thinking in universities to make sure that we have the right approach to resilience and adaptation.

Paul shared the principles that had been identified for and by the project:

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- Recognising risk and disadvantage
- 'Just' adaptation
- Avoid unintended consequences
- Adaptation that links to broader social, economic, environmental and public policy agendas
- Collaboration and networking
- Doing *with* – not *to* – communities
- Targeted engagement
- Embed lessons learned in future practice/ innovations

In relation to the project's findings, Paul particularly wanted to highlight:

- The importance of maintenance of our assets
- The need to work with other sectors to ensure that we are getting the right sort of insurance into communities - people have different perceptions of insurance, it is not always seen as a priority and there are now very few local insurance brokers.
- Housing and property management:
  - The strong association between flooding and deprivation both for tenanted and homeowners
  - Lack of investment by private landlords in properties in flood risk areas bought cheaply to generate rental income
  - Letting agents, managing agents and landlords not always clear on their responsibilities.
- Lack of flood and climate literacy amongst both professional stakeholders and communities.

The Committee received an overview of how the findings and recommendations are set out in the report and noted the summary of key recommendations:

1. Integration across sectors at a local level and operational delivery offers the best way of dealing with residual risk.
2. Professional stakeholder and residential and business communities are required.
3. Use existing networks from many sectors to deliver flood resilience.
4. People need to be able to access insurance that is appropriate.
5. In the private rented sector, letting and management agents and landlord roles and responsibilities need to be 'clarified', tightened, publicised and training provided, and tenants and lessees need to know their obligations.
6. Property Flood Resilience (PFR) – New maintenance models are needed for householders and Responsible Providers as is disadvantaged communities we cannot assume that maintenance will occur without LA support and intervention, whole building or street approaches are vital, Flood Performance Certificates need to cover all residential properties, and again a cross-sector integrated approach is needed.

Fran Comyn then provided Members with an overview of the Resilient Roch Project, which is one of 25 projects in the national FCRIP, which has £6.5 Million of programme investment to March 2027. Within the Resilience Roch project, the communities of Littleborough and Wardleworth are being used to pilot a whole range of measures to inform how we support and deliver community flood resilience beyond 2027.

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There are a number of stakeholders working together to deliver this project including; EA, NFF, UU, OVO Energy, Groundwork Energyworks, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, NW RFCC, Flood Re and ABI (Association of British Insurers), Defra, DLUP (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) and local landowners, businesses and community bodies. Members noted the key drivers for the project along with a new focus on integrated water management, engagement with the energy sector, and flood and fuel poverty.

With regard to community capacity and leadership Fran highlighted the need for street champions to gather and share knowledge within the community.

Work packages are also looking at whole house climate resilience in terms of sustainable maintenance and affordable maintenance.

Adrian thanked Fran and Paul for their presentation and asked if there were any questions or comments.

Carolyn Otley welcomed this presentation and remarked on the range of new approaches being considered together for building community resilience, all of which reflects what has happened in Cumbria after Storm Desmond. She highlighted the local government re-organisation in Cumbria where there are now two Unitary Authorities, which have two new housing teams located in the same department as the flood teams, which feels like an opportunity. She asked what advice the presenters would give to the new organisations.

Peter Maynard (Rochdale Borough Council Housing) recommended engaging with elected RFCC Members and finance teams with the details of the project to get their support and buy-in, as Local Authorities need to invest alongside other funding they can attract. He reflected on the challenge of deteriorating condition of housing (often terraced) within deprived communities due to the lack of ability of residents to invest. He emphasised the importance with terraced properties of making improvements to the whole terrace. Traditionally central Government has stepped in with grant regimes, every ten to fifteen years, where Local Authorities can tackle problems in these areas. He also highlighted that Local Authorities can still borrow money at reasonable rates and there is a strong case for investing in housing stock in deprived areas, which has positive knock-on effects on other elements of public spending.

Members were advised of a £1 Million of investment in the last 12 months from the public health budget to make properties wind and watertight to prevent hospital admissions. The Committee heard that overall savings from doing this have been immense. There has also been recent investment to re-point 80 properties in the Wardleworth area for a cost of £0.5 Million, which will secure the housing stock into the future. Peter reinforced the need to look at whole system costs and savings.



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Peter reflected on the tragic death of a small child in Rochdale due to damp and mould in their home, and highlighted that this is having huge national implications and important changes are about to be made. The Decent Home Standard for social rented accommodation has not had the effect it was meant to have from the amount of social rented stock that now needs significant retrofitting and deep repair. This Decent Home Standard is about to be applied to private rented homes as well but the Government has been encouraged to not stop there, but to look at the issues around owner occupiers too, as increasingly there are owner occupiers that also suffer from those challenges.

Ian Crewe thanked Fran and Paul for their presentation and highlighted the importance of supporting our most vulnerable and commended them for their work. Ian noted that Rochdale is one of the most diverse communities in the country, many residents may not speak English and he asked if the project group were well enough equipped to penetrate these communities.

Councillor Giles Archibald shared his support for this work. He noted the high level of child poverty in Rochdale, which is also equalled by some wards in Cumbria and he advised the new authorities in Cumbria are heightening their attention to the issue of financial resilience, which is one of their major priorities. He remarked that the unitarisation of Westmorland and Furness and Cumberland Councils will help to increase focus on these issues and confirmed that flood zones are talked about, not only from the EA's perspective, but also based on Cumbria's projections.

Councillor Archibald also remarked on the need to integrate initiatives like this with other things going on in the area. He asked about Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and what will be reported to the Committee to measure the success of the project. Fran advised there is a monitoring and evaluation framework which has been established for the Flood Poverty Project and expanded for the Resilient Roch Project. In time with further mainstreaming, this will start to get things more embedded in the Council's wider indicators. Fran advised the monitoring programme can be shared to provide further information.

**ACTION: Fran Comyn**

Regarding wider integration, Fran advised this is ongoing with internal and external linkages in place. With regard to community diversity and engagement, Fran advised that Rochdale Council has a long-standing relationship with its communities and also have a long-standing relationship and important partnership with the National Flood Forum (NFF), who have developed trust and awareness with communities.

Peter Maynard reflected that during the Covid pandemic his team were front and centre in getting food and fuel vouchers out to people and liaising with utilities etc. Eighty sustainable community groups were operating across Rochdale, some based on

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specific ethnicities and others were geographically based. Trusted partners within these eighty community groups are still in place where strong links are constantly maintained.

Councillor Nick Mannion advised in the 1990s he worked with North Staffordshire communities suffering mining subsidence, who had very similar issues to those experienced in Rochdale. They had no access to insurance due to recorded mining faults and mine shafts and also the National Coal Board had sold off a lot of their properties to private landlords. In his experience one of the most effective insurance brokers was the Credit Union, which was run by the local community. He suggested a future KPI focussing on awareness of other sectors e.g. Fire and Rescue, Health Service.

Ollie Hope asked whether the project team is in touch with the EA's Green Finance Team on insurance. Fran advised this is part of Paul Cobbings' work programme, but any further assistance that can be given would be most welcome.

Adrian Lythgo advised that most Local Authorities have an approach to try to engage with parts of communities which have multiple issues around social injustice. Rightly they are all different as they relate to different communities. He highlighted the challenge of holding on to key resources to continue such engagement if it is not mainstreamed. Adrian asked is there a shared learning event that can be run off the back of this project to help Local Authorities with their own internal work. Fran agreed that this can be provided.

Nick Pearson added a final remark reminding Members of the major flooding which had occurred in Rochdale in Storm Eva in December 2015 when 324 homes flooded and 18000 properties were without power. There is now a Rochdale and Littleborough flood scheme delivering significant investment to reduce the flood risk.

**24 (05) Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan**

Dee Grahamslaw, United Utilities, provided the Committee with a presentation on the learning gained from the development of an Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) in Greater Manchester. This extraction and dissemination of learning has been funded by the RFCC through its Business Plan. This was further dissemination of knowledge on the back of the interim update to the October RFCC meeting while the project was still underway.

After introducing the aims of the IWMP developed by the partnership, Dee reported that learning from the project has been distilled, facilitated by Jacobs consultants, through interviews with key UU, EA, and GMCA Directors, and structured workshops with the project team.

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Dee provided an overview of the key ingredients to developing an IWMP and detail of how to integrate with other partners, share objectives and establish trust with each other. Keeping project momentum was also identified as a key ingredient, with focussed themes for weekly meetings, along with co-locating to a central location to learn more about each-others organisations. Detail was also shared about creating visibility for the project, its work and its outcomes with the commitment to share best practice nationally, in a simplified and accessible way.

Councillor Giles Archibald commented that Manchester gets a lot of its water from Cumbria, yet Cumbria's contribution is very rarely mentioned. He also spoke about the need for water to be purified through peat and if peat in Cumbria is severely degraded, the water is of poorer quality. Adrian Lythgo advised this can be picked up as part of the agenda later in the meeting.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Dee for her presentation recognising that the approach is scalable and therefore the dissemination of the learning from GM is very valuable.

**24 (06) Report from the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group**

For the benefit of new Members, Adrian Lythgo advised that this item is the formal decision-making process for items included in the reports to and from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group, which take place in advance of full RFCC meetings to discuss and scrutinise proposals in greater detail.

Neville Elstone thanked the Sub-group, he welcomed their scrutiny, debate and discussion and welcomed others to attend future meetings. He was pleased to have had discussion on maintaining assets. Adam Walsh presented the update on the investment programme.

Update on the Capital and Resource Maintenance Programme 2023/24

Properties better protected

- 2,857 properties across the North West have already been better protected this year. This is 80% of the 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.
- This is a reduced forecast from the 4,379 properties reported at the last Sub-group meeting. This is due to delays to scheme delivery meaning that the benefitting properties will now be better protected in future years. The Penketh and Whittle FRMS is one example but there are others.

Expenditure – Year end forecasts

- Total capital funding for the 2023/24 programme is £107.456 Million.

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- We are forecasting 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 Cumbria and Lancashire Culvert Programme, and both Areas' Screen programmes. These were all impacted by the transition to new delivery frameworks, previously identified as a risk.

#### Expenditure – Actual to date

- 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.
- Significant spend is still required between now and the end of the financial year and Adam urged LAs to submit any grant claims as soon as possible.

#### Reporting efficiency savings

- Nationally we are significantly under the 10% efficiencies reporting target, which is a condition of the FCERM GiA funding.
- There has been a new efficiency reporting approach this year 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. Members noted training has been supplied to both EA and RMAs, with technical support available locally and within National teams.
- North West accepted efficiency claims this year total £4.77 Million across 10 projects.
- Total North West efficiencies for the 6-year programme to date of £6.2 Million. This is positive, but there is still a way to go to achieve the target.
- West Kirby provided as an example of efficiency savings - 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.

#### EA Resource (Resource and Maintenance) Funding

- 2023/24 funding currently totals £21.056 Million (including staff costs, maintenance, and resource project information).
- Currently both areas are showing a forecast above budget.
- An additional £25 Million has been allocated in-year across the country, specifically for maintenance delivery, which does not yet appear in budgets. The North West allocation is £1.36 Million (£0.8 Million for GMMC and £0.56 Million for C&L).
- 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.

Members were advised Paul Bowden, EA FCRM Operations Local Delivery Lead for GMMC Area, had attended the Sub-group meeting to provide Members with an overview of what maintenance work has been funded and delivered over the last quarter. Adam advised the NW Operational Delivery Teams have also been providing

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incident response support to other areas during the last quarter and highlighted that during incidents regions come together to provide a national team effort.

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.

The Committee heard the availability of resource funding is going to be a challenge over the next few years, which is likely to see reduced programmes of work being delivered and this has been highlighted in the recent NAO report and a number of reports from the media. Adam also referred to conversations at previous meetings about risks affecting flood schemes and he advised this is being worked on for a future meeting.

Neville Elstone thanked the EA teams involved in the maintenance work, in responding to the increase in maintenance budget.

Indicative FCRM Grant-in-Aid Allocation for 2024/25

Adam Walsh reminded Members the indicative capital allocation in October 2023 was £93.38 Million against a bid of £108.7 Million. Following the RFCC's Local Choices submission our request for additional GiA has been largely accommodated with a final allocation of £98.56 Million, which is good news.

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. Adam emphasised we should not slow down on delivery and should look to accelerate delivery or discuss new delivery opportunities.

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

Adam also highlighted that through the Local Choices process, the £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. There is still the opportunity to bring this back into the immediate programme if it is deliverable.

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

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Adam advised that the final settlement on the GiA asset maintenance allocation for 2024/25 should hopefully be available for the April 2024 meeting.

Neville Elstone highlighted there was a lot of information to take in and advised Members are welcome to contact Officers offline to discuss any concerns.

As is formally required at all January RFCC meetings, the Committee were asked to consent the allocation of FCRM Grant-in-Aid for the 2024/25 programme.

The RFCC provided their consent.

Local Levy Programme 2023/24

Adam provided a summary of the Local Levy programme including the opening balance, this year's income, the allocation and spend forecast, and therefore the expected closing balance.

Following the question raised by Councillor Archibald at the previous meeting, Adam advised that further information on interest earned on Local Levy balances will be provided at a future meeting.

In terms of the Local Levy resource, there is expected to be a 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.

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.

Members were then asked to consider a Local Levy contribution to the River Irwell at Kearsley scheme. Neville Elstone advised that a good robust discussion took place at the Sub-group meeting. He advised the request is for circa 10% of the funding for this scheme and acknowledged that Local Levy funding is the funding of last resort, where it can be used to step in and underwrite the project.

Councillor Stephen Clarke raised his concern about a total scheme cost of approximately £20 Million for 80 properties, advising that other schemes have been knocked back even with better cost-benefit ratios and he questioned as to why the Billington Scheme had been rejected, which has had flooding over a number of years.

Nick Pearson advised the cost benefit information can be shared and Councillor Giles Archibald asked for this information to be shared with all Members.

**ACTION: Nick Pearson/Adam Walsh**

Neville remarked that all challenges to funding requests are welcome. Members heard and noted that the request for Local Levy funding for the Kearsley Scheme was

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supported by the majority at the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group Meeting and the recommendation was to support the funding request.

Adrian Lythgo remarked that the concern raised by Councillor Clarke about value for money is an important point, as well as being raised by the NAO in relation to the whole programme. He advised that Committee is challenged with balancing value for money with protecting communities from flooding. He reflected that some of our best value for money comes from coastal defence schemes where large numbers of people are protected but where communities haven't experienced widespread flooding in the north west for some considerable time whereas some communities inland have been flooded more than once. He advised that seeking to balance these considerations is an important part of our role.

Councillor Richard Silvester asked if the Committee can look and see if we can support moving the Billington Scheme forwards. Adrian advised this project is still in the programme, but as with a number of schemes the full funding package is still being established. The Local Levy can be used to underwrite projects and fill the funding gap in order to get them moving forwards.

Adam Walsh highlighted the Frequently Flooded Allowance that can be used for when a community of ten or more properties have flooded twice within the last ten years. Up to a maximum of £2.5 Million per project can be awarded and he advised recent conversations have taken place with National colleagues to ensure that our North West communities who have experienced this are on the list to potentially receive this grant. Adam also advised in the meantime conversations will continue with other EA colleagues seeking to secure as much GiA and Other Government Department (OGD) funding as we can for our projects.

Following consideration 11 RFCC Members approved the additional Local Levy contribution of up to £2.4 Million for the River Irwell at Kearsley FRMS.

#### Capital Programme Co-ordinator Role

Neville Elstone emphasised the importance of this Local Levy funded role in sharing learning and translating information between the EA and other RMAs. He advised following the discussion at the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group Meeting he was pleased that a majority decision was clarified and recommended to the RFCC, which included a number of conditions which were presented to Members.

Members confirmed their support of the recommendation from the RFCC F&BASG to extend funding of the post until the end of March 2027.

#### Local Levy Strategy Refresh

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Sally Whiting reminded Members of the Local Levy Strategy, first produced in 2020, which sets a framework for the RFCC's use of the funding and guides the allocation of Local Levy. Members heard the document is now subject to a light-touch refresh rather than a substantial review.

She reported that a couple of key matters of principle had been raised and discussed by the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group. The first was on the setting of a presumed maximum Local Levy contribution to a single scheme. Of the two options proposed to the Sub-group, there was a consensus for setting this at £5 Million, fixed for the duration of the Local Levy Strategy (likely to be 2 or 3 years).

RFCC Members noted the majority of Sub-group Members supported this recommendation, however Councillor Stephen Clarke asked it to be noted that the Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership supported option B for the presumed maximum Levy contribution (set at the level of the annual income), which they believe provides greater flexibility. Following a vote 10 Members supported the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group's Option A recommendation, with 2 opposing.

The second principle relates to reviews of Local Levy funded staff resources and new guideline requiring the sponsorship and involvement of an independent RFCC member and an appropriate senior EA manager with a degree of separation from the role(s).

Members supported both the principles for inclusion in the revised Local Levy Strategy.

Sally Whiting advised the draft revised Local Levy Strategy is included in the papers for the meeting and welcomed any further feedback by the end of January. Neville thanked Members for their discussion.

**Resolved:**

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

- Noted the progress delivering the 2023/24 capital and resource programmes
- Consented the FCERM GiA final capital allocation for 2024/25.
- Consented the FCERM GiA asset maintenance resource indicative allocations for 2024/25 pending final approval
- Noted the current Local Levy position and current spend forecast.
- Approved the additional Local Levy contribution of up to £2.4 Million for the River Irwell at Kearsley FRMS, noting this is in addition to the £600k of Local Levy approved for the Scheme in January 2021.
- To support the continuation of the Local Levy Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) role until March 2027, subject to implementation of the conditions agreed.
- Supported Option A (£5 Million) as the presumed maximum Local Levy contribution to FCRM Schemes.
- Supported the introduction of new principles relating to reviews of Local Levy funded



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staff resources.

- Noted the further opportunity to comment on the draft Local Levy Strategy by the end of January 2024.

**24 (07) RFCC Business Plan and Local Levy Programme 2024/25**

For new RFCC Members Sally Whiting provided an overview of the RFCC Business Plan highlighting that we are about to go into the third and final year of the plan, after which a refresh will be done. She provided a summary of status and performance on the 25 projects, 22 of which are currently live. Members heard that the vast majority of projects are progressing to plan and of the £1.4 Million investment this year, the current forecast is around £1.1 Million. Sally provided brief highlights of a few of the Business Plan projects.

The Committee heard that Project RAINCOAT (ID2.2) is no longer progressing due to the changes in personnel and loss of resource.

With regard to RFCC Business Plan investment for 2024/25, Members were advised the funds required for this is £1.187 Million. A breakdown against the ambitions was provided along with a breakdown of how the benefits of the investment is spread across the partnerships.

Councillor Giles Archibald welcomed seeing peatland restoration in the plan but was unable to see where the resources have been allocated to achieve this and asked if the investment matches the ambition. Sally confirmed that this work would come under the Managing Water at a Catchment Scale with Nature ambition and that she would welcome seeing this work scoped to see what peatland restoration is taking place across the North West before proceeding. Adrian Lythgo advised that a gap analysis is the only tangible action, which will determine the level of investment required, although it's not in the programme right now.

Kate Morley advised she is happy to see this in the plan and looks forward to supporting its consideration within the Business Plan.

**Resolved: The RFCC:**

- Noted the progress on Business Plan projects and spend forecasts
- Acknowledged the close-down of action ID2.2 (Project RAINCOAT)
- Approved the proposed 2024/25 funding allocation of £1.187 Million to Business Plan projects.

For the whole Local Levy programme for 2024/25, Adam Walsh presented the table of proposed Local Levy allocations and provided a short overview for Members.

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Adrian Lythgo remarked on the variability of Local Levy allocations on schemes and within partnerships from year to year as it very much depends on which big schemes are coming through and how much Local Levy they need in each year. He recommended Members to observe Local Levy allocations over three or four year periods, so they can stand back from it and see the longer term patterns.

Adrian Lythgo then asked Members to indicate their approval for the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2024/25.

**Resolved: The RFCC:**

- Approved the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2024/25, as recommended by the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group.

**24 (08) Recent national developments relevant to flooding policy and programme implementation – Recent NAO reports and NIA recommendations**

Adrian Lythgo welcomed Dan Bond, who presented an overview of the findings and recommendations from the recent National Audit Office (NAO) report and the National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA).

Members heard the NIA is the second assessment, published in October 2023, which has not moved on a great deal since the first NIA, but key elements of the report include the setting of long-term measurable targets and ensuring funded plans are in place to significantly reduce the number of properties that are at risk of flooding by 2055. Dan highlighted the focus on surface water. There is currently national consideration being given to setting clear targets in terms of surface water flood risk, local plans and devolved budgets.

The Committee were advised that from a rivers point of view there are similar messages with regard to having long-term measurable targets, NAFRA2 (National Flood Risk Assessment) is also referenced and the need to have different resilience standards in different places has also been recognised.

With regard to the NAO report, published on 15 November 2023, Members heard there is lots of cross over with the NIA themes and Dan advised the IPA review (Infrastructure and Projects Authority) is also similar.

The NAO study highlighted the following recommendations:

- The current programme needs reprofiling to ensure value for money.
- There needs to be budget flexibility between capital and maintenance.

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- Planning for the next capital programme needs to take place.
- Need to develop long-term milestones to 2100.
- Need to improve business case forecasts.
- Need to improve the completeness, consistency and accuracy of data.

Dan advised the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) met on 27 November to discuss the findings, where Philip Duffy, EA Chief Executive and Caroline Douglass, EA Executive Director for Flood and Coastal Risk Management, attended. The PAC raised significant concerns including in relation to the re-profiling of the capital programme, asset maintenance, development in the flood plain, and surface water and data.

Adrian thanked Dan for his attendance and advised the Committee could pick up the themes from the review at the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group, particularly with regard to value for money and deliverability as there are a number of attendees who will be able to feed into this conversation and provide advice.

**24 (09) SMP Explorer Launch**

Katie Eckford provided Members with an overview of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) Explorer tool, being launched nationally at the end of January 2024, which is a new map-based tool to make SMPs easier to access and understand. Whilst aimed at coastal practitioners, the SMP Explorer tool is also available to the public and will help them to better understand the risks of coastal flooding and erosion, alongside the management approaches and actions being taken along the coast. Katie also provided a summary of SMPs including their planning timeframes, coastal management policies and North West implementation progress.

Katie outlined the importance of the coast for communities, wildlife, economy and tourism and there are many factors and stakeholders that have an interest or play a key role in the coast who have varying needs and priorities. With climate change comes rising sea levels and more intense storms.

Councillor Giles Archibald commented on the forecast figures shown in the presentation, advising that the lower level probability scenario shown will be much more damaging. Carl Green advised the figures are based on the medium forecasts. The affordability of the measures required and what we do about this is the focus of the innovation project.

Members heard that from summer 2024, the Explorer website will link to the Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping data for England and include climate change impacts information. There will also be a link to the National Assessment for Flood Risk later in the year.

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Adrian Lythgo thanked Katie for her presentation advising of this good resource and good platform to widen the conversation with communities. Susannah Bleakley advised this resource is a big step forward and we should all be using the SMPs more.

**24 (10) Any Other Business**

Carolyn Otley made Members aware of a Met Office online course on climate change which is now available to Community Emergency Planning Groups across the UK, which shows the likely impacts of flooding across the UK.

Councillor Giles Archibald commented that flooding and phosphorous transfer are related and enquired on the role of this Committee with regard to dealing with this phosphorous overload. Adrian Lythgo advised that this is not directly within the remit of the RFCC but that he has not considered this fully and the Committee will need to have time to consider and think through this properly. Perry Hobbs advised that UU does a lot of work with farmers and landowners with regard to soil management best practice, along with the EA. He advised where there are permits to discharge phosphates and UU works with landowners to find more cost beneficial ways to reduce phosphates on their land. Councillor Archibald raised his concern with this issue in light of the climate change predictions advising this is a deteriorating position and not an improving one. Adrian advised this is something that could be considered under the 'Managing Water at a Catchment Scale' Business Plan theme, which the Cumbria Partnership will play a part in.

Councillor Stephen Clarke highlighted that under new proposed legislation developers will no longer automatically have the right to connect to existing drainage networks unless they have an approved sustainable drainage system in place and advised these proposed changes are due to come before parliament very soon.

With regard to the consultation on the adoption of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act and following on from the presentation given by Laura Bigley at the October 2023 RFCC meeting, Adrian advised the consultation that was due to be launched is still outstanding and his personal view is that there is some risk that it may not happen before any general election.

Adrian again welcomed the two new RFCC Members and thanked the two outgoing RFCC Members, Suzana Ilic and David Harpley. He asked Members if they were happy for him to write letters of thanks to Suzana and David on their behalf, for their excellent four years of contributions, which they were happy to support.

**ACTION: Adrian Lythgo**

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Adrian Lythgo referred Members to the information papers, with particular reference to the UU update paper and the paper advising Members of the January 2025 meeting date.

Adrian thanked Members for their attendance to the meeting and again apologised for the cancellation of the site visit to Rochdale, which would have been very powerful to illustrate the discussion earlier in the meeting.

The next RFCC meeting will be held virtually on 26 April 2024.

DRAFT

## NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

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**UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE  
NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2024**

	<b>ACTION/ MATTER ARISING</b>	<b>ACTIONED</b>
<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Flood Poverty – Project Findings and Recommendations (RFCC Business Plan Action ID8)</b></p> <p>Councillor Archibald also remarked on the need to integrate initiatives like this with other things going on in the area. He asked about Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and what will be reported to the Committee to measure the success of the project. Fran advised there is a monitoring and evaluation framework which has been established for the Flood Poverty Project and expanded for the Resilient Roch Project. In time with further mainstreaming, this will start to get things more embedded in the Council's wider indicators. Fran advised the monitoring programme can be shared to provide further information.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>Action: Fran Comyn</b></p>	<p>This information is being pulled together to be shared with RFCC Members w/commencing 22/4.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group – Local Levy Programme 2023/24</b></p> <p>Councillor Stephen Clarke raised his concern about the cost of the River Irwell at Kearsley Scheme and it was agreed the cost benefit information for this scheme and the Billington Scheme to be shared with all RFCC Members.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Nick Pearson / Adam Walsh</b></p>	<p>This information is being pulled together to be shared with RFCC Members w/commencing 22/4.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>Adrian Lythgo received approval from Members for letters of thanks to be sent on their behalf to Suzana Ilic and David Harpley for their excellent 4 years of contributions to the Committee.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>ACTION: Adrian Lythgo / Rachel Harmer</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Completed</p>

## NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING 26 APRIL 2024

## NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

## Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

## Draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2024

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

**Attendees:**

Neville Elstone	RFCC Member – General Business and Assurance and Chair of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group
Adrian Lythgo	RFCC Chair
Cllr Denise Rollo	RFCC Member – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Stephen Clarke	RFCC Member - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr James Shorrocks	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 Nick Mannion	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strat. Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Tony Brennan	RFCC Member - Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities
Chris Findley	RFCC Member – Development and Sustainable Investment
Susannah Bleakley	RFCC Member – Coastal Issues
Carl Green	Chair of the North Wales and North West Coastal Group
Fiona Duke	Officer – EA Area FR Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)
Richard Knight	Officer – EA Area FR Manager, Cumbria
Ollie Hope	Officer - EA Area FR Manager, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire Area (GMMC)
Adam Walsh	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, C&L
Andy Tester	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, GMMC
David Kennedy	Officer - EA FCRM Senior Advisor, C&L
Anthea Rawcliffe	Officer – EA FCRM Advisor, C&L
Sally Whiting	Officer – EA Senior RFCC Advisor
Rachel Harmer	RFCC Secretariat, EA FCRM Programming Team, GMMC

**Support Officers/Observers:**

Sarah Fontana	Officer, EA FCRM Senior Advisor, GMMC
Ayush Sheth	Officer, EA FCRM Programming Team Advisor, GMMC
Crystal Orton	Officer, EA FCRM Project Manager, GMMC
Jason Harte	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Nick Rae	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Andrew Harrison	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Pieter Barnard	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Alison Harker	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Jane Hugo	Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Rachel Crompton	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Lorah Cheyne	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Sarah Wardle	Officer – Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Jill Holden	Officer - Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

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Matthew Winnard  
Katie Eckford

Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Officer – Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator/ Coastal  
Group Secretariat

**1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

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

Councillor Denise Rollo advised that she needed to leave the meeting at 11am and gave authorisation for Pieter Barnard to place any votes on her behalf, as a representative of the Cumbria partnership.

Neville highlighted the proposed amended Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Sub Group, sent out in advance of the meeting, which had been trialled at the previous meeting in January. He provided a reminder of the revised voting arrangements 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.

Rachel reported that apologies had been received from Councillor Ian Moncur and Councillor Daniel Barrington (from the Merseyside SFRP), Kate Morley (RFCC Member – Conservation), David Shaw (RFCC Member – Planning and Design), Perry Hobbs (RFCC Member – Water Industry) and Nick Pearson (EA Area Flood Risk Manager, GMMC).

**2. Feedback from the RFCC Meeting on 19 January 2024 and actions since**

Neville reminded us of the key decisions from the 19 January RFCC meeting following the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group's recommendations.

The Committee:

- Noted the progress delivering the 2023/24 capital and resource programmes.
- consented the FCERM GiA final capital allocation for 2024/25.
- Consented the FCERM GiA asset maintenance resource indicative allocations for 2024/25 pending final approval.
- Noted the current Local Levy position and current spend forecast.
- Approved the additional Local Levy contribution of up to £2.4 Million for the River Irwell at Kearsley FRMS, noting this is in addition to the £600k of Local Levy approved for the Scheme in January 2021.
- Supported the continuation of the Local Levy Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) role until March 2027, subject to implementation of the conditions agreed.
- Supported Option A (£5 Million) as the presumed maximum Local Levy contribution to FCRM Schemes.
- Supported the introduction of new principles relating to reviews of Local Levy funded staff resources.



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- Noted the further opportunity to comment on the draft Local Levy Strategy by the end of January 2024.

**3. Investment Programme Update****Investment Programme Update 2023/24**

Andy Tester introduced himself as the EA Programme Manager for Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire, and provided an overview of progress on delivering the in-year capital (all RMAs) and resource (EA only) programmes.

**Capital programme 2023/24**

Andy provided the national investment programme context and encouraged reflection on what has already been achieved over the last few years.

We heard forecast figures at the end of January 2024 indicate the North West will better protect 3383 properties from flooding this year, which is about 10% of the national programme, of which 2930 properties are now better protected. Since January the forecast (3462) properties better protected has reduced by 79 properties largely due to scheme delays pushing their completion into future years. Andy gave the example of the Penketh and Whittle Scheme had a target of 221 properties better protected, which will now be formally reported in 2024/25.

We noted our forecast is below our national set target, which is partly due to the nationally estimated 20% uplift to capture non-residential properties not reflecting reality in some cases. Andy cited the Wyre Dune and Beach Management Scheme where the non-residential properties target given was 351, where the actual figure is 4. No additional properties are at risk of flooding - it is simply about having better data.

Spend forecasts at mid-February showed that we are expecting to draw down £98.5 Million this year, which is £10.7 Million less than allocated and £8.7 Million less than forecasts reported at the January meeting. This is due to several projects being deferred. Examples were provided, supported by details in the report.

At the end of January actual spend was 77% of the full year forecast. EA schemes had spent 79% of their forecast with £17.2 Million left to spend. LA schemes had claimed 71% of their forecast with £4.9 Million still to claim in 2023/24. We noted the figure from the end of January 2024 indicated £22.2 Million was still to be claimed in the last month of the 2023/24 year. Updated figures to the end of the financial year are still being processed and will be available at the July 2024 meeting.

With regard to efficiencies, up to Quarter 3, we have accepted claims with a total value of £6.382 Million from 15 projects. We noted the North West are forecasting to achieve 7% of efficiencies against a target of 10% for 2023/24.

Andy highlighted the challenges that had been present during 2023/24, including nine named storm events between September 2023 and January 2024, which impacted teams and schemes causing disruption to delivery of the capital programme. We noted adverse weather conditions during the winter months have caused delayed delivery of all work programmes, and resourcing across all Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) continues to be a challenge.

**EA Resource (Resource and Maintenance) Programme 2023/24**

We noted the current funding allocation of £22.415 Million, which is an increase from £21.056 Million reported at the January meeting. The main reason for this increase is the £1.36 Million

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North West share of the £25 Million additional funding nationally being transferred to resource funding. We noted the £5 Million overspend is approved nationally by the EA, and remains in the same position as it was at the end of February. We were advised both EA areas are on track to complete their maintenance programmes for 2023/24.

**Funding allocation for 2024/25 (FCERM Grant-in-Aid)**

We noted the allocation of £98.6 Million capital funding allocation for the North West has now been confirmed and approved by the EA Board. This figure is for capital maintenance of assets, new defences and property level resilience schemes. It also includes the enabling and support programme including Asset Reconditioning. There is also an additional capital allocation detailed in the paper for an EA led scheme in Cleator, Cumbria.

We noted the resource allocation for 2024/25 has increased by £300k from last year. In real terms this is a decrease due to the decline in asset condition and the increase in the amount and severity of storms having an impact on some assets.

Andy advised we are now entering the annual programme refresh period with a change from previous years in that the refresh process will cover the last 2 years of the programme, instead of just the programme for the following year. National guidance for this is currently being written.

With regard to risks to delivery, we heard we are continuing to see partnership funding gaps increase across many schemes which may delay progress or stop schemes altogether. To try to mitigate this a North West Partnership Funding Sub-Group has been established in the EA to assess, review and identify funding and assess the viability of schemes. Andy advised the Secretary of State has also agreed criteria to use some of the existing national funding settlement to off-set partnership funding pressures and an update on this will be provided at a future meeting.

We also noted the transition to new supplier frameworks may have an impact on delivery in the first two quarters of 2024/25, and that resources continue to be stretched into the 2024/25 programme.

In September 2023 the EA and Defra announced £25 Million funding for improving flood resilience through a new Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme, which is being managed by the EA. This NFM programme will help meet the aims of the Government's policy statement on flooding and coastal erosion, the National FCERM Strategy, and Government's Environmental Improvement Plan, and will build on and apply what we learnt from the £15 Million NFM pilot programme (2017 – 2021). We heard the Government has committed to double the number of government-funded projects that include nature-based solutions to reduce flooding and coastal erosion risk. The target is for 260 NFM projects between 2021 and 2027 and the NFM Programme will help to achieve this target.

The North West has been successful in obtaining additional NFM funding through this National NFM Programme. Of the 40 successful projects nationally, 13 are from the North West, which are:

- Cheshire Wildlife Trust: Meols NFM scheme
- City of Trees Trust: Crompton Moor Slow the Flow Leaky Dams
- Community Forest Trust: Whitewell Brook NFM
- Mersey Rivers Trust: Alt catchment NFM
- National Trust: Poynton and Micker (Norbury) catchment plan (Headwaters)
- Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust Ltd.: Ribble Revival: Darwen community catchment

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- Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust Ltd.: Ribble Revival: Wrea Green community catchment
- Ribble Catchment Conservation Trust Ltd.: Ribble Revival: Clitheroe community catchment
- Woodland Trust: Smithills Estate NFM 2024
- Wyre River Trust: Wyre Catchment resilience programme
- Brampton 2 Zero CiC, Brampton Natural Flood Management Project
- National Trust, Common Farm Hydrological Restoration
- National Trust, Resilient Coledale

Adrian Lythgo made a link from this to an item coming later in the agenda under the Business Plan item. He advised it is very good news in terms of these NFM schemes being awarded national funding, but when national funding becomes available it usually has a very tight turn around, so unless we have an idea of schemes that could be taken forward and we have done some of the initial work, it is very difficult to provide successful business cases. He advised there is something later in the agenda about how we might go about developing a strategic framework so that we can have projects and opportunities ready.

Councillor Nick Mannion advised this is exactly what has been done within Cheshire East where they have been investing time and resources into a schedule of various oven-ready capital projects (wider than flood risk management) across the authority, as when funding is announced it's just not feasible to sufficiently develop projects in the timescale available. He noted the timescales given are unrealistic where Local Authorities are struggling with capacity. He noted this challenge is across the public sector.

Councillor Tony Brennan, attending his first Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting, advised he is really happy with the progress that's being made.

### **Local Levy Programme Update**

Andy highlighted the resource balance at the start of the 2023/24 year of £12.216 Million, which includes interest earned on balances at the end of 2022/23 (of £216k). Income for 2023/24 was £4.412 Million and therefore the total available balance was £16.628 Million.

Current forecasts indicate we will draw down £6.4 Million, which is £1.8M less than allocated. This is due to a number of scheme forecast changes including Lindale Road, Grange over Sands (£270k) - due to delayed delivery; Irwell Vale to Chadderton (£101k) - project not progressing due to funding gap; and Sankey Brook (£115k) – rescheduled to the next CSR (Capital Spending Review) period. Final outturn figures will be advised at the July meeting.

For 2024/25 the North West will start the financial year with a total available resource of £15.3 Million (£4.544 Million in income, a forecast balance of £10.236 Million carried forward, and £0.52 Million estimated interest on balances at the end of 2023/24).

The current spend forecast for 2024/25 is £9.849 Million, which includes the requests for Local Levy to be discussed further on today's meeting agenda. The North West RFCC is forecast to have a balance of £5.451 Million at the end of 2024/25.

We received an overview of the Local Levy income and expenditure scenario.

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Neville Elstone thanked staff across all RMAs for delivering projects and those involved in NFM who have been working at this topic for many years in order to bring it into the mainstream. He also thanked those who work in the resource maintenance teams, who through a year of challenges have successfully overspent significantly to utilise the additional funding nationally.

Carolyn Otley made a comment relating to the challenge of an autumn and winter full of storms, noting that it does not appear in the risks for this year's capital programme. Carolyn highlighted her experience and involvement in emergency planning meetings with the Met Office suggesting that wet winters full of storms are something we need to expect and build into our planning more. She suggested inviting a Met Office Advisor to attend a meeting to provide us with an idea of what the future climate change projection data might look like.

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

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Councillor Rollo and Councillor Mannion.

**We considered and recommend that the NW RFCC:**

- Notes the approved capital and maintenance resource allocations for 2024/25 and the associated targets.
- Notes the updated capital allocations.
- Continues to support the EA and other RMAs in the delivery of the final 3 years of the current capital investment programme.
- Notes the current Local Levy position and latest spend forecast.

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Councillor Rollo and Councillor Mannion.

**Requests for Local Levy Funding**Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme £2 Million

At our meeting in January, we received a brief overview of this scheme from Pete Miles, who advised this funding request would be coming to a future meeting.

We were provided with an update on the Preston and South Ribble scheme by Anthea Rawcliffe. We were advised of the layout of the scheme across the areas of Broadgate and Riverside, Lower Penwortham, Frenchwood and Fishwick Bottoms, Walton-le-Dale and Higher Walton. We noted the scheme came about following the 2015 floods where almost 200 properties were flooded in Preston and South Ribble, but which was considered to be a near miss as the peak flows for the Ribble and Darwen rivers did not coincide with each other or the high tides.

We heard the scheme will better protect circa 3600 residential properties and approximately 600 local businesses, many of which are smaller businesses. Most communities at risk of flooding in Preston are within the 60% least deprived areas in England, critical infrastructure benefits in the

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area include the west coast main trainline, schools, several important commuter routes in and out of Preston and a number of important locations of water and electricity infrastructure.

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, Othe Government Dept 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.

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 European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding for a number of reasons, delays due to local circumstances, planning restrictions, permitting constraints and local concerns.

We noted the project is also seeking funding from the Secretary of State to close the funding gap. Anthea advised the funding gap has also been discussed with the Local Authorities at Partner Board Meetings and although the Local Authorities are supportive of the continuation of the scheme, unfortunately there is no funding available.

Neville Elstone underlined that as it's predominantly small businesses in the area, contributions from these are unlikely and he reiterated the challenges on Local Authority funding. He also advised that this project was discussed at the meeting in January where there was the promise that the Local Levy would be the funder of last resort.

Councillor Phillip Cusack recognised that the environmental enhancements of the scheme looked quite impressive and he wondered if there is a good news story with regard to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Anthea advised they are aiming to achieve the EA target of 20% BNG for the scheme, and clearly any remaining planning permissions will demonstrate at least 10% BNG.

Councillor James Shorrocks commented that if the request was coming from other areas, the Lancashire Partnership would see this as rather a large request without the proper scrutiny of this process. He advised the Lancashire Partnership has suggested that the decision on this be pushed back to our July meeting, as they feel they need more detail on the scheme and the funding gap. He advised the Lancashire Partnership know that costs have risen and a percentage of this is due to inflation, however they would like to meet with the project team before a decision on this is made. Anthea advised that the project team would be happy to meet with them to discuss further and answer any questions they have.

Adrian Lythgo commented that if the Lancashire Partnership wanted to look at the scheme in a bit more detail that is a good thing but asked if the delay in approving this project for three months will have any practical impact on the scheme progressing. Anthea advised that it would not at the current time but a decision as soon as possible would help them. She reiterated that they are still pursuing other sources of funding and Local Levy would always be a last resort and the first to be returned if not needed. Neville acknowledged the proposal to delay this Local Levy request to July but he invited any further comments to enable as full a debate as possible.

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Phillip Cusack advised that the request had been discussed by the Greater Manchester Planning the previous week and he understood that they had approved the request. Councillor Tricia Ayrton confirmed this was their decision.

Neville asked Councillor James Shorrocks if the feedback from the Greater Manchester partnership changed his view. Councillor James Shorrocks advised he would still like this discussion to be pushed back to the July meeting and to take up the offer of a meeting with the project team in the near future. He stated that they don't want to delay the scheme unnecessarily, but they are keen to understand the finer details.

Neville asked if there were any strong objections to moving this Local Levy request to the July RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group Meeting. No objections were raised so it was resolved to bring it back to the July meeting.

**Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme (Wilmslow) £30k**

Ellie Rigby, LA officer from Cheshire East LLFA provided an overview of the project, highlighting the high risk of surface water flooding around the boundary and school playing fields, a number of incidences of internal flooding in the last few years, causing impacts such as the closure of the hall for weeks, classrooms being flooded and the sports pitch being unusable for much of the year.

We heard the plans are to install a forest school section, requested by the school, which would be part of the NFM proposal, along with some rain gardens around the school and an attenuation pond, which would alleviate the surface water flooding coming from the ordinary watercourse passing through the school grounds and would take runoff from the school buildings. It was noted that three residential properties would also benefit from reduced flood risk.

Ellie provided an update on the funding position reporting that in the last few days the project has learned it has been unsuccessful in obtaining DofE SUDs for Schools Funding and has also been unsuccessful in securing NFM funding from the EA. The current estimated cost is £100k, it is eligible for around £55k of Grant-in-Aid, they are contributing £15k from their own Cheshire East capital budget, so are asking the RFCC to provide the remaining £30K. Ellie reinforced the educational and potential safety impacts on the children of the flood risk currently and highlighted these and the environmental benefits that the project will provide.

Neville asked Ellie to confirm whether the project would take place this year, which she did, reporting that the work would be carried out during the school summer holidays.

Councillor James Shorrocks asked if there would be a further Local Levy request if the funding gap is not filled. Ellie confirmed that they have revised the proposal and its cost, and if they are successful in securing the £30K from the RFCC and the Grant-in-Aid, they are not expecting any further gap in funding.

**Recommendation: We considered and recommend the RFCC approve the request for £30k of Local Levy funding for the Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme.**

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Councillor Rollo and Councillor Mannion.

**Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (£120k)**

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Ellie Rigby provided the background to the scheme involving a culvert which flows under several residential properties, and therefore having multiple riparian owners, being left to deteriorate over a number of years. This has resulted in several sink holes opening up requiring emergency works by the council to restore some conveyance. Ellie advised one residential property was also demolished on the advice of their insurance company, as the culvert flowed underneath their house.

Survey works have identified that there are still issues with conveyance where part of the culvert is undersized, and one residential property still has frequent internal flooding. The proposed works will enable a greater volume of water to pass through the culvert bringing benefit to 10 residential properties, which are situated directly above the culvert, and the highway which has had to be closed multiple times. Another 5 properties will benefit in the future as they could be affected by the impact of climate change.

Ellie reported that the total scheme cost is £175k. Cheshire East Council have already spent £150k and is able to contribute another £10-15k. They are expecting to secure £45k GiA funding. Therefore the Local Levy ask is £120k. She acknowledged that this is a relatively large proportion of the total cost but that this is a complex issue with assets under multiple riparian ownership and there are considerable local benefits including health and safety. She also reported that further discussions with property owners regarding their responsibilities as riparian owners of the culvert will also take place.

Neville Elstone asked if the insurance company bought another house for the resident of the demolished house and enquired as to whether the owner still owns the land. Guy Metcalf advised the insurance company did not purchase another property for the residents, with one going into special care and another passing away. They were vulnerable elderly residents, typical of the type of residents in this area. There is recognition of the riparian responsibilities of residents, but believes that this is an instance where Cheshire East Council needs to be diligent and sympathetic to the residents and help them.

Councillor Nick Mannion declared an interest in this item by advising that he was the Councillor for the next door ward to where this issue is and used to live approximately 250 metres from the site. He advised the sink hole appeared overnight on Hobson Street which serves around 200-300 residential properties along with several businesses. Council engineers did their investigation, which resulted in a house being demolished. He then highlighted the residents that live below the proposed works and asked the officers to provide reassurance that the works are a long-term solution and will not result in the problem being moved downstream.

Councillor James Shorrocks advised this Local Levy request represents 70% of the total project cost and highlighted in the Local Levy Strategy it states that projects under £0.5 Million should not include more than a 50% Local Levy contribution. He asked if the Local Authority have not used their £100K Quick Win funding, could they use their Quick Wins funding to fill the funding gap on this scheme. He then referred to the information regarding the properties that could flood and asked if they have actually flooded, how urgent is the work and what is the risk to these properties.

Neville Elstone highlighted the £150k emergency funding already provided by Cheshire East Council, asking if we could consider that a contribution, which may go some way to mitigating the funding question.

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Councillor Shorrocks responded that he did take that point on board, that it does provide some mitigation in these circumstances, and that he was happy to accept that point.

Guy Metcalf responded on Neville's earlier question about who owns the land now, advising that it is the owner of the local mill building who are local landowners and land surveyors. They have agreed to reinstate the culvert as it extends across their premises. The agreement is that the authority will work up to the highway boundary and the mill owner's contractor will facilitate the reinstatement work across their land up to Hobson Street at their own expense. When further queried by Neville, Guy confirmed that this element and contribution is not included into the overall costs of the project provided today. Neville Elstone advised in theory though, that these costs could be included in the total costs of the project, even though the funding of this part is being settled by another party.

Guy then responded to Councillor Mannion's question, reassuring him that they do not expect the project works to create any issue downstream. Comprehensive CCTV survey work with Jacobs has taken place up to a couple of miles downstream to where it meets the River Bollin and the remainder of the culvert is in pretty good condition. This area is creating a bottle neck.

Finally Guy confirmed that three properties have flooded internally and there are a number of ongoing issues with a number of basements flooding to circa 8 feet in depth.

Councillor James Shorrocks thanked Guy for his response.

With regard to the potential use of Quick Wins funding, Ollie Hope remarked that the Quick Win funding is only around £100k per year for the whole partnership, and is intended to be for small scale quick win projects, and possibly studies to develop projects, but it is not intended to prop up schemes of this scale. He did not feel that something of this scale at full business case stage fits the mould of Quick Win funding.

Guy Metcalf advised that additional funding may be available from Cheshire East Council if required.

**Recommendation: We considered and recommend the RFCC approve £120k of Local Levy funding for the Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works.**

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Pieter Barnard and Councillor Mannion.

#### **4. Local Levy Strategy**

Sally Whiting advised the Local Levy Strategy has been undergoing its refresh for a period of time, which has been discussed by the Committee on a couple of occasions, most recently in January 2024 where some important principles were discussed.

We heard the final draft of strategy was subsequently circulated for comment and a MS Forms survey was done, which resulted in 7 responses. Minor comments were raised relating to the text of the strategy itself, where a few tweaks to the wording have been made to accommodate those. Sally reported that the main theme of the comments was regarding the high-level nature of the strategy, which is inherent as it is a document of key principles, and the definite reinforcement of



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the need for supporting detail of how Local Levy request should be put forward and how the fund will be managed.

Sally noted that this is something that has been intended for a while now but hasn't been produced yet. She confirmed this is now recognised as vital and is being treated as a priority, to be included as a series of pages within the RFCC Sharepoint site, coming soon.

A final draft of the Local Levy Strategy was provided as one of the papers for the Sub Group to recommend to the full RFCC that it is now ready for approval.

There were no further comments or questions. Neville Elstone thanked those who have given their input to this work.

**We considered and recommend that the NW RFCC:**

- Approves the refreshed Local Levy Strategy.

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Pieter Barnard and Councillor Mannion.

**5. RFCC Business Plan Update**

Sally Whiting presented this report, highlighted some key graphics which summarised progress /status of the projects, and the investment profile for 2023/24 year and the following two years. The investment for 2023/24 was circa £1.4 Million. The final outturn figures are still awaited however the final forecast is just under £1.1 Million, which is a small underspend of around £340k. This is partly due to provision of budget which wasn't required such as the RMA Capacity Building Programme. This is good news as we have tapped into national training courses and budget and so not used Local Levy funding which had been set aside.

The RFCC has previously approved £1.2 Million for 2024/25 Business Plan work. We also noted the indicative Local Levy funding requirement of £1 Million for 2025/26.

Sally provided a graphical illustration of the broadly even split of the benefits of the investment across the partnerships, and an overview of the current level of investment over the three years of the Business Plan against the five ambitions.

Sally highlighted the 'Managing Water at a Catchment Scale with Nature' ambition which has been waiting for the new Cumbria partnerships to establish themselves after the local government reform, which was now in place leading that ambition and today we will hear about a new proposal they have developed.

Sally presented three proposed changes to the business plan:

- **ID3 – Wider benefits of FCRM schemes**

We heard this project was originally scoped out a few years ago and was led by and sponsored by a RFCC member who is no longer on the Committee. The project was retained under the 'Accessing Investment and Funding' ambition, led by Greater Manchester, and has been considered again by the partnership. However, the need for some rescoping, and the involvement of the GM

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING 26 APRIL 2024**

partnership in a number of other Business Plan projects, means that there is now insufficient capacity to progress this project. Sally therefore proposed that the action be formally closed down as part of the 2022-2025 Business Plan.

There were no comments or questions.

A vote took place which concluded to recommend to the RFCC that this project be closed down.

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Pieter Barnard and Councillor Mannion.

- **ID12 – Front Gardens Project** – budget flexibility request of up to £10K

Sally Whiting advised that the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup provide delegated authority from the RFCC to approve changes to allocations on Business Plan projects with previously approved allocation that are within 10%. In this case the potential increase of £10k represents around 7% of the RFCC's investment.

Sally reminded Members of the aims of this project which is seeking to influence householder choices on what they do with their front gardens and the surfaces they use, so that the cumulative effect on surface water flood risk is reduced. She explained that since the original proposal for funding to the project, the project has identified and progressed an additional opportunity to attend and exhibit at the RHS Urban Show in Manchester, happening next week. This will be targeting a slightly different demographic, which is more urban and slightly younger. This has increased the project costs slightly. In addition, we now have a clearer idea of the costs of the show feature garden for the RHS Tatton show in July. We noted that the project manager is continuing to seek additional sponsorship and contributions from suppliers and partners, but in case these are not successful, the project is requesting the Sub Group's approval to incur limited additional expenditure up to £10K if required.

There were no comments or questions.

A vote took place which approved the budget flexibility request of up to £10K should this not be found from other sources.

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Pieter Barnard and Councillor Mannion.

- **NFM Pipeline Development for Cumbria** - £150K Local Levy contribution

Sally Whiting introduced this new project proposal under the Managing Water at a Catchment Scale with Nature ambition that has been proactively developed quite quickly by the Cumbria Partnership over the last few months. Ali Harker and Dave Kennedy then provided a more detailed presentation on the project proposal.

Ali Harker highlighted the Cumbria partnership are now in a good place to deliver a project that not only benefits Cumbria, but also the wider Partnerships in the North West and potentially beyond.

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Ali recognised that Cumbria has already benefitted from significant funding to deliver large traditional flood defence schemes but that there remains a considerable risk to smaller communities for which traditional flood defence schemes are either unachievable or financially unviable under the existing funding arrangements. This project will ensure the continued delivery of flood risk mitigation measures in areas where traditional flood defences are not viable where there is a need to do things differently, using natural flood management or hybrid solutions.

We heard the predicted impacts from climate change see an increase in devastating effects from flooding in local communities with significant uplift in rainfall, peak river flows and sea level and noted that the CiFR project (Resilience Innovation programme) is leading the development of a climate change risk assessment for Cumbria.

Dave Kennedy outlined the project proposal, advising some of this work will be to build upon work that has already been done in Cumbria. He advised there is widespread agreement from strategic partners that development of an NFM pipeline will help enable the delivery of future flood risk management projects in areas by being ready to benefit from NFM funding opportunities. Without this pipeline the ability to progress flood projects in Cumbria is limited and will leave communities at risk.

We heard the project proposal is to develop a pipeline of NFM projects that have the potential to significantly reduce all types of flood risk that are 'business case ready'. Other benefits such as water quality and climate adaptations will be integrated where possible. The idea is to develop a template and methodology to allow other partnerships to develop a similar pipeline.

We noted the total project cost of £220k, which has secured £70k of funding from the CiFR project, resulting in the Local Levy request of £150k, £90k in year one and £60k in year two. We also noted the project timeline of 18 months.

Councillor James Shorrocks welcomed the sharing of knowledge, but he advised the Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership feel they are not seeing the resources to support NFM work in their area and he asked if there is any further detail of how the £150k has been arrived at. He also commented on the project developing tools and the process and methodology to be used – he asked who would receive the detail of these tools.

Dave advised they will be shared within the RMAs, and wider (e.g. with environmental NGO partners).

Neville Elstone commented regarding ELMS funding, he sits on the National Agricultural Transition Working Group for Defra and advised it will be fascinating to see how we move from a position of pitching for individual projects to individual landowners pitching as part of broader land management schemes and how that is taken up by land agents, forestry agents, agricultural advisers etc. He advised there is a lot of learning in how we in our water/flood community engage with that community in this debate. He advised of the massive potential incentives announced at the Oxford Farming Conference in early January, but the substantive detail underpinning this is yet to be published. He noted following a discussion in December with a lead civil servant in Cumbria, there appeared to be a significant uplift to the incentives in January so they do seem to be listening, but there is a huge learning piece around this and he advised it is really important that this project captures that. He advised this is a developmental piece that we have to keep following.

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Councillor James Shorrocks advised he is happy with this clarity.

Ali Harker confirmed that the full project proposal is in the meeting papers with a detailed breakdown of the costs and funding. She offered to run through this, but Neville wanted to operate on the assumption that people have read the papers provided.

Regarding the points raised by Neville on ELMS funding Dave Kennedy advised the uplifts that have been announced in January were enormous, which was encouraging to see, but the devil will be in the detail about how we knit this all together. He also raised the concern that the design of ELMS means that you could see landowners choosing NFM measures in areas where they aren't really needed. This project will help to identify the areas of greatest need, with the potential to involve Natural England so that they are clear on local priorities, and ELMS measures may be better targeted at where they will be most effective, making best use of the funding available.

Neville affirmed his agreement with this point about targeting.

Chris Findley commented that this looks like a good project and asked how confident they are regarding the timescale. Dave Kennedy advised they are relatively confident about this and with having done 18 or 19 projects across Cumbria with the original £2.5 Million and then more with the previous Local Levy funding from Slow the Flow, they feel they can work up double that number of projects without any problem. He advised there is a lot of information that has been predeveloped and most of the RMAs will already have their high-risk areas that they know about and it is just a case of bringing it together to collate. He noted the difficulty is deciding on the methodology.

Adrian Lythgo noted there is an appetite across the North West in all the sub regional partnerships to get their own priority led NFM programmes off the back of this sort of work. Referring to Phase 5 which is the knowledge transfer stage, he asked if it is possible to add a mid-point of sharing best practice, which Dave agreed to incorporate. Neville suggested that the project come back to a future Subgroup meeting to clarify how they could share the learning with different audiences.

Finally, Ali reiterated that the project is to develop a pipeline of NFM projects ready to take advantage of any funding opportunities, not to deliver those projects on the ground, and she also reiterated that there is an explicit knowledge transfer phase for the last three months of the project.

There were no further comments or questions.

**We considered and approved:**

- ID12 – Front Gardens Project – The budget flexibility request of up to £10k should the funding for this not be secured from other sources.

**We considered and recommend that the NW RFCC:**

- Notes the progress on the delivery of the RFCC Business Plan actions.
- ID3 – Wider Benefits of FCRM Schemes – Approves the proposal to close down this project.
- NFM – Pipeline Development (Cumbria) – Approves the Local Levy investment of £150k.

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING 26 APRIL 2024****6. Partnership Co-ordinator Contribution Review**

Given that this review and a previous proposal has been discussed by the Subgroup at a previous meeting, and the revised proposal had been shared with the partnerships in advance of the Subgroup meeting, Neville briefly presented the revised funding proposal.

This is for the RFCC to provide:

- £37K per partnership per year (up from £30k per year) for three years to March 2027.
- £5K additional sum to support partnership operating costs.

The basis for these sums is:

- Above average standard level of on-costs (50%) on top of basic salary.
- Assumed salary increases of 4.5% in 2023/24 and 3% in 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.
- Provides a 50% RFCC contribution to the average estimated cost of the roles.
- Also accounts for shortfall in funding in 2023/24.

This amounts to an increase in RFCC contribution of £60K per year.

There were no comments or questions.

**Recommendation: We considered and recommend the RFCC:**

- Supports the revised RFCC contribution of **£42K** per partnership per year, fixed for the next three years from 2024/25 to 2026/27, with this formally and explicitly split into:
  - o **£37K** for the co-ordinator role.
  - o **£5K** partnership support costs.

**Votes in favour:** Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrocks, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Silvester, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Ayrton, Councillor Brennan, Pieter Barnard and Councillor Mannion.

Neville Elstone advised there has been significant discussion and input to this review and thanked all for their work in developing the proposal.

**7. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting of the FBA Sub-Group on 5 January 2024**

We were referred to two items of matters arising, which came from the last Sub group meeting in January. Neville advised both items have been addressed which include: the request for an RFCC induction – two RFCC induction sessions have taken place during March 2024; and, with regard to the Wyre NFM project, this item this will be brought to the July 2024 meeting.

All voting Members approved the draft minutes of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting held on 5 January 2024.

There were no further comments or matters raised.

**8. Any Other Business**

Neville advised no items have been put forward and asked if there were any items or comments, which there were none.

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He thanked everyone for attending the meeting and thanked those who have pulled the information together, recognising the amount of work that goes into the preparation of papers. He thanked attendees for their time, consideration and thought, along with the engaging discussion. He advised it is great news re the NFM project and he is pleased that we have been able to provide contributions to Cheshire East and commended the officers from Cheshire East for their determination to get these projects over the line.

There were no further items of business and the meeting was closed.

**9. Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting is 5 July 2024.

DRAFT

## North West Investment Programme

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

**12<sup>th</sup> April 2024**




**1. Purpose**

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

The FBAG are asked to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note the progress delivering the 2023-24 capital and resource programmes</li> <li>• Note the current / future position of the Local Levy Programme and latest spend forecast</li> <li>• Allocation for the 2024/25 capital and resource programme</li> </ul>

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



**2.1. Overview**

			
	<b>Properties to be better protected</b>	<b>Partnership funding</b>	<b>Efficiency savings</b>
<b>National Overview</b>	We are investing over £5 billion the next six years to better protect hundreds of thousands of properties.	We have secured approximately £1.5 billion of partnership funding contributions	£49 millions of efficiency savings (for 22/23 and at Q3 23/24 to date) against a cumulative target of £132 million
<b>North West Overview</b>	3,383 properties forecast to be better protected in 2023-24.	Approximately 10% of the North West six year Programme is made up of partnership funding.	£7,310,010 of efficiency savings (for 22/23 and at Q3 23/24 to date) against a cumulative target in the region of £20 million

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2.2 2023-24 Programme

What outcomes are we delivering?

		<b>2023-24 * Target</b> 3,598	<b>2023-24 Forecast</b> 3,383	<b>2023-24 Actuals at the end of Jan</b> 2,930
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*\*No official RFCC target. Targets are split by Area.*

2.2.1 Forecast figures at end of January 2024 indicate the North West will better protect 3,383 properties from flooding this year, of which 2,930 properties are now better protected. The forecast reported at the last FBASG was 3,462, a decrease of 79. 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.

2.2.2 Targets for each project have been increased by 20% to account for Non-Residential Properties (NRP). We found that this is overestimated for major projects (for example, Wyre NRP target was set at 351 properties while actual figure is only 4 properties).

2.2.3 We have seen projects that were forecasting to complete in 2023/24 pushed out into next year's programme, an example of this is Penketh and Whittle had a target of 221 properties better protected, which will now be claimed in 2024/25.

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

	<b>Capital funding available</b> <b>£109.2 million</b>	<b>Capital forecast</b> <b>£98.5 million</b>
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2.2.5 The total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2023-24 programme is £109.2 million. This includes £94.8 million of central Government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid), £8.45 million of Local Levy and £5.9 million of Partnership Funding Contributions.

2.2.6 Forecasts at mid-February 2024 show that we are expecting to draw down £98.5 million this year. This is £10.7 million less than allocated, and £8.7 million less than forecasts reported at the last meeting. This is due to several projects being deferred, such as:



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Scheme	Area	EA/LA	Value (£k)
Shap Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme	CLA	EA	~£2,000
Lindale Road Grange over Sands	CLA	LA	~£2,000
Preston and South Ribble	CLA	EA	~£1,300
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme	GMMC	EA	~£1,300
Salford Flood Alleviation Improvements	GMMC	EA	~£745
Penketh and Whittle FRM Scheme	GMMC	EA	~£865
ENVRECON 23-24 Mersey Dids-cap	GMMC	EA	~£606
Churchill Ave Culcheth Culvert Renewal	GMMC	LA	~£305
			£7,821

2.2.7 At the end of January actual spend is 77% of the full year forecast. Environment Agency schemes have spent 79% of their forecast – with £17.2 million left to spend. Local Authority schemes have claimed 71% of their forecast with £4.9 million still to claim in 2023-24. Please refer Appendix B.

*Note: Figures above are till end of Jan and additional claims are expected before year end*

2.2.8 Challenges throughout 2023-24 (this financial year):

- We still have £22.2 million to be claimed in the last month of the year.
- There have been 9 named storm events between September 2023-January 2024, which has caused disruption to delivery of the capital programme (Storms: Agnes – September, Babet – October, Ciaran and Debi – November, Elin, Fergus and Gerrit – December and Henk and Isha – January)
- Adverse weather conditions during the winter months have delayed delivery of all programmes.
- Resources (all RMAs) – resources availability in LA continues to be a challenge.

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

2.2.9 The Environment Agency Portfolio Management Office now leads on co-ordination of efficiency submissions and reporting. We have received efficiency claims data for Q1, Q2 and Q3 submissions for this current financial year, with a total accepted claims value of £6,382,560 with contributions from 15 projects across the Northwest (£32,222,703 Nationally across 53 projects). Please refer appendix F for 23-24 detail. We are forecasting to achieve 7% of efficiencies across the North-West for 2023/24 against a target of 10%. This is vastly improved from previous years.

**2.3 2023-24 EA Resource Maintenance Programme**

2.3.1 Environment Agency Resource funding for the Northwest currently totals £22.415 million (increased from £21.056 million in January report). This

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includes staff costs, maintenance and resource projects. As of the end of February we are forecasting £27.435 million, which is £5 million above budget and approximately £3 million increase from January report.

National have been made aware of the forecast overspend in February.

**EA Resource Programme financial summary 2023-24**

<b>Resource Programme, inc. Maintenance, Staff Costs and Resource Projects</b>	<b>Budget £k</b>	<b>Forecast £k</b>	<b>Forecast Variance to Budget £k</b>
Cumbria & Lancashire	12,016	15,376	-3,359
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	10,399	12,059	-1,659
EA Total FCRM GiA Resource	22,415	27,435	-5,018

**2.4 2024-25 Capital and Resource Programme**

2.4.1 The Northwest Grant in Aid indicative capital allocation for 2024-25 (£98.6 million) has now been confirmed and approved by the Environment Agency Board. This figure is for capital maintenance, defence & property level resilience schemes. It also includes the enabling & support programme including Asset Reconditioning. See Appendix C for details.

2.4.2 The Resource Programme has not yet received its final allocation for 2024-25. See Appendix C for indicative Resource Maintenance Allocations.

2.4.3 Risks to the capital programme for 2024-25 (next financial year):

- We are continuing to see partnership funding gaps increase across many schemes, which may delay progress or stop the scheme all together.
- The transition of frameworks being rolled out into operation, may have an impact on delivery in the first two quarters of 2024/25.
- Resources continue to be stretched into next year's programme.

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

**3.1 Current position 2023-24**

3.1.1 Forecasts (to be confirmed following 2023-24 final outturn, expected before the next meeting) indicate we will draw down £6.4 million which is £1.8 million less than allocated. This is a reduction in forecast of approximately £500k since January’s meeting and takes account of the following main forecast changes:

Scheme	EA/LA	Forecast reduction
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Lindale Road Grange over Sands	LA	£270k due to delayed delivery (Reprofiled to 2024/25)
Irwell Vale to Chatterton	EA	£101k - Project is closing due to funding gap. Minimal spend only in 23/24
Sankey Brook	EA	£115k – Local levy moving into next CSR

<b>2023-24</b>	
<b>Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)</b>	
Cash balance at start of year	12.216 *
Local Levy income	4.412
Total available balance	16.628
Allocation	8.153
Forecast	6.392
Variance to allocation	1.761
Expected remaining cash balance at year end	10.236

\* Cash balance has been updated to include interest earned on balances at the end of 2022/23 which was £216k.

### 3.2 2024-25 Forward Look

3.2.1 The North West RFCC will start the 2024-25 financial year with total balance of £15.3m (£4.544m income, £10.236m carried forward and £0.52m interest on balances at the end of 2023-24). The total current forecast for 2024-25 is £9.849m (including the four requests for Local Levy support below). The North West RFCC will therefore be carrying a balance of £5.451m at the end of 2024-25.

<b>2024-25</b>	
<b>Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)</b>	
Cash balance at start of year (expected)	10.236
Expected interest from 2023/24	0.520 (tbc)*
Local Levy income (4.412 + 3%)	4.544
Total available balance	15.300
Latest forecast	9.849
Expected remaining cash balance at year end	5.451 *

\* Including expected interest from 2023/24 balances.

### 3.3 Requests for Local levy support

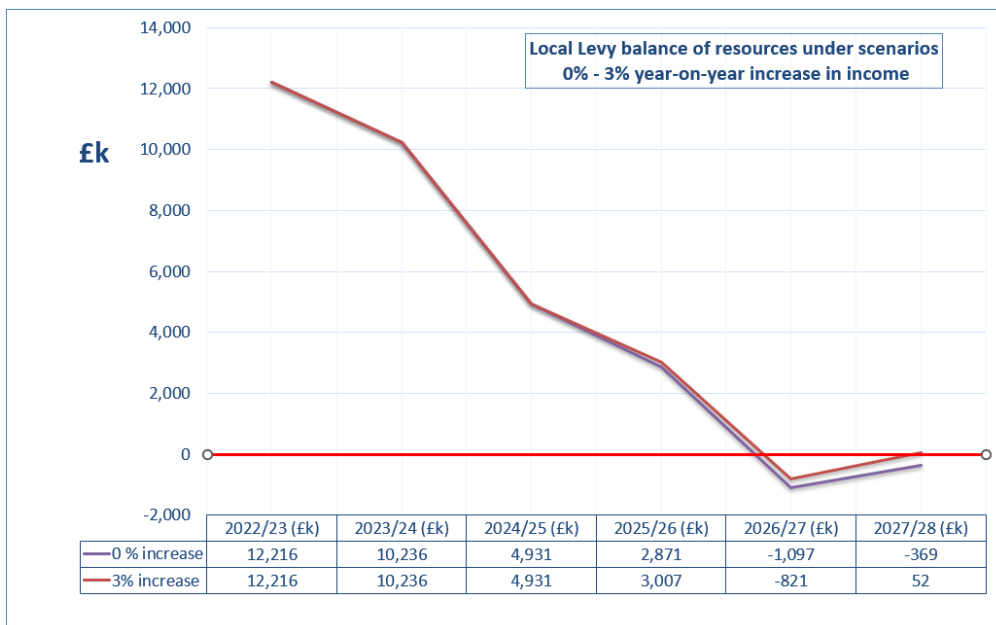
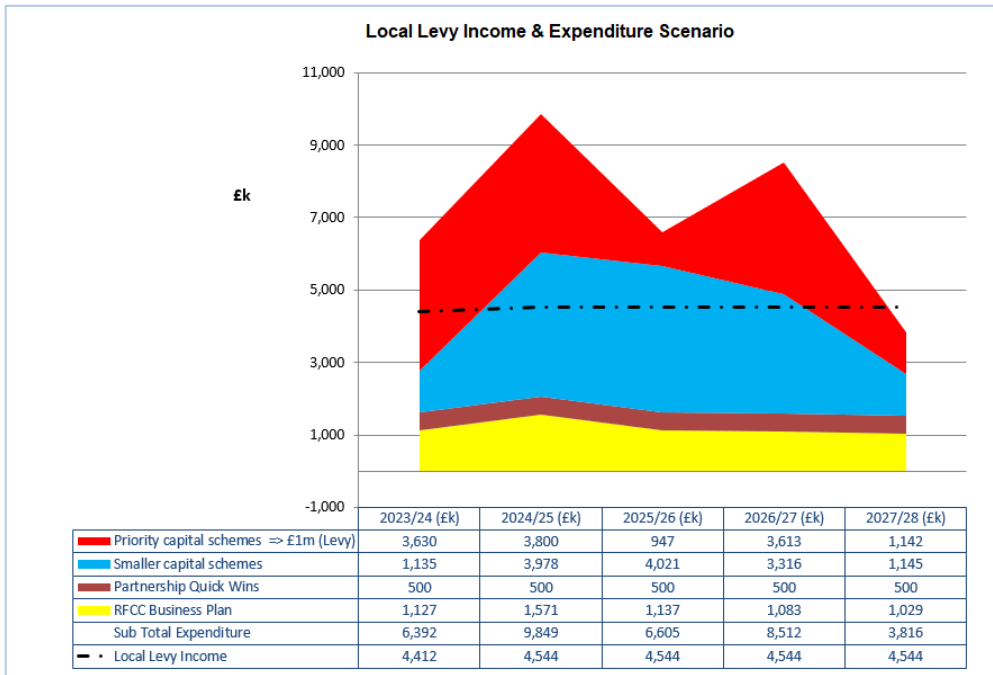
3.3.1 Appendix G provides a briefing note on the 'Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme. This is a request for the RFCC to increase the

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Local Levy support contribution from £3m to £5m which represent 6% of the project total cost.

- 3.3.2 Appendix H provides a briefing note on the 'Local Levy request for Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme. This is a request for the RFCC to approve Local Levy contribution of £30k which represents 15% of the project total cost of £200k. This project will deliver reduced flood risk to a primary school and three residential properties.
- 3.3.3 Appendix I provides a briefing note on the Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (Ryle Street Culvert upgrading and clearance works). This is a request for the RFCC to approve Local Levy contribution of £120k which represents ~ 70% of the project total cost of £175k. This project will deliver reduced flood risk to 15 residential properties, improve channel conveyance and increase the local capacity of the culvert thereby reducing the likelihood of the culvert surcharging and flooding properties and highways. This scheme attracts £45,254k GiA and not eligible for other contributions. The local authority will contribute a further £10k towards this project.
- 3.3.4 There is a further request for £150k Levy funded Business plan for Cumbria NFM pipeline development which is detailed in a separate business plan update report.
- 3.3.5 The below graphs show the income & expenditure scenario (with Local Levy support for the above requests included). In these updated scenarios, the total balance of Local Levy reduces to below zero in 2026/27 however with the level of risk carried and changes we experience each year we believe this can be managed and some spend can be deferred to 2027/28 at a later stage if required.

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\* Local Levy balances above exclude interest expected on balances in future years

- Asks of the FBAG:**
- To note the current position and latest spend forecast.
  - Note and recommend for approval the four requests for Local Levy support.

Please note there is a separate report covering updates to the RFCC Business Plan. See Agenda Item 5.

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**APPENDICES**

Appendix A	Properties better protected – 2023-24 forecast and target breakdown
Appendix B	Capital Funding spend to date (actual)
Appendix C	2024-25 Capital Programme Final Allocation
Appendix D	Local Levy ‘Quick Wins’ claims in 2023-24
Appendix E	Top 10 schemes with approved Local Levy contribution
Appendix F	Efficiency Savings
Appendix G	Local levy request for Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme
Appendix H	Local Levy request for Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme
Appendix I	Local Levy request for Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (Ryle Street Culvert upgrading and clearance works)

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Properties better protected – 2023-24 forecast, target and actuals breakdown</b>
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	<b>Properties better protected – 2023-24 Forecast and Target data</b> (includes all rOM: 2A, 2A.NRP, 2B, 2B.NRP, 3, 3.NRP)
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Scheme Name	Partnership	2023/24 Forecast	2023/24 Target (for info only)	Actuals
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	Lancashire	1,760	1,896	1,760
Radcliffe & Redvales Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester	430	0	430
West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme	Merseyside	245	0	245
ENVDebrisScreensGMMC	Cross-Partnership	102	127	102
Skirting Beck, Egremont	Cumbria	83	75	83
Jenny Beck Culvert Refurbishment, Bolton	Greater Manchester	65	81	65
Appleby pumping station capital maintenance	Cumbria	51	0	51
CL Culvert Refurbishment Programme	Cross-Partnership	45	40	45
Lentworth Drive at Burrow Beck	Lancashire	44	40	44
Flimby Surface Water Alleviation - RMA Scheme	Cumbria	34	31	34
Ravenglass, Cumbria - Surface Water	Cumbria	20	19	20
North Road, Holme Village Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	17	0	17
Fitzgerald Drive, Darwen	Lancashire	15	0	15
Kirkby Stephen Combined Flood Risk	Cumbria	13	0	13
Grant Close, Westbrook FRM Scheme	Cheshire	6	0	6
Penketh and Whittle FRM Scheme	Cheshire	0	275	0

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Churchill Ave Culcheth Culvert Renewal	Cheshire	0	30	0
Badgers Rake Lane, Little Sutton	Cheshire	5	4	0
Adder Hill Great Boughton	Cheshire	3	0	0
Newchurch Estate, Culcheth, Warrington	Cheshire	0	52	0
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	Cheshire	0	16	0
Little Bollington River Bollin PLR	Cheshire	0	14	0
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	Cheshire	12	0	0
Woolston Park FRM Scheme	Cheshire	13	0	0
Frog Lane Drainage Improvement Scheme	Cheshire	3	0	0
Black Brook Culvert St Helens	Cheshire	0	9	0
Ewan Close, Barrow in Furness	Cumbria	0	71	0
Threlkeld Village	Cumbria	0	40	0
Lindale Road Grange over Sands	Cumbria	0	21	0
Greystoke Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	0	19	0
Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	Cumbria	0	12	0
Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	0	12	0
Spittal Farm, Wigton	Cumbria	9	0	0
Orchard Place, Cleator Moor	Cumbria	0	31	0
Shap Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme	Cumbria	0	31	0
Manchester Restoration of Open Channels of Ordinary Watercourses	Greater Manchester	309	385	0
Golburn Clough, Greenfield Oldham	Greater Manchester	36	0	0
Lenham Gardens Surface Water Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester	13	0	0
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	Greater Manchester	0	82	0
Manchester Trash Screens Phase 2	Greater Manchester	0	37	0
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Lancashire	0	22	0
Lumb Brook, West View, Rossendale	Lancashire	50	47	0
Hardman Brook-Hall Carr Brook, Hardman Avenue, Rawtenstall	Lancashire	0	20	0
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	Merseyside	0	15	0
Forty Pitts Drain (possible collapse)	Merseyside	0	44	0
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,383</b>	<b>3,598</b>	<b>2,930</b>

\* Projects with a 2023-24 target and a zero forecast are still expected to deliver the properties later this CSR.



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Partnership	Number of schemes forecasting properties better protected in 2023-24	Total 2023-24 Forecast	Total 2023/24 Target (for info only)	Actuals
Greater Manchester	5	853	585	495
Merseyside	2	245	59	245
Cheshire	7	42	400	6
Cumbria	7	227	362	218
Lancashire	4	1,869	2,025	1,819
Cross-Partnership	2	147	167	147
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3,383</b>	<b>3,598</b>	<b>2,930</b>

Appendix B	Capital Funding spend to date (actual at end January 2024) – (£ million)
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Partnership	Full Year Forecast	Spend/claimed to date	Variance	EA remaining to spend	LA remaining to claim
Greater Manchester	£12,916,962	£6,690,284	-£6,226,678	£4,998,408	£1,228,270
Merseyside	£6,014,158	£3,883,761	-£2,130,397	£31,473	£2,022,761
Cheshire	£4,600,071	£3,223,689	-£1,376,382	£591,533	£784,849
Cumbria	£27,963,806	£22,067,198	-£5,896,609	£5,465,609	£431,000
Lancashire	£36,128,625	£31,042,264	-£5,086,362	£4,629,362	£457,000
Cross-Partnership	£8,349,398	£6,867,059	-£1,482,339	£1,482,339	£0
<b>Total</b>	<b>£95,973,020</b>	<b>£73,774,254</b>	<b>-£22,198,766</b>	<b>£17,198,723</b>	<b>£4,923,880</b>

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**Appendix C | 2024-25 Capital Programme final allocation**

**Total Programme Overview (Inc Support Programmes & Rec)**

	CLA	GMMC	NW
TPE	74,425,591	37,050,418	111,476,009
All GiA	65,880,591	32,681,494	98,562,085

**Overview for Def, CM and PLP Projects**

	CLA			GMMC			NW		
	Total	EA	Other RMA	Total	EA	Other RMA	Total	EA	Other RMA
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 Man	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
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>98,544,392</b>	<b>64,060,205</b>	<b>21,570,263</b>	<b>12,913,924</b>

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**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 Manc	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
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>98,544,392</b>	<b>64,060,205</b>	<b>21,570,263</b>	<b>12,913,924</b>

**Support Programmes & Reconditioning**

Programme	CLA Allocation	GMMC Allocation	NW Total Allocation
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,341,000</b>	<b>9,591,000</b>	<b>12,932,000</b>
<b>Reconditioning</b>	<b>1,345,000</b>	<b>7,675,000</b>	<b>9,020,000</b>
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

**FCRM GiA Resource Maintenance Indicative allocation by RFCC**

RFCC	2023/24 Final allocation (£m)	2024/25 current Indicative allocation (£m)
<b>North West</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>12.4</b>
Anglian Eastern	8.9	8.5
Anglian Great Ouse	5	4.9
Anglian Northern	11.8	11.4
Northumbria	2.9	2.8
Severn and Wye	4.6	4.2
South West	5.4	5.3
Southern	11.5	11.4
Thames	20.6	20.1
Trent	15.8	16.3
Wessex	8.1	8.5
Yorkshire	13.8	14.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>120.2</b>	<b>120.2</b>

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**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

**Outcome Measures**

CLA		
Project	EA/oRMA	rOMs
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>1,057</b>
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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>653</b>
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

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**Appendix D | Local Levy 'Quick Wins'**

Partnership	2023/24 Allocation	2023/24 Forecast	Actual Claims to end of January 2024
Greater Manchester	£ 100,000	£ 100,000	£ 40,000
Merseyside	£ 100,000	£ 100,000	£ -
Cheshire	£ 100,000	£ 100,000	£ -
Cumbria	£ 100,000	£ 100,000	£ 50,000
Lancashire	£ 100,000	£ 81,000	£ 81,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 500,000</b>	<b>£ 481,000</b>	<b>£ 171,000</b>

*Please Note: Figures above are from the end of January and most of the remaining claims have already been received.*

**Appendix E | Top 10 schemes with approved Local Levy contribution**

Scheme Name	Partnership	LRMA Name	2021-2022 to 2026/2027 (£k)
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	Greater Manchester	Environment Agency	£3,700
Preston and South Ribble	Lancashire	Environment Agency	£3,000
River Irwell, Kearsley	Greater Manchester	Environment Agency	£3,000
Fleetwood & Copse Brook Scheme	Lancashire	Environment Agency	£1,770
West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme	Merseyside	Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council	£1,605 (claimed Aug 23)
Appleby Flood Risk Management Scheme	Cumbria	Environment Agency	£1,500
Kendal Appraisal Package - Kendal	Cumbria	Environment Agency	£1,430
River Calder, Padiham	Lancashire	Environment Agency	£1,300
Penketh & Whittle	Greater Manchester	Environment Agency	£1,250
Lancaster Caton Road (Phase 3)	Lancashire	Lancashire city council	£1,116

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<b>Appendix F</b>	<b>Efficiency Savings</b>
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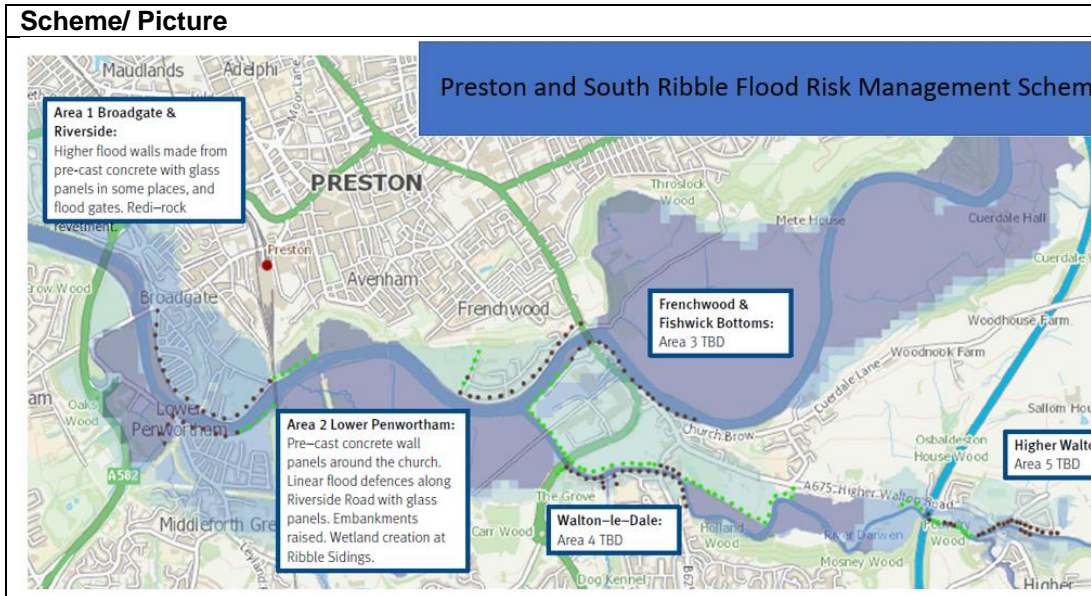
<b>GMMC and CLA projects</b>	<b>EA/LA</b>	<b>Efficiency Savings</b>
West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	£ 2,565,553
Kendal FRMS	EA	£ 1,064,868
Preston & South Ribble FRMS	EA	£ 835,121
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	£ 812,131
Penketh and Whittle FRMS	EA	£ 387,185
Lower Risk Debris Screens GMMC Assessments	EA	£ 224,925
CLA Recovery and Reconditioning	EA	£ 171,591
Pegs Pool & Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	£ 122,074
Cockermouth Asset Reconditioning	EA	£ 86,713
River Calder, Padiham	EA	£ 35,012
Sankey Brook FRMS	EA	£ 24,926
Alt Breach Repair and Maghull Review	EA	£ 15,992
Cutting the Carbon	EA	£ 15,624
Threlkeld Urgent Culvert Repair Works	EA	£ 12,282
Irwell Vale to Chatterton	EA	£ 8,564
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>£ 6,382,560</b>

<b>Area</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Sum of FDGIA Funded claimable saving (£)</b>
<b>GMMC: Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>£ 4,023,283</b>
<b>CLA: Cumbria and Lancashire</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>£ 2,359,278</b>
SSD: Solent and South Downs	23/24	£ 16,327,819
LNA: Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire	23/24	£ 2,920,160
KSL: Kent, South London and East Sussex	23/24	£ 2,481,606
YOR: Yorkshire	23/24	£ 1,624,765
DCS: Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly	23/24	£ 1,149,891
EAN: East Anglia	23/24	£ 547,275
HNL: Hertfordshire and North London	23/24	£ 463,736
NEA: Northeast	23/24	£ 277,698
WSX: Wessex	23/24	£ 47,192
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>£ 32,222,703</b>

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**Appendix G**

**Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme**



**Introduction/ Background**

The Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme is a £80M (approx.) project covering 9km<sup>2</sup> and protecting 3,611 residential and approx. 600 business properties.

Flood defences built between the 1920s and 1990s are at the end of their life and require replacing. During the 2015 floods almost 200 properties flooded in Preston and South Ribble, and this was deemed to be a ‘near miss’. It was fortunate that the peak flows on the Rivers Ribble and Darwen did not coincide with high tide.

As per the image above, the scheme is divided into 5 areas. Construction in Areas 1 and 2 started in Spring 2022 and is due to be completed in December 2024. The remainder of the scheme is subject to a Business Case Update Report (BCUR) that will require approval from the Large Project Review Group (LPRG) before we submit for planning permission for Areas 3&4 (Early in 2025).

We have met with beneficiaries of the scheme including Electricity North West; United Utilities; Network Rail; Lancashire County Council; Preston City Council and South Ribble Borough Council; as well as MPs and councillors representing the local communities. All are keen to support the scheme but there is little funding available in this area.

In previous years we have also engaged with numerous private businesses that fall within the area of benefit from flooding, but we were unable to secure any additional funding from these. With the existing economic climate, it is felt that

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spending more time re-engaging this business would not prove to be cost effective.

### **Scheme Development**

The Full Business Case (FBC) considered a number of options for the project, all incorporating linear defences to deliver sustainable flood risk management over the lifetime of the scheme. FBC Option 3b was the preferred option as it provided value for money to the UK taxpayer and the following:

- Fully financed through a combination of Grant-in-Aid, ERDF funding and GiA booster funding.
- Hard defence construction offset via the provision of environmental mitigations, such as opportunities to enhance local ecosystems whilst being sensitive to the heritage of the area.
- Enables future economic growth and investment within the area.

Construction on Areas 1 and 2 will be completed in December 2024. We aim to have LPRG approval ahead of this so that construction of Areas 3&4 can commence afterwards in 2025.

3,611 residential properties will benefit from the scheme (but not all of these will move to a lower risk band and be counted as OM2s). Approximately 600 businesses will benefit from the scheme. Critical infrastructure benefits including the West Coast Main Line, schools, several important commuter routes, water and electricity infrastructure. Most communities that are at risk of flooding in Preston are classified as within the 60% least deprived areas in England. However, approximately 1,108 properties at risk of flooding are classified as within the 40% most deprived areas in England. By achieving the Standard of Protection (SoP) provided by the proposed scheme, the detriment created by the flood risk will be substantially reduced and help to encourage future economic growth and investment in the deprived areas.

In Areas 1 & 2 the scheme will deliver a 1 in 75-year SoP, including an allowance for climate change. In Areas 3&4 the scheme will deliver a 1 in 50-year SoP for the present day. Where possible existing defences in Areas 3&4 we will be raised in height to maximise their design life (built c.2002). In Area 5 the scheme will deliver a 1 in 20-year SoP with an allowance for climate change. Modelling is currently being updated and as such the SoP for Areas 3, 4 and 5 may change.

Environmental enhancement benefits include:

- Creating 0.35Ha of new wetland habitat at Ribble Sidings. To be delivered in partnership with South Ribble Council who will be responsible for long term management.
- A combination of on and off-site tree planting (approx. 16,000 trees) to deliver biodiversity net gain targets. Phases 1&2 alone will deliver over 20% betterment. The addition of proposed tree planting at Fishwick Bottoms will deliver a significant improvement to local biodiversity. The



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team is working with Ribble Rivers Trust and Preston City Council to help realise these opportunities.

- Some trees removed in Areas 1 and 2 have already been adapted as root wads and used to stabilise riverbanks and provide a natural refuge for aquatic life. Over time these will trap sediment and encourage natural vegetation growth.

Landscape benefits include:

- Enhancement to the aesthetics and character of the area through replacement of defences which are more sympathetic to their setting.
- Improvements to important infrastructure such as the Preston Guild Wheel (a hugely popular cycle route).
- Striving for the most sustainable solution – using existing features, such as the old railway embankment in Area 2, which avoids the need for new defences along the riverbank. Identifying a more sustainable and acceptable solution at Miller Park in Area 1 which avoids works in a listed park and opposition from stakeholders.

Social benefits range from improved health and wellbeing through to greater prosperity. At the core of the health and wellbeing benefits is the creation of general enhancements e.g. viewing points across the river Ribble corridor. The riverside walk can currently be accessed from all residential areas that border the river corridor and this experience can be improved through the introduction of viewing points and other previously mentioned landscaping improvements. It would encourage more users for walking, running, dog walking and cycling.

#### **Funding and External Contributions**

When construction started on Areas 1 and 2 in Spring 2022, the scheme was fully funded. Since then, the scheme has experienced cost increases from design changes required due to:

- unforeseen ground conditions
- additional technical challenges of working in an urban area – e.g. multiple service diversions, road closures and security issues
- a requirement to rephase affecting withdrawing from ERDF funding (£6.5M)
- delays and rephasing due to local circumstances such as road closures
- planning restrictions and permitting constraints
- local community concerns

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**Preston and South Ribble Scheme Funding Table**

Source	Amount (£M)	Comment
Total Scheme Cost Estimate	Up to 80	Final scheme cost yet to be realised due risk realisation areas 1 & 2 and ongoing modelling & economic assess for areas 3, 4 & 5.
<u>FDGiA</u>	42.4	Projected to increase when economics are recalculated on final scheme design and new PF Calc.
<u>FDGiA</u> Booster	15.8	
Dept of Education	0.9	
Other Gov. Dept.	12.83	This includes the additional £10M allocated in August account for price rises as a result of necessary design and inflation.
Local Levy	3	£1M in 21/22 and £2M in 24/25

**This leaves a funding shortfall of up to £5M.**

Combined cost increases due to inflation and material availability has led to overall scheme costs increasing from approx. £65M to up to £80M. In August 2023 a funding gap of £15M was apparent so the Environment Agency has allocated an extra £10M of Other Government Department (OGD) funding to the scheme.

The project team has discussed the funding gap with the three local authorities at recent partner board meetings. They have each stated that there is no funding available to contribute towards the scheme. We are also seeking funding from the Secretary of State to close this funding gap.

**Recommendation**

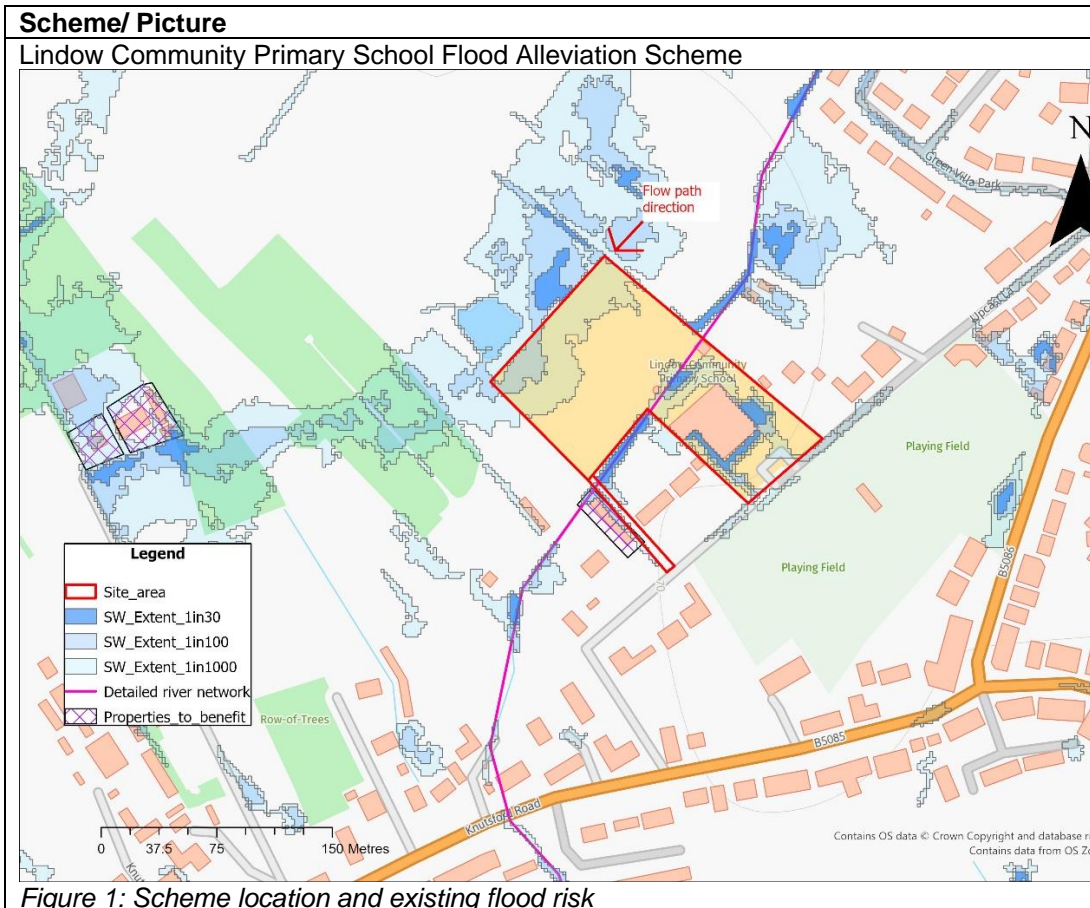
The project team requests that the Committee support an additional Local Levy (LL) contribution of £2M (taking total LL to £5M) to help deliver reduced flood risk to 3,611 residential properties, 600 businesses and critical infrastructure. 1,108 properties at risk of flooding are classified within the 40% most deprived areas in England. This support will provide confidence for LPRG to approve the remainder of the scheme if higher scheme costs are realised. We will continue to fill the funding gap via the sources noted above and use the LL as underwriting any remaining gap, satisfying the requirement that LL is funding of last resort.

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This contribution would take the Local Levy amount to £5m, which represents just over 6% of the project total (up to £80m) and less than the maximum of 15% as per the Local Levy Strategy

**Appendix H**

**Local Levy request for Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme**



**Introduction/ Background**

Lindow Community Primary School, Wilmslow, and three surrounding residential properties are at high risk of surface water flooding (Figure 1). The school has experienced internal flooding multiple times over many years; for example, the school hall was closed for three weeks in 2022 due to flooding and classrooms were flooded several times. This disrupted learning, recreational activities, caused costly damages needing repair, and has posed a safety risk. The flooding is believed to be predominantly surface water with additional fluvial flooding from the ordinary watercourse. There appear to be two overland flow routes where water drains from the northeast, due to topography, and flows directly towards the school towards the southwest. EA flood maps show flood depths of between 300-900mm are expected within the school grounds which is a significant hazard, especially for children. Around 60m of culverted ordinary watercourse flows through the school site from northeast to southwest and

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eventually discharges into the Mobberley Brook (Main River) 650m downstream of the site (Figure 2). Additionally, 270m of culverted land drain borders the sports fields and connects to the ordinary watercourse at the upstream and downstream ends within the site.

There are currently no flood resilience measures in place surrounding the school or along the ordinary watercourse.

Natural Flood Management (NFM) on site could intercept surface water overland flow routes and fluvial exceedance flows from the ordinary watercourse, to alleviate flooding to the school and surrounding properties.

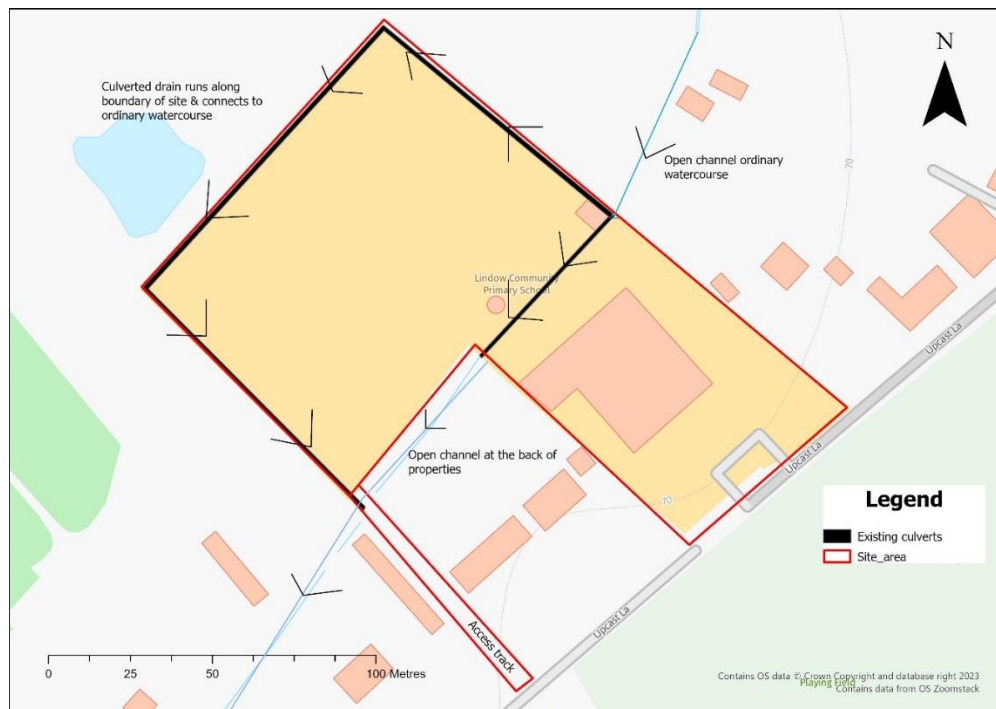


Figure 2: Existing drainage through the school site

**Key Partners:**

- Cheshire East Lead Local Flood Authority (CEC LLFA): leading the scheme & CEC own the land.
- Lindow Community Primary School: manage the site & will carry out future maintenance.
- Woodland Trust, Mersey Forest Trust & Cheshire Wildlife Trust: pledged to supply trees and time to plant them as part of the project (to create a Forest School area)
- Department for Education (DforE): SuDS for Schools partnership funding contribution towards scheme costs (TBC)
- Jacobs: CEC consultant likely to carry out the feasibility study & design of the scheme.
- Environment Agency: Grant in Aid partnership funding contribution towards scheme costs (TBC)
- Willis Bros: CEC contractor likely to carry out construction works

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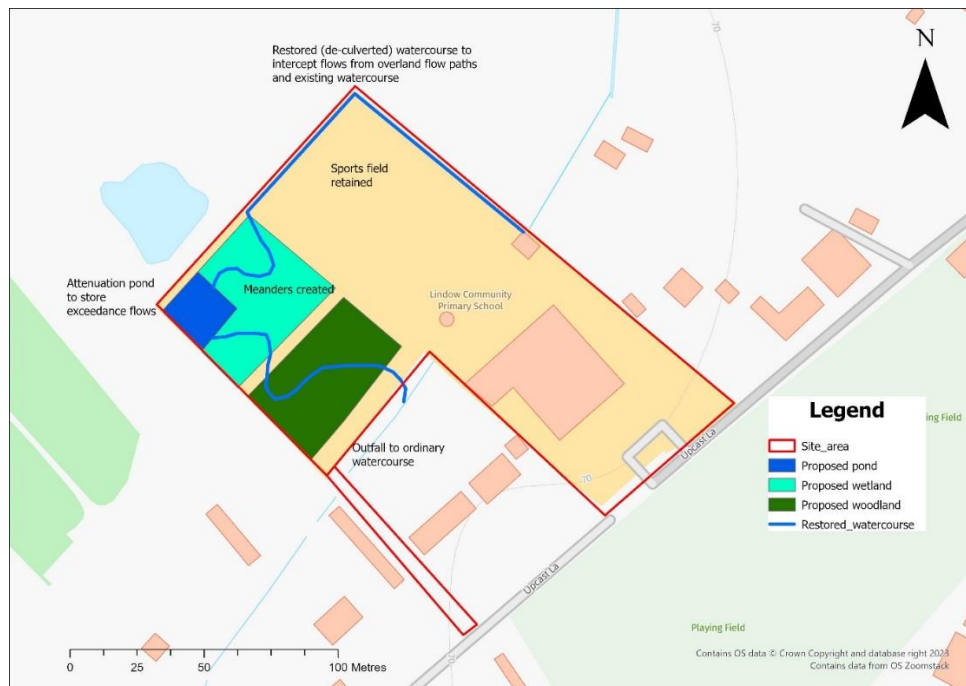
**Scheme Development**

NFM is proposed, with measures having been identified based on the site layout and initial discussions with the school and suitability with surrounding land, although solutions will be confirmed at design stage (Figure 3).

- Re-naturalising approximately 330m length of watercourse
- Construct a wetland approximately 1,400m<sup>2</sup>
- Construction a retention pond approximately 300m<sup>2</sup>
- Plant a woodland (Forest School) approximately 1,000m<sup>2</sup>

Assuming the project’s DforE funding application is successful (decision expected March 2024), and the EA approves the project submission on PAFS, the key milestone dates are expected to be:

- Outline Business Case (OBC) start date: April 2024
- OBC completion date: June 2024
- OBC approval: July 2024
- Design contract awarded: August 2024
- Construction contract awarded: November 2024
- Construction starts: July 2025 (in line with school summer holidays to minimise disruption)
- Ready for service: September 2025



*Figure 3: Proposed solutions*

At least three residential properties at risk today are expected to benefit by moving two risk bands. None are in a deprived area.

Lindow Community Primary School is currently at high risk and will benefit from the scheme.

At least one additional residential property is likely to be at high risk by 2040 and benefit from the scheme.

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**Environmental benefits:**

Significant environmental benefits could be realised, including Biodiversity Net gain, carbon sequestration, and educational benefits through the creation of a Forest School woodland, wetland, a pond, and improved grassland. The measures will provide significant habitat creation, groundwater re-connectivity, assist with climate regulation and will cater for low flows.

The tree planting, attenuation pond, wetland and de-culverting will help improve the quality of the water which eventually discharges into Mobberley Brook, helping it to achieve good ecological status (from moderate). Watercourse restoration will also improve fish passage, aquatic habitat and geomorphology. The ‘working with Natural Processes – Evidence Directory’ and EA Internal Culverting Policy supports the above benefits claims. The scheme supports the NWRFCC’s strategic aim to promote the mainstreaming of nature-based solutions for flood mitigation and manage water with nature.

Environmental regeneration of the land (re-purposing land not currently fully utilised for installation of NFM measures) and making the school building/site more resilient to climate change.

**Funding and External Contributions**

The total estimated scheme cost is £200,000

- Environment Agency Grant in Aid: eligible for £59.606k
- Department for Education (DforE) SuDS for Schools grant: Up to £95k applied for (decision expected March 2024)
- Cheshire East Lead Local Flood Authority (CEC LLFA): could contribute £15.395k
- United Utilities: conversations ongoing about potential contributions (financial or practical)

Assuming the above contributions materialise in full, the funding gap remaining is £30,000 which we hope would be provided by Local Levy. The funds would likely be required in financial year 2024/25 (for the construction).

**Recommendation**

The project team requests that the Committee support a Local Levy contribution of £30,000 to help deliver reduced flood risk to a primary school and three residential properties. 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. This scheme supports the Committee’s strategic aims to promote nature-based solutions and build flood literacy and resilience. The project could provide significant environmental and educational benefits and be a great case study to share with other RMAs (Risk Management Authorities) who could potentially replicate similar schemes across other schools which are at risk of flooding.

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**Appendix I**

**Local Levy request for Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (Ryle Street Culvert upgrading and clearance works)**

**Scheme/ Picture**

**Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (Ryle Street culvert upgrading and clearance works)**

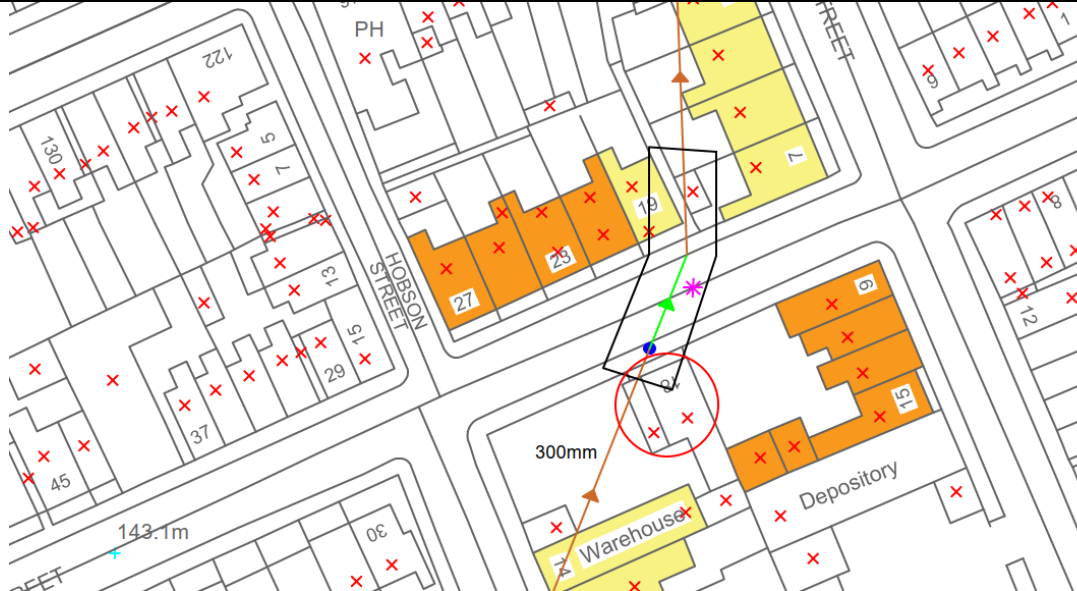


Figure 1: Site Location Plan showing the route of the culvert underneath Ryle Street / Hobson Street (culvert flows from south to north)



Figure 2: Site where 18 Hobson Street was previously demolished. Sink hole (open section of culvert) to the right of the photo demonstrating water levels near ground level during a dry day (not raining) and not flowing freely downstream.

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**Introduction/ Background**

In 2018 a sinkhole developed in the public highway at Ryles Pool, Macclesfield, Cheshire East. Consequently, Cheshire East Council carried out emergency repair works, eventually completed in 2021. During these emergency works, partial blockage of the ordinary watercourse was identified. Cheshire East Council were not able to fully survey the culvert due to physical obstruction within the culvert and access issues. A temporary 300mm piped culvert section was put in place as an emergency measure to maintain some channel conveyance.

At present, during rainfall events, water within the watercourse at adjacent private land (residential properties) is regularly observed to be close to or at ground level (1 residential property has internally flooded twice in the last few years). Groundwater ingress into the culvert has been observed following CCTV surveys, so there is an interaction between the culvert and groundwater. It is expected that during a large rainfall event, up to 10 residential properties could suffer internal flooding caused in part by the failure of the culverted watercourse to sufficiently convey water. The EA Long Term Flood Risk surface water flood map identifies at least 10 properties at High Risk in a localised “low spot”.

Cheshire East Council LLFA are the primary partner in finding a solution. The LLFA have also been engaging with United Utilities who have a combined sewer in close proximity to the ordinary watercourse. The ordinary watercourse falls beneath residential properties so is under the ownership of multiple riparian owners.

There is significant local interest in a solution. In 2020 a house situated above the line of the culvert (no 18 Hobson Street) was demolished on the advice of a private insurance company (Figure 2).

**Scheme Development**

The proposed option is to provide a replacement upsized culvert (from 300mm to 450mm) across the highway to connect upstream and downstream existing parts of the culvert.

This will improve conveyance and allow more water to be retained in the system thereby reducing the likelihood of the culvert surcharging and flooding properties and highways. The works will also safeguard the culvert section from further collapse (a health and safety improvement as well as flood risk).

Two maintenance access manholes will also be installed to improve access for future inspection and maintenance. The provision of the upsized culvert and manholes will allow specialised tools to clear and survey adjacent sections of the watercourse.

Due to the urgency (imminent flood and health & safety risks), OBC approval and commencement of works are planned for Spring 2024. The works are expected to be completed within 6 months of commencement.

10 residential properties are expected to directly benefit from these works over the next 25 years through a reduction in risk of fluvial flooding from the culvert and interacting groundwater and surface water flood risk.

The associated OM2 benefits are **£226,269k**.

These properties situated above the line of the culvert will also benefit from a reduced risk of culvert collapse so there is also a health & safety benefit.



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The installation of new manholes will also provide easier and safer access for future inspection and maintenance.

An additional 5 residential properties expected to be at high risk by 2040 will also benefit from this scheme.

**Funding and External Contributions**

The total estimated scheme cost is £175,000.

This includes costs to upgrade the culvert, install new access manholes and limited clearance and survey of the culvert.

No future costs have been included in the calculation as the maintenance of the culvert is the responsibility primarily of the riparian owners rather than the LLFA.

Cheshire East Highways will continue to maintain the section of culvert under Ryle's Street where it falls under the carriageway but we have not included these costs in the PFC; we are assuming that within the next 25 years (benefits period of these works) the only maintenance required would be inspection & jetting, so those kind of activities would be carried out as normal by the highways team for that section of culvert under Ryle's Street.

Under partnership funding rules, this scheme attracts £45,254k GiA.

There are no other existing partnership funding contributors.

The riparian owners (of the residential properties) are the main beneficiaries (apart from the Local Authority highways) for the scheme, but it is unlikely that contributions will be agreed and secured from the multiple riparian owners.

There is very little capital budget available within the Local Authority to provide for these works. The Local Authority has already spent £150,000 on the previous emergency works delivered by contractors between 2018 – 2021 (installation of temporary 300mm pipe and associated temporary works, surveys, road closures, highway re-surfacing, and installation of new chamber). This figure does not include the additional cost of Council resources managing the works over the years.

The Local Authority will contribute a further £10,000 towards this project.

The LLFA has considered all current available Partnership Funding routes and grants, however this scheme would not be eligible for any.

Therefore, it is likely a local levy value of £120,000 (the remaining funding gap) is now required for financial year 2024/25 to ensure other budgeted Local Authority capital flood risk works across Cheshire East are not impacted.

**Recommendation**

The project team requests that the Committee support a Local Levy contribution of £120,000 in principle to help deliver reduced flood risk to 15 residential properties, with benefits over the next 25 years.

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The works will improve channel conveyance and increase the local capacity of the culvert thereby reducing the likelihood of the culvert surcharging and flooding properties and highways.

The works will also address the imminent flood and health & safety risk of the culvert collapsing further.

Due to the culvert being under the ownership of multiple riparian owners, seeking contributions is very unlikely within the urgent timescales. If any other partner able to bridge the shortfall in funding is identified, the Local Authority will update the Committee accordingly.

END

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UPDATE ON EA RESOURCE MAINTENANCE DELIVERY



23/24 Maintenance Delivery Quarter 4 update



1. What we have delivered this quarter

Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire



Tree blockage clearance on  
Micker Brook in Cheadle



Maintenance of floodwalls at  
Westleigh



Maintenance of Flood  
embankments on the River



Compensatory Tree Planting in St Helens in conjunction with Mersey  
Forest and Local Farmers

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We have completed our annual Section 12 Inspections at our Reservoir Sites in order to ensure we are compliant with the Reservoir Act 1975 (Wigan Res in photo below)



South Lakes tidal door inspections in advance of high tides. This is our tidal flood gate in Ravenglass.



Operational Field Team undertaking annual vermin maintenance on flood embankments.

Wigan Flood Basin drainage works – installation of new coir rolls to prevent banking erosion. Work delivered by internal workforce.



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**2. Maintenance Delivery**

The graph below shows the allocated budget for the year, in comparison to year end position and agreed year end forecasts.

	GMMC	CLA	TOTAL
<b>APT Budget (£000)</b>	5213	6487	11700
<b>Yr End Forecast</b>	5841	8045	13886
<b>Yr End Position</b>	6014	8045	14059
<b>Variance %</b>	97	100	

The Year end position for both Area's will be over original budget but to our agreed and accepted forecasts.

<b>GMMC</b>					
Quarter	MEICA	Electricity	Projects	Internal Maintenance	TOTAL
Q1	10	10	87	795	902
Q2	70	134	55	1574	1833
Q3	45	59	658	873	1635
Q4	25	84	662	700	1471
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>1462</b>	<b>3942</b>	<b>5841</b>

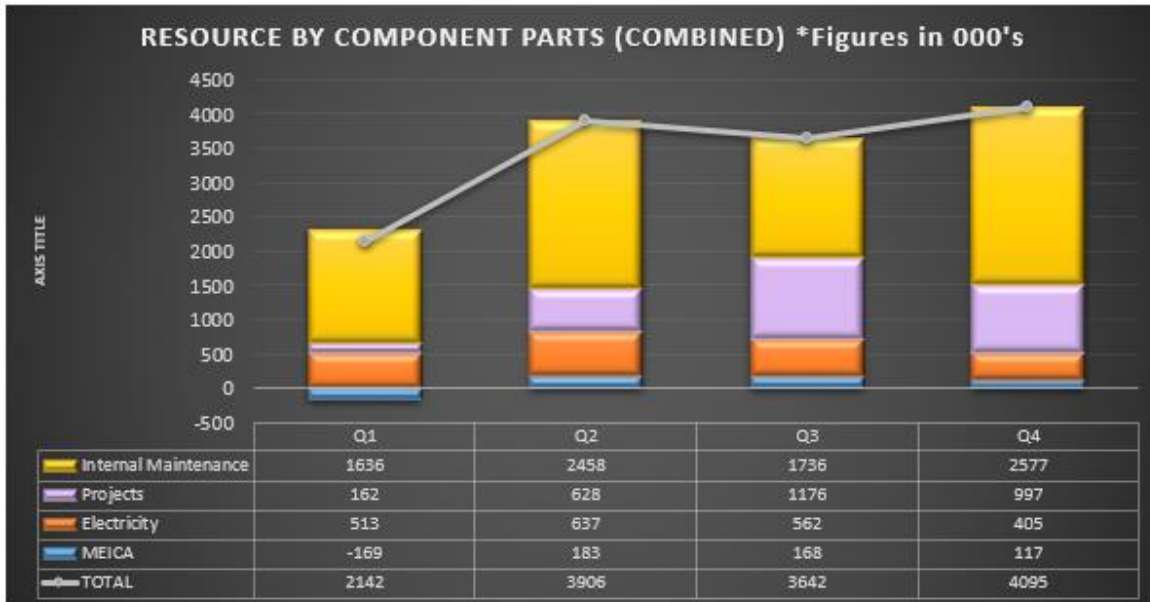
  

<b>CLA</b>					
Quarter	MEICA	Electricity	Projects	Internal Maintenance	TOTAL
Q1	-179	503	75	841	1240
Q2	113	503	573	884	2073
Q3	123	503	518	863	2007
Q4	92	321	335	1877	2624
<b>Total</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>1501</b>	<b>4465</b>	<b>7944</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>					
Quarter	MEICA	Electricity	Projects	Internal Maintenance	TOTAL
Q1	-169	513	162	1636	2142
Q2	183	637	628	2458	3906
Q3	168	562	1176	1736	3642
Q4	117	405	997	2577	4095
<b>Total</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>2117</b>	<b>2963</b>	<b>8407</b>	<b>13785</b>

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The chart above shows the breakdown of budgetary spend per quarter across the main spend routes of internal maintenance, projects, electricity and MEICA.

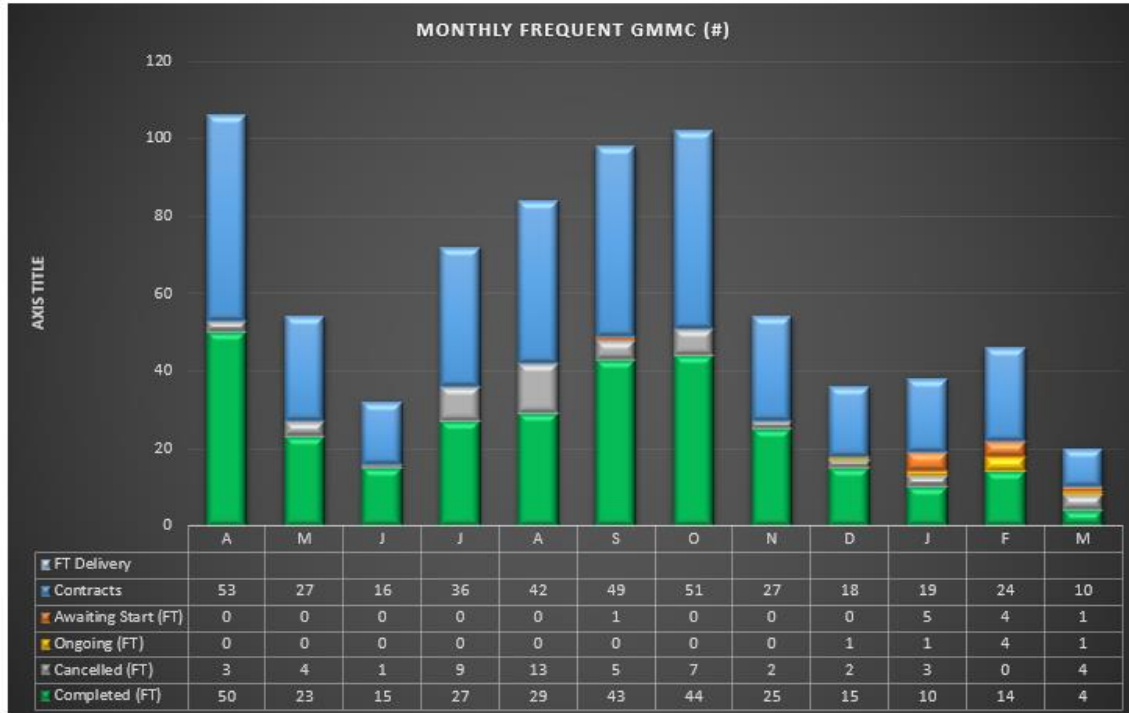
**2.1 Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Maintenance Progress**

Below shows the breakdown of frequent maintenance in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire delivered over the year. The graph demonstrates progress to date on completed work orders for the maintenance programme.

GMMC	366					
Month	Contracts	FT Delivery	Awaiting Start (FT)	Ongoing (FT)	Cancelled (FT)	Completed (FT)
A	53		0	0	3	50
M	27		0	0	4	23
J	16		0	0	1	15
J	36		0	0	9	27
A	42		0	0	13	29
S	49		1	0	5	43
O	51		0	0	7	44
N	27		0	0	2	25
D	18		0	1	2	15
J	19		5	1	3	10
F	24		4	4	0	14
M	10		1	1	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>299</b>

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Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire are on track to complete their maintenance programme by end March 2024.



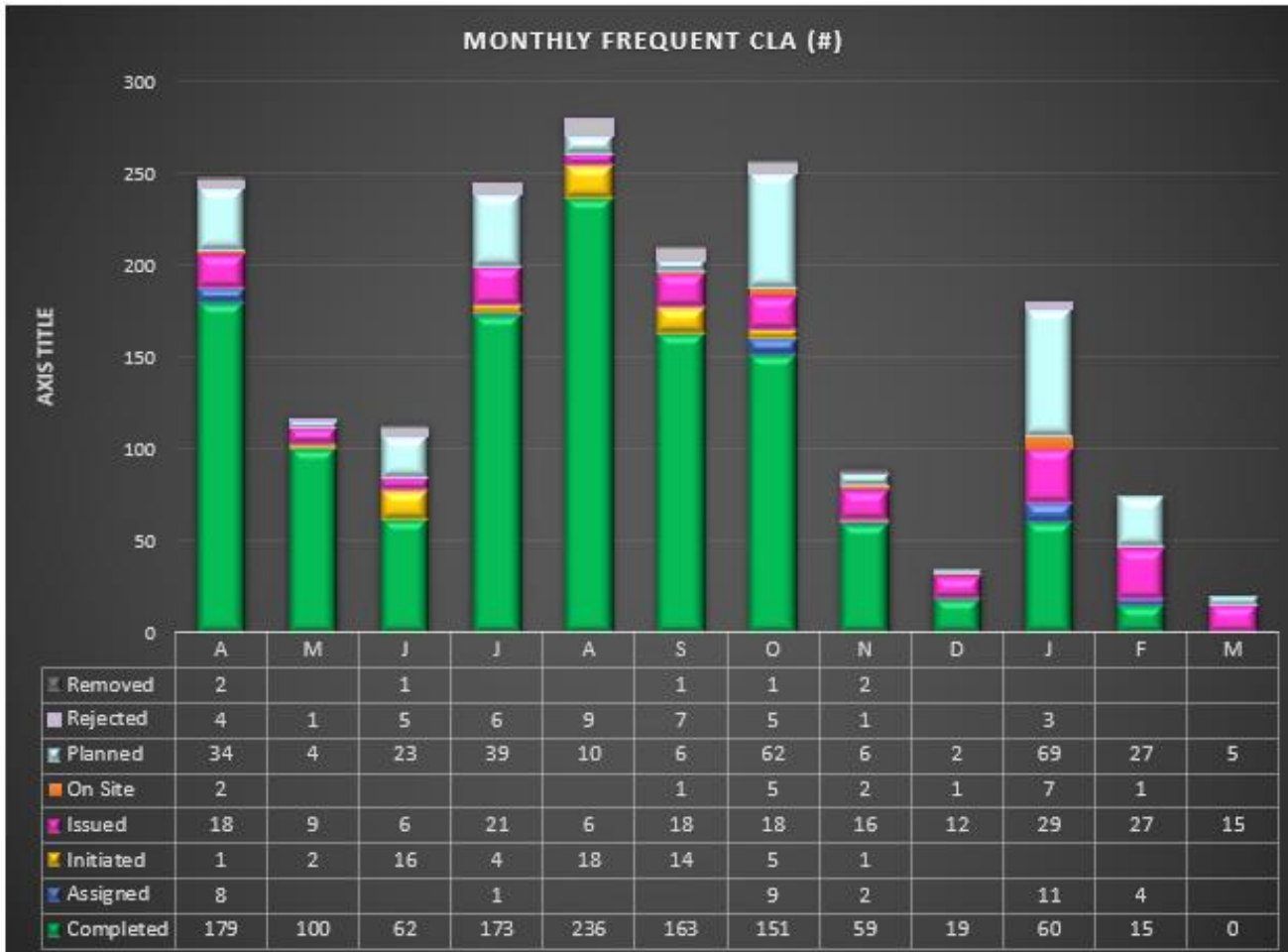
**2.2 Cumbria and Lancashire Maintenance Progress**

Below is the breakdown of frequent maintenance in Cumbria and Lancashire delivered throughout the year and shows completed progress against total planned programme.

CLA	Assigned	Initiated	Issued	On Site	Planned	Rejected	Removed	Completed
A	8	1	18	2	34	4	2	179
M		2	9		4	1		100
J		16	6		23	5	1	62
J	1	4	21		39	6		173
A		18	6		10	9		236
S		14	18	1	6	7	1	163
O	9	5	18	5	62	5	1	151
N	2	1	16	2	6	1	2	59
D			12	1	2			19
J	11		29	7	69	3		60
F	4		27	1	27			15
M			15		5			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1217</b>

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CLA Area are on track to complete their maintenance programme by end March 2024.



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### 3. Key messages and Challenges

#### End of Year Position

Areas have been asked to work to January forecasts for year end and this has mean overspending on original budgets, however we are working to our accepted forecasts.

#### Framework Renewals

The Environment Agency has a new maintenance framework due to go live in April 2024. We are working to try and minimise impact on delivery in 24/25

#### Uncertainty around funding

Initial Resource Allocation received for 24/25 was a 5% reduction on 23/24 budgets in Cumbria and Lancashire. Although in GMMC the allocation was more than that received in 23/24 this merely addressed the chronic underfunding in previous years and is still only 57% of what we had bid. We are waiting for final confirmation of budgets for 24/25

#### Resource

The EA has a recruitment pause on the moment which is delaying bringing people into the department, this is combined with a greater workload and competing challenges around data and programme delivery

Paper produced by Paul Bowden and Nikki Beale – Local Delivery Leads for GMMC and CLA.

March 2024

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE  
FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING****12 APRIL 2024****2024/25 FCRM CAPITAL AND ASSET MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME****Recommendations**

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

1. Note their approved capital and asset maintenance resource allocations for 2024/25 and the associated targets.
2. Note the updated capital allocations.
3. Continue to support the Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authorities in the delivery of the final 3 years of the current capital investment programme.

**Headline messages:**

- The final capital and asset maintenance resource allocations and associated targets for 2024/25 are set out in appendix A and B.
- Updated targets for the 6-year investment programme have yet to be agreed by Ministers.

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 On 8 February 2024 the Environment Agency Board approved the allocation of capital and resource funding for 2024/25 as described in the programmes consented at the January RFCC meetings.

**2.0 Latest delivery position – capital & asset maintenance**

- 2.1 Since the start of the programme in April 2021, over 250 schemes have better protected 87,000 properties, of which approximately 30,000 are by schemes led by other RMAs. Alongside better protecting properties, a range of other wider benefits have also been delivered through these schemes including protecting agricultural land, road and rail, and creating and improving natural habitats and rivers.
- 2.2 Our target for EA owned and maintained high consequence assets at required condition for 2023/24 was 94.5%. Overall, we are seeing a declining trend in asset condition, predominantly caused by insufficient funding for maintenance over the long term coupled with increasing frequency and severity of storms. Our aging asset base also means we have many older assets which deteriorate more quickly and require repair more often. Climate change also means our assets are put under pressure more frequently from both

prolonged dry weather as well as increasing flooding. This winter, the UK has experienced 10 named storms which puts increasing pressure on our assets.

- 2.3 More than 5400 additional asset inspections following the winter storms series have identified a significant drop of around 2% in our asset condition. As many as 1800 assets have been damaged, with some 1400 in high consequence systems. Currently around 92.5% of EA high consequence assets are at their target condition. Our long-term ambition is to reach 98%.
- 2.4 Third party assets inspected have been impacted but to a lesser degree with a drop in third-party maintained assets in high consequence system falling from 90.19% at target condition to 90.02% over the same period. (a drop of 0.17%)
- 2.5 In autumn 2023, the National Audit Office (NAO) completed a report on FCRM. To support successful programme delivery while ensuring compliance with environmental requirements and standards, the FCRM Portfolio was also reviewed by the Infrastructure Projects Authority (IPA) in November 2023. A number of recommendations and actions were reported by the NAO and IPA. Progress towards completing these recommendations and actions is a priority and work towards this is underway.

### **3.0 Capital programme – current position**

- 3.1 The capital allocation, as approved by the EA Board, was based on a review of deliverability across the Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). The Environment Agency will be running local deliverability health checks through the spring to help address delivery challenges and ensure appropriate actions are being taken to deliver the final 3 years of the programme.
- 3.2 Whilst no decision has been made on targets, we know the original 336,000 properties better protected target is unachievable. We are continuing to work with Ministers and Defra on revised targets for the programme. Our forecast delivery of 200,000 properties will still be a challenge and a collective effort will be needed between all RMAs, RFCCs and the Environment Agency to achieve this.
- 3.3 At a meeting in January, the Secretary of State agreed to our proposals to reprofile funding for the remaining years of the programme to maximise outcomes. This included agreement to proceed with the Frequently Flooded Allowance (FFA). Secretary of State also agreed to criteria , to use some funding to offset partnership funding pressures. A decision on which projects will benefit from FFA and contributions to partnership funding gaps is anticipated in late May. The updated programme business case has also been approved by Defra Permanent Secretary and subsequently through the HM Treasury Approval Process (TAP) in February.
- 3.4 In addition, the Environment Agency Board agreed to support projects reaching Full Business Case in 24/25. This was done in consultation with Area Programme Teams. The additional allocations can be found in Appendix A.

### Efficiencies

- 3.5 Projects have realised efficiencies that total £54 million so far in the current programme. This equates to around 2.8% 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 programme goes further in protecting as many communities as possible.

Carbon

- 3.6 Delivering carbon reduction on the capital programme is important 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.
- 3.7 This year we have also assessed emission targets for future years 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.
- 3.8 For all RMA projects, valuing the net impact of carbon from FCERM projects to help choose low carbon options in business cases is important. Supporting guidance for this is available [Valuing the carbon net impacts of FCERM projects - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuing-the-carbon-net-impacts-of-fcerm-projects). In 2024/25, we want to improve our systems further to report on RMA business case carbon forecasts and targets and to track their contribution to Net Zero Carbon reduction targets.

Reclassification of Budgets

- 3.9 As shared at the January RFCC Committee meeting, the Environment Agency has for some time had an exemption to accounting standards allowing resource (RDEL) costs associated with capital investments to be classified as capital (CDEL) in our accounts. This exemption has now come to an end. HMT approved the required reclassification of CDEL to RDEL funding for 2023/24 and recently approved for 2024/25. The remaining 2 years will be agreed through the next Spending Review.

RMA-led schemes

- 3.10 In October last year, we asked RMAs to complete a short confidence assessment of surface water schemes that remain on the capital programme, so we can support their delivery and the stability of the programme overall. We have acted on the results of this survey by reaching out to ADEPT and together, we have identified four priority areas to focus on. We will work in partnership with ADEPT and other RMAs over the next few months to take these priority work areas forward. The priority areas are:
- Training and sharing of best practice
  - Improving surface water scheme delivery
  - Looking forward to future programmes (improved pipeline planning)
  - Strategic partnerships and RFCCs.
- 3.11 The RMA delivered programme represents a significant (42%) portion of the national 200,000 properties better protected forecast, and to date RMA led schemes have better protected approximately 30,000 properties which is a fantastic achievement. Moving into the final three years of the current programme, and with a further 50,000 properties to protect, it is vital that forecasts for spend, outcome measures and timescales are as realistic and accurate as possible, to allow us to understand and address risks to delivery in a timely manner. To support this, a revised RMA PowerPortal and training package is in development, which will simplify and streamline the process of entering this information for RMAs. This, alongside the other measures detailed in this paper will form part of a suite of measures intended to support RMAs to continue delivering against what we know is a challenging backdrop of funding, capacity, and resource pressure.

### Stakeholder and Beneficiary Mapping Tool

3.12 The Stakeholder and Beneficiary Mapping Tool (SBMT), an EA led ArcGIS system, is over halfway through its development and is on schedule for roll out this summer. The SBMT is being developed to support the early stages of EA and RMA project development. We are currently seeking an RMA sponsor to support adoption across our community.

#### **4.0 Asset maintenance programme**

4.1 The approved asset maintenance resource allocation for 2024/25 is set out in appendix B.

### Recovery

4.2 Following the winter storms seen since October 2023 we have seen increased operating and repair costs. A submission was made to Government for additional funding in the Spring Budget but was unsuccessful. Owing to the scale of damage, this means we will need to limit investment to the most urgent additional operational costs and repairs within existing budgets.

4.3 However, as we are currently considering proposed approaches to this, we envisage seeking further input at future RFCC meetings.

4.4 In February 2024, £75m of new funding was announced for IDBs that protect agricultural land and rural communities from flooding. It is likely that the funding will be split between storm recovery and modernising and upgrading IDB assets and waterways for the future. Further details of the proposed fund are yet to be determined and will be communicated in due course.

#### **5.0 Recommendations**

5.1 The RFCC Committees are asked to:

1. Note their approved capital and asset maintenance resource allocations for 2024/25 and the associated targets.
2. Note the updated capital allocations.
3. Continue to support the Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authorities in the delivery of the final 3 years of the current capital investment programme.

**Dan Bond**  
**Deputy Director, Portfolio Management Office**  
**28 March 2024**

Appendix A: Capital allocations for 2024/25

Appendix B: Approved asset maintenance resource allocations for 2024/25

Appendix C: Process for allocating funding

**Appendix A - Additional Capital allocations for 2024/25 by RFCC**

The following sets out the additional capital allocations for each RFCC that requested funding through the full business case work (this is in addition to previously confirmed allocations).

<b>RFCC</b>	<b>Grant in Aid 24/25 (£)</b>
Anglian Northern	3,776,263
North West	170,000
Northumbria	90,000
Southern	50,000
Thames	455,000
Trent	76,000

**Appendix B: FCRM GiA asset maintenance resource allocation by RFCC**

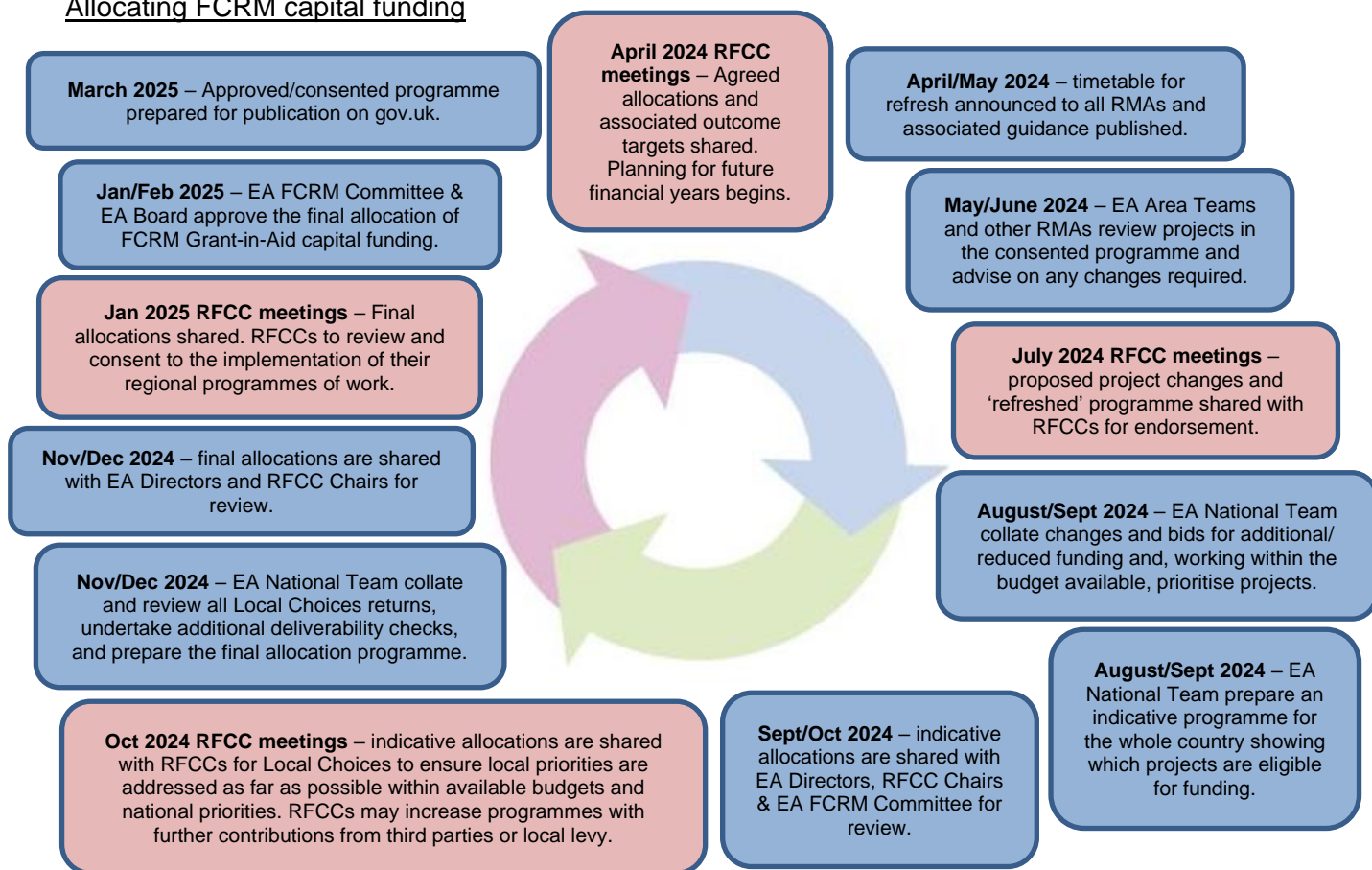
The following sets out the allocations for each RFCC, showing funding for asset maintenance, asset management projects and the effectiveness initiative. The allocation for 2023/24 is shown for information only.

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
<b>Total</b>	<b>120.2</b>	<b>120.2</b>

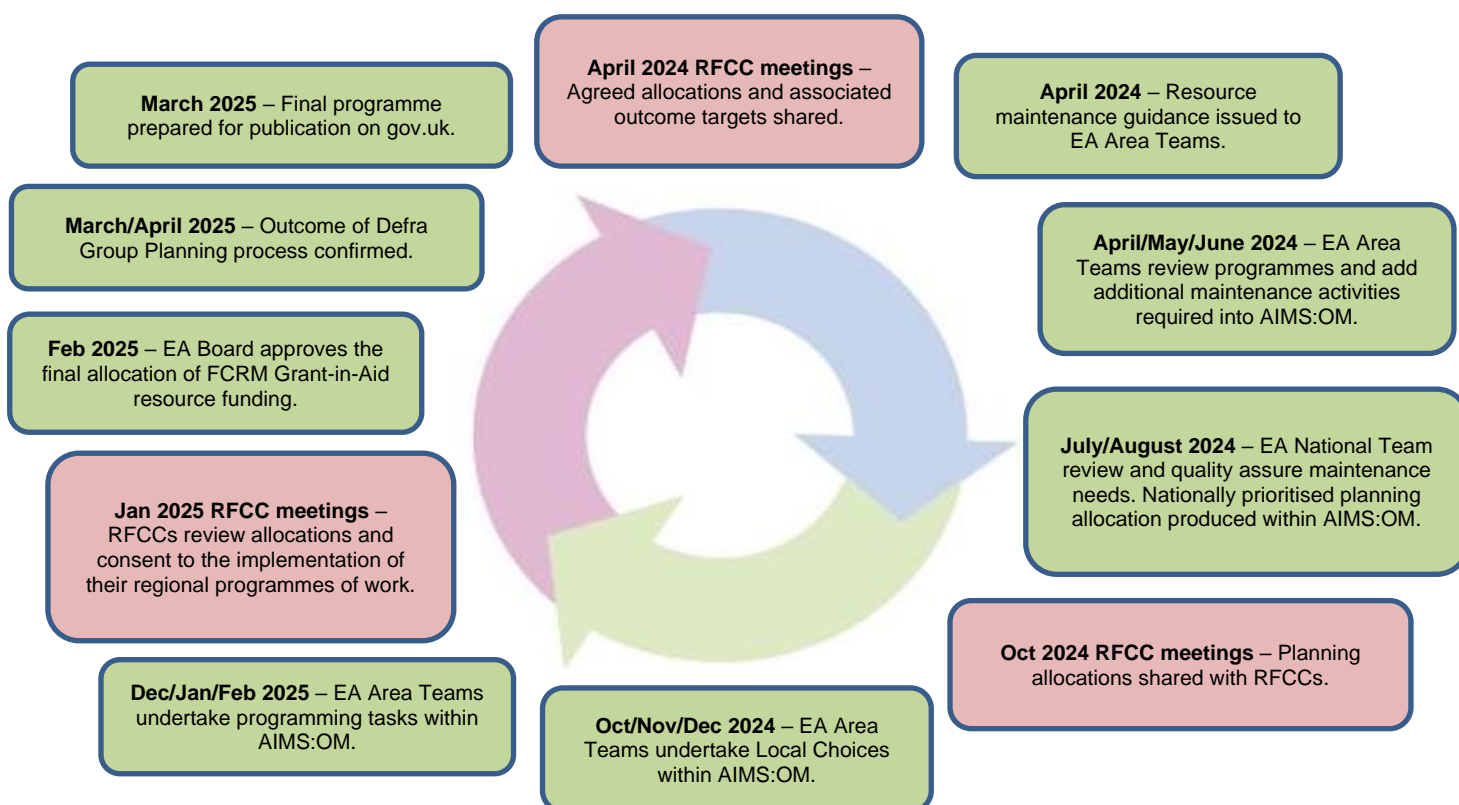
1. Funding for 2024/25 includes asset maintenance, asset management projects and the effectiveness initiative (linked to decommissioning).
2. Funding does not include grant in aid directed towards national asset management work (e.g. improvement in standards)
3. Allocations plan to include funding that 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 funding**

Allocating FCRM capital funding



Allocating FCRM resource maintenance funding



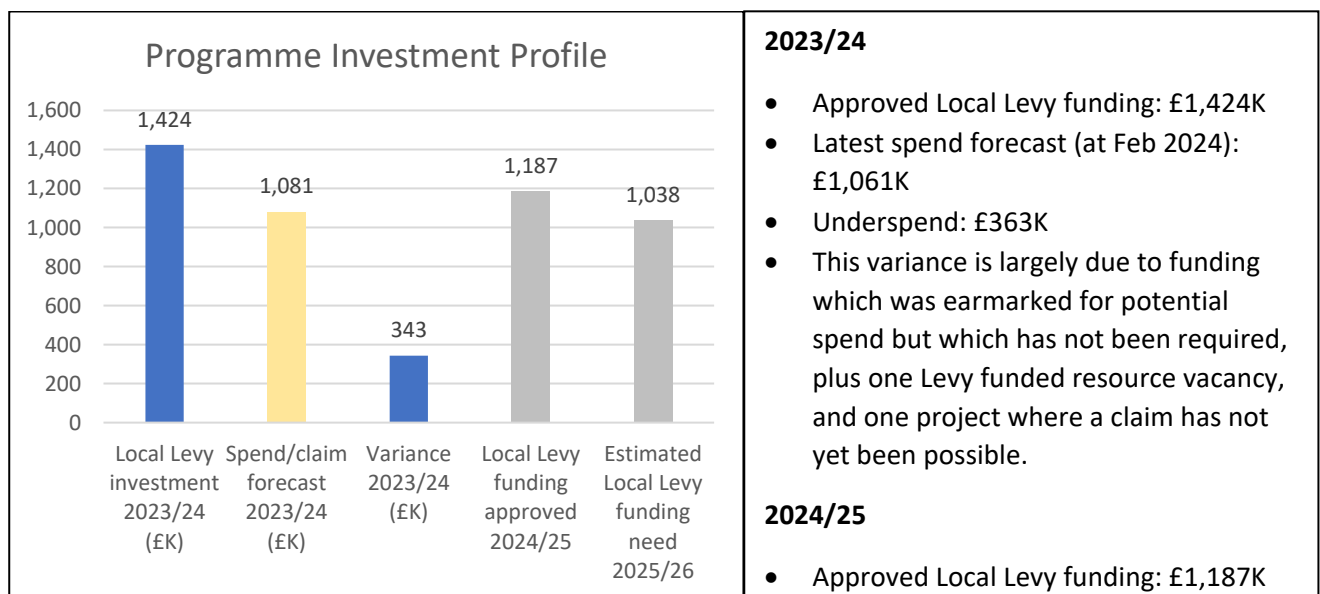
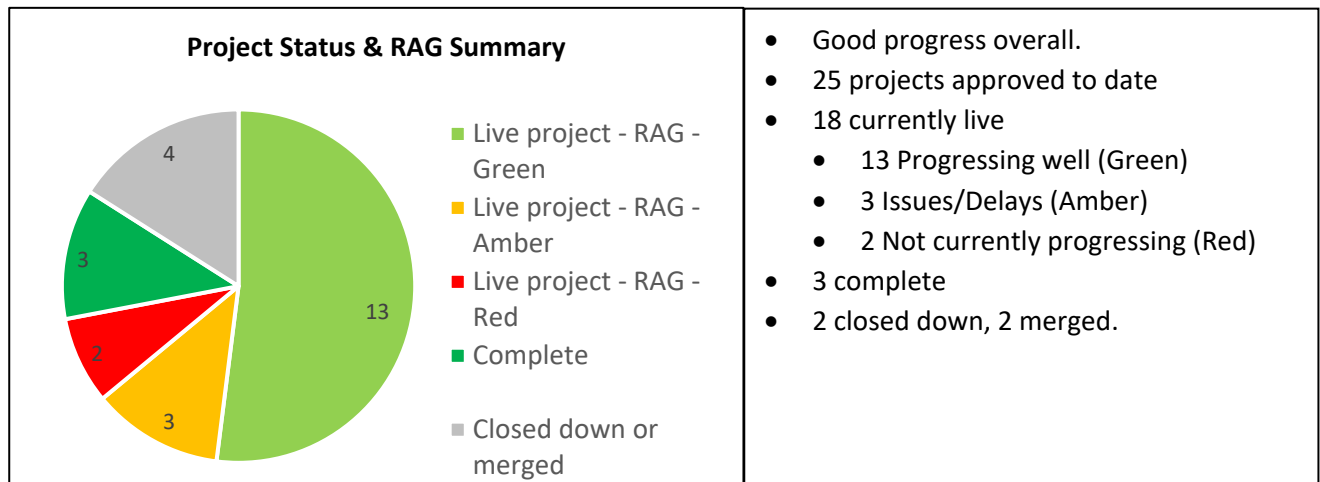


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**North West RFCC Business Plan  
End of Year 2 Progress report**

**1. Progress Dashboard**



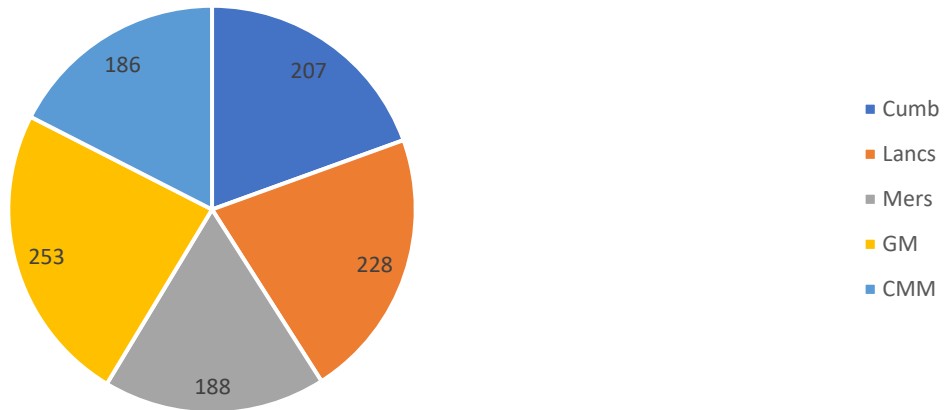
2023/24 Investment profile by Ambition			
Ambition	Local Levy allocation (£K)	Spend/claim forecast (£K)	Variance (£K)
Accessing investment and funding	220	25	195
Building community resilience	250	310	-61
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	111	55	56
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	224	127	97

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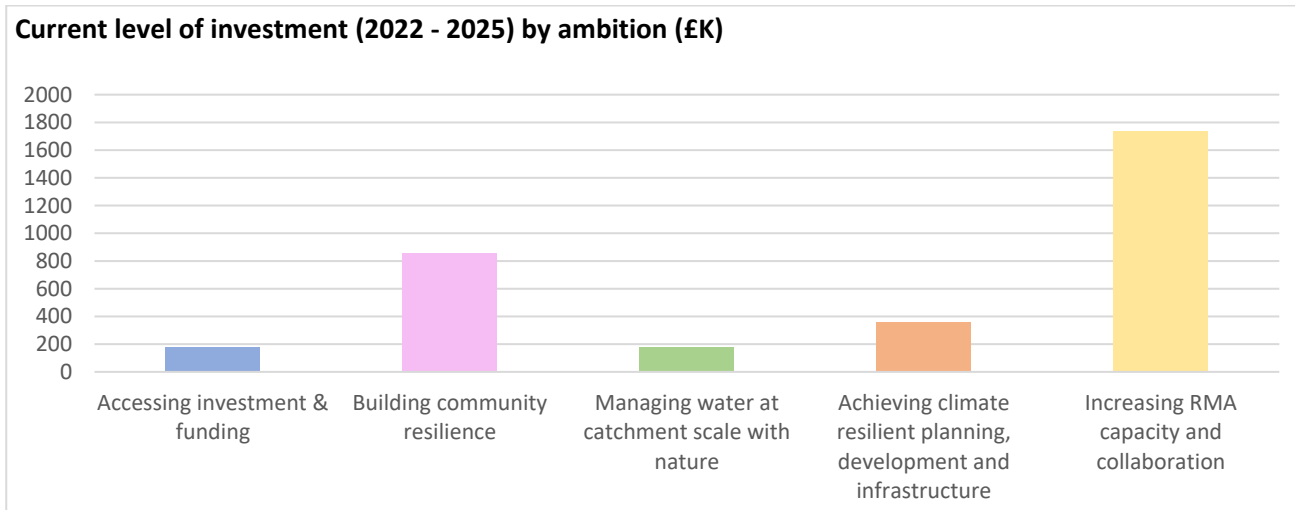
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	619	544	75
	<b>1,424</b>	<b>1,061</b>	<b>363</b>

Project Status 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	2	0	1	0	2
Building community resilience	5	4	1	0	0	0
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	4	1	0	1	2	0
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	6	4	0	0	0	2
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	2	2	0	1	0
	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>

Investment by partnership benefitting (2023/24) (£K) (based on forecast)



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A full project-level breakdown of progress and spend forecast is provided as Appendix B.

## 2. Approved investment for 2024/25

2.1. In January 2024, the RFCC approved Local Levy investment in Business Plan actions in 2024/25 totalling £1,187K.

ID	Project title	Local Levy allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Total for Ambition (£K)
1	Potential investment and partner map	25	70
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	250
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	42
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	231
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	594
15	Risk management authority capacity building programme	25	

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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	
		<b>1,187</b>	<b>1187</b>

- 2.2. Once the final 2023/24 spend data is available, an adjustment will be made to this allocation figure to reflect how much funding was drawn down in 2023/24 and how much needs to be drawn down in 2024/25. This update will be brought to the July meeting for approval.
- 2.3. There are also a couple of proposals, set out below, which subject to RFCC approval will be reflected in the 2024/25 allocation.

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### 3. New proposals

#### 3.1. Action for close down

##### ID3 Wider benefits of FCERM schemes (Accessing Investment and Funding ambition)

- 3.1.1. This project was originally scoped several years ago under the previous RFCC Business Plan. No progress was made due to lack of resource at that stage but the project was carried through into the 2022-2025 Business Plan, refreshed somewhat to align it to current strategic aims.

##### ID3 - Original scope - Overview

This project aims to better 'Capture the (wider sustainable) benefits', (e.g. environmental, social, health & wellbeing, and economic), of flood alleviation schemes, by:

- Identifying 'key parameters' which could be (or perhaps are already), being measured and monitored;
- Use these 'key parameters' to:
  - attract additional investment, working at both scale and place, i.e. strategically and on the ground;
  - disseminate the additional sustainable benefits to a wider audience, including both current and potential investors. (There will be a focus on private investment, which nationally was noted to have decreased from 25% in 2014, to 7% in 2020, by the NAO);
- Better understand how NW FCERM could help potential and existing partners, achieve their own sustainability / climate change goals, and hence increase the potential for increased partnership working and investment;
- Explore how design could play a greater role in increasing wider sustainable benefits, and lead to further investments. (A recent report by the Design Council, indicated that for every £1 invested in design, businesses saw on average £20 return on revenue, £4 on profits and £5 on exports). There are also interesting developments in 'Conscious Design', which will be touched upon in this work.

- 3.1.2. Some of these aspects have moved on over the last few years and there is some overlap with other initiatives, either led by the Environment Agency nationally or as part of the RFCC's Business Plan.
- 3.1.3. As the lead partnership on the Accessing Investment and Funding ambition, Greater Manchester (GM) partnership have been re-considering the project scope to refresh/update it, and to set it in a GM context. However, given the resources available and ongoing delivery of several other Business Plan projects, re-scoping and progressing with this project is not currently a priority within the current Business Plan period.
- 3.1.4. No funding had been allocated for this project in 2024/25 due to uncertainty of status. It is now proposed that this project is formally closed down. This recommendation has been proposed and endorsed by the ambition level governance.

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**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
26 APRIL 2024****3.2. Budget flexibility request****ID12 Front Gardens project**

- 3.2.1. This project currently has RFCC approved funding of £138K, £108K for two years of project manager resource and £30K to design and construct a Show Feature Garden (SFG) at the RHS Tatton Show in July 2024.
- 3.2.2. Since its inception, the project has learned about the opportunity to provide an educational exhibition to promote rainwater harvesting and sustainable drainage in urban gardens at the RHS Urban Show in Manchester on 18-21 April. This targets a different demographic to the RHS Tatton show, something which the RFCC felt was important. It is also a pilot show for 2024 and may not be repeated each year, hence why the project has chosen to take advantage of the opportunity whilst it presents itself. An exhibition at the show (referred to by the RHS as a 'Content Cube') has been successfully secured. The name for the exhibition is "Rainwater Capture Cube" and it will showcase DIY solutions to rainwater harvesting and sustainable drainage (SuDS), to the public. Furthermore, there will be two educational models for the public to engage with, which will inform them of the relationship between increased impermeable paving and increased surface water runoff.
- 3.2.3. Now that the project has a garden designer on board, and the SFG design is well underway, project costs have become clearer. The costs also account for the final phase which entails relocating the SFG from the Tatton Park showground to its proposed permanent location (Whitaker Park, Rawtenstall). This requires adjustments to the design and reconstruction of the garden so that it is in keeping and sympathetic to Whitaker Park.
- 3.2.4. Overall, there is currently a small, predicted funding shortfall of around £10K for the project. The Project Manager has been successful in securing sponsorship and donations in-kind for the exhibits from suppliers and partners. This includes a £20K contribution from United Utilities towards the garden, £3K worth of SuDS products from a private company, and £750 funding from the Association of SuDS Authorities. The project manager is continuing to seek further contributions and sponsorship. There is also a strong drive towards sustainability and cost savings via the use of reclaimed materials and re-use of all materials used for the Urban Show within the Tatton Show Feature Garden in July.
- 3.2.5. Should we not manage to secure the full £10K from other sources, the project is asking the committee for flexibility to incur up to an additional £10k (7% of approved project investment), rather than reduce the project scope or compromise on the garden design quality.

**3.3. New project proposal**

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**Natural Flood Management (NFM) Pipeline Development (Cumbria)**

- 3.3.1. Following the establishment of the new strategic partnership group for Cumbria, they have been actively taking on their role as lead partnership for the Managing Water at Catchment Scale with Nature ambition, and considering how to respond to the RFCC's strategic aims under that ambition.
- 3.3.2. The nature of communities in Cumbria means that natural flood management and catchment scale interventions will be a major part of working towards a more resilient future there.
- 3.3.3. A new project proposal has been developed which will develop a pipeline programme of natural flood management projects. This will build on the significant experience already gained on NFM in the North West, partly supported by the RFCC in the past, but rather than using Local Levy to deliver NFM projects now, this more strategic investment will develop a programme of shelf-ready projects with business cases, addressing a range of flood sources. Once in place this will enable Cumbria RMAs to respond quickly as funding opportunities arise, either one-off funds, often with very short turnaround times, or through the Environmental Land Management Schemes, biodiversity net gain etc. While the pipeline of projects will be focussed on Cumbria, the approach and tools developed will be very much transferable to other parts of the North West and this knowledge sharing will be an explicit element of the project.
- 3.3.4. The project is seeking Local Levy investment of £150K and will also benefit from a £70K contribution from the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience (CIFR) project. The £150K Local Levy investment will be spread across 2024/25 and 2025/26. The project will be led by the Environment Agency with the full engagement and support of Westmorland and Furness Council, Cumberland Council and United Utilities.
- 3.3.5. Full details of the proposal are provided as Appendix A for the consideration of the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group. The Sub Group are asked to support this request and recommend its approval to the RFCC.



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<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>New Project Proposal NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)</b>
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**Project name**

NFM Pipeline Development Project (Cumbria)
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**Sponsoring Sub-regional partnership**

Cumbria	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Greater Manchester	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lancashire	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cheshire Mid Mersey	<input type="checkbox"/>
Merseyside	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coastal Group	<input type="checkbox"/>

**RFCC Business Plan ambition**

Accessing investment and funding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building community resilience	<input type="checkbox"/>
Managing land at catchment scale with nature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Achieving climate resilient planning and development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Achieving climate resilient infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Strategic aim the project contributes to ([from RFCC Business Plan ambitions](#))**

<p><b>Managing water at catchment scale with nature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To drive the mainstreaming of nature-based solutions as part of the flood and coastal erosion risk management approach, encouraging holistic and innovative approaches, and achieving wider environmental benefits wherever possible (including biodiversity and environmental net gain, enhanced natural capital and net zero carbon emissions).</li> <li>To increase the ambition and scale of catchment partnerships, through best practice, and effective, locally appropriate leadership and engagement.</li> </ul>
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**Project Organisation**

Lead partner	Environment Agency
Other partners involved	Cumberland Council Westmorland and Furness Council (including CiFR) United Utilities Wider partners will be involved as project develops – for example environmental Non-Government Organisations (eNGO) such as The Rivers Trusts, National Highways, Network Rail, Natural England, Forestry England

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**Project description**

<p><b>Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a pipeline of NFM projects that have the potential to significantly reduce flood risk that are “business case ready” – where possible, these will bring other benefits, such as improvements in water quality, and include options to adapt to changing climate risks</li> <li>• To develop a template and methodology to allow other areas to develop a similar pipeline</li> </ul>
<p><b>Activity/Method/Phases</b></p>	<p><b>Project Initiation Activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint delivery partner for mapping work</li> <li>• Identify/appoint/train delivery staff within RMAs (2x part time roles)</li> <li>• Establish technical advisory board from partner organisations</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 1 - Create a long list of communities at risk – 0-3 months</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute criteria for potential projects to risk management authorities and other partners (for example eNGO including The Rivers Trust, Network Rail)</li> <li>• RMA’s and selected partner organisations to identify potential locations</li> <li>• Compare proposals to identify locations with multiple direct and secondary flood risks</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 2 – Screen the long list locations – 3-6 months</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify those locations where NFM is likely to be most effective based on features including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Current research findings</li> <li>○ Working with Natural Processes Mapping</li> <li>○ Risk of flooding – defined as Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP)</li> <li>○ Risk of secondary flood risk related impacts (such as outfall locking, erosional impacts and inundation of drainage systems)</li> <li>○ Catchment size (NFM is more effective at reducing flood risk in smaller catchments)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 3 - Undertake walkovers to “ground truth” potential interventions – 6 – 12 months</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify which interventions are likely to be possible on the ground (due to ground conditions, landowner engagement, solution scale, opportunity for modular progression based on funding etc)</li> <li>• Walkovers will involve staff from a number of organisations to build and spread knowledge of NFM interventions and funding opportunities</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 4 – Develop information for Business Case (and other funding opportunities) – 12-18 months</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce a spreadsheet identifying, for each location, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Key data for community at risk (properties or assets at risk)</li> <li>○ Proposed NFM interventions and likely cost</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Funding opportunities (for example ELMs or links to synergistic projects)</li> <li>○ Economic impacts (some information likely to be available via NaFRA2)</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 5 – Share learning with other areas - 15-18 months</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Develop a template and methodology guidance to share with other areas</li> <li>● Run a workshop (including a site visit) in each of the other 4 sub-regional partnership areas</li> </ul>
<b>Deliverables/outputs</b>	<p><b>1. Develop a pipeline of “Business Case Ready” NFM opportunities across Cumbria.</b></p> <p>Without this pipeline, the resources are not available to react to funding opportunities as they become available unable to proceed with NFM/hybrid schemes that will help protect small communities currently at risk of flooding.</p> <p><b>2. Template and Methodology Guidance for other sub-regions.</b></p> <p>This will enable Cumbria and other partnerships to prepare a NFM Pipeline assisting all with the submission of successful funding bids in response to often short notice funding opportunities.</p>

**Estimated project duration 18 months**

Start (month/year)	Completion (month/year)
June 2024	December 2025

**Local Levy investment sought (£K)**

Year 0 (Current year)	
Year 1 (Next financial year) 24/25 - June start	
Staff time within RMAs – 1 FTE, 9 months - £52.5k	
Delivery Partner – Mapping £70k	Total Year 1 Cost £152.5k
Delivery Partners – Ground truthing - £30k	Less CiFR Contribution £62.5k
CiFR Contribution 24/25 - £62.5k	<b>Local Levy Investment £90k</b>
Year 2 25/26	
Staff time within RMAs – 1 FTE, 9 months - £52.5k	Total Year 2 Cost £67.5k
Delivery Partner – business case development - £15k	Less CiFR Contribution £7.5k
CiFR Contribution 25/26 - £7.5k	<b>Local Levy Investment £60k</b>
Year 3	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£150k</b>

**Contributions from other partners (financial or resource/in kind)**

<b>Partner</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience	£70k
Conversations ongoing in LLFA’s and other partners	

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**How are the learning and/or outputs from the project transferable to other sub regional partnerships within the North West?**

Cumbria has now completed flood schemes for most large communities where traditional hard flood defences are an option. Work to explore the potential to reduce the flood risk for smaller communities using NFM (and hybrid solutions) in a targeted way, immediately upstream of communities at risk (e.g. Flimby and Grange), is underway and this work will continue to evolve through CiFR.

It is an increasing challenge to fund the development (appraisal) phase of NFM projects, meaning that when funding becomes available on short timescales, it is difficult to submit a high-quality bid. This is a challenge that other areas in the NW will begin to face as they complete existing traditional capital schemes (and as climate risks increase).

This project will provide the tools and a process for developing a pipeline and methodology for delivery of NFM projects across the NW.

**How will the learning and/or outputs from the project be transferred to other sub regional partnerships within the North West?**

During the last few months of the project, we will produce a template and methodology guidance for other sub regional partnerships to use to develop their own NFM pipeline.

This will be supported by an offer to run a workshop, including a site visit/walkover of a potential NFM site, in each sub-region, in order to begin to share knowledge and experience.

**Governance**

<b>Project Manager</b>	<b>Dave Kennedy (Environment Agency)</b>	
<b>Project Executive</b>	<b>Richard Knight (Environment Agency)</b>	
<b>Project Resource e.g. consultants, students, new resource to be recruited</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FTE staff member across RMAs</li> <li>• Consultant to support mapping</li> <li>• Resource from partners (eg eNGO's including The Rivers Trusts) to support walkovers, ground truthing and landowner engagement</li> <li>• Consultant to support business case development</li> </ul>	
<b>Has the project been discussed and formally supported by the RFCC member sponsor?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Has the project been discussed and formally supported by the strategic partnership group?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

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<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>RFCC Business Plan – Project Updates</b>
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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
<b>ACCESSING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING</b>								
ID1	Investment mapping project	Green	This project is looking at the range of potential investment sources available for flood risk measures, primarily for LLFAs, collating them into a data tool, and exploring options for making detailed information on these more accessible and easier to identify. Consultants (Jacobs) were procured via GMCA and project is now well underway, due to complete later in 2024.	75	20	25	0	45
ID2.1	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms - Wyre Catchment CIC	Green	Adrian Lythgo currently represents the RFCC on the Project Buyers Group, attending twice-yearly meetings. Reports are also being received by the project on the NFM measures and monitoring being installed. A presentation on the learning from the project is intended for the Sub Group meeting in July 2024.	45	25	45	45	135
ID2.2	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms -	Closed down	A one-year contribution of £50K was agreed in principle subject to successful contractual arrangements being put in place but due to loss of a key resource from the project, and challenges around aligning investment source timeframes between partners, this project is no longer	0	0	0	0	0

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
	Project RAINCOAT		progressing. The action has been closed down as part of the RFCC's Business Plan.					
ID3	Assessment and valuation of wider benefits of flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes	Red (Proposed for close down)	Project was paused for re-scoping and other projects have been taking priority. Project now proposed for close down as no spare resource capacity.	0	0	0	0	0
<b>BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</b>								
ID5	The Flood Hub	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This year we have seen significant growth in pageviews and users. October and November smashed previous records on pageviews and users, coinciding with a period of named storms, but reflecting the ongoing active management and development of the site's content.</li> <li>Over 260 websites now link to The Flood Hub.</li> <li>There has been ongoing development of content and improvements to the structure of the site. There is a provisional programme of developments in place for 2024/25.</li> <li>Educational material shared on the website continues to receive really positive feedback.</li> <li>The FCERM scheme sections continue to be developed and updated.</li> </ul>	115	115	115	115	330

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social media campaigns run this year include 'Community Flood Resilience', #12DaysofFloodResilience, Whose Involved in Managing Flood Risk, and Riparian Ownership.</li> </ul>					
ID5A	The Flood Hub - National expansion	Amber	Significant level of interest from other RFCCs led to exploration of potential commercial arrangements/implications of expanding the site to allow other RFCCs to come on board. It is clear that this would be complex and potential risks the partnership arrangement we currently have with our delivery partner Newground. Instead we are now exploring a small-scale trial with one other RFCC. No additional cost would be incurred by the North West RFCC for any of the changes made.	0	0	0	0	0
ID6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	Green	This is a 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 Q3.	10	10	10	10	30
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	Green	<p>This quarter, Newground have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported numerous members of the public</li> <li>Supported more elected members and partnership meetings.</li> <li>Supported risk management authorities (EA, LAs and UU) by providing support and advice</li> </ul>	124.55	124.55	124.55	124.55	369



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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
			<p>to the communities of Maghull, Lower Kinnerton, Ashton-in-Makerfield and Woodlands, Liverpool.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Received and dealt with numerous Flood Hub website enquiries, some with further emails and phone calls for advice, support and guidance.</li> </ul> <p>More detail will be available in the end of year report from Newground.</p>					
ID8	Flood Poverty Project	Green	<p>Work is substantially complete. Findings report currently being finalised. Remaining focus is on sharing learning which included a presentation at the January 2024 RFCC meeting. A workshop for a wider cross-section of relevant stakeholders (specialising in housing, property rentals, insurance etc) is now being planned (currently anticipated June 2024).</p>	0	60.5 (prior yr alloc)	0	15	<b>137</b>
<b>MANAGING WATER AT CATCHMENT SCALE WITH NATURE</b>								
ID9	Whole catchment approach - GM IWMP Learning	Complete	<p>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 transferable learning more widely. Work is complete. Remaining focus is on sharing learning.</p>	30	16.57	0	0	<b>16.57</b>

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
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	90
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	39
ID20	Land management engagement	Red	Development of potential initiative was paused while ELMS design was ongoing and until Cumbria partnership were in a position to pick up the lead role. Consideration of a possible engagement event to focus on land management and flood risk is now under active consideration by the Cumbria partnership.	12	0	12	5	17
ID22?	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	Red (Proposed as new project April 2024)		0	0	117.5 (Subject to approval)	32.5	150 (Subject to approval)
<b>ACHIEVING CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</b>								
ID10	Evidence gathering – Climate resilience within	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	50	0	0	0	0

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
	planning and development		Sharepoint site once launched and are available on request. A second round of projects was carried out by the next year's students focussing on planning conditions and enforcement. The draft reports are currenting being reviewed.					
ID12	Action campaign – Front gardens	Green	Project well underway and plan in place. Current focus is on developing a 'cube' exhibit for the RHS Urban Show in Manchester in April 2024, and on a show feature garden at RHS Tatton in July 2024. There will be significant comms and awareness raising around both exhibits. Multi-medal winning garden designer Leon Davies is working with the project on both RHS exhibits.	54	52	86	54	<b>138</b>
ID4/13	Data sharing and mapping of flood risk and drainage assets	Green	Project being led jointly by Greater Manchester and Merseyside partnerships. Project is taking an in-depth look at existing asset registers across the two partnership areas, exploring the practicalities of sharing and mapping assets across multiple partners, and then exploring more collaborative and joined-up approaches to asset maintenance. Project now actively underway with Phase 1 almost complete, being delivered by consultants Arup.	100	55	145	0	<b>197</b>
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	20	20	0	0	<b>20</b>

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
			input from a wide range of stakeholders. Design guide will be largely generic and transferable to other partnership situations. Project is well underway expected to be complete this financial year.					
<b>INCREASING RMA CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION</b>								
ID14	Local authority capital project delivery challenges	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	0
ID15	Risk management authority capacity building programme	Green	<p>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.</p> <p>Training sessions have been run in NW on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying and recording efficiencies</li> <li>Developing Quick Win projects</li> <li>Changes to the programme outcome reporting measures (such as properties better protected).</li> <li>Ad hoc training by LA CPA's on use of Power Portal to report progress and profile expected claims.</li> <li>LA CPA support with PAFS (system) as needed, especially around the time of the annual programme refresh.</li> </ul>	50	0	25	25	25

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
			Links have been developed with other areas across the country to share training and learning opportunities including sessions on partnership funding. There is now a national SharePoint site which all RMAs can access with training and resources which will help 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 – Funding approved and recruitment underway. Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator – role ongoing.	569	554	569	569	<b>1,707</b>
ID17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - Develop business case	Amber	Project carried over from previous years. There has been some exploratory work done including survey and workshop. This work has been affected by the change in the role of Coastal member on the RFCC. The work to date is expected to be formally written up in the next quarter so that next steps can be established.	0	0	0	0	<b>25</b>
ID18	RFCC Sharepoint site	Amber	Development of the site is well underway but the amount of content means this has taken time and resource and due to resource shortages and other priorities, it is slightly behind schedule. Launch has	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Allocation (£K)	2023/24 Forecast (£K)	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)
			slipped slightly from March and is now expected to take place during the next quarter.					

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**North West RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting**

**12 April 2024**

**Review of funding support for Partnership Co-ordinators**

**Revised proposal for consideration and approval**

**Recommendation:** The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are asked to consider and support the revised RFCC contribution as detailed in the report.

**Background**

The North West RFCC is underpinned by five sub-regional partnerships, through which risk management authorities and wider partners work together at strategic, tactical and operational levels. Essential to the success of these partnerships is the existence of a co-ordinator role, hosted by a selected local authority within the partnership.

The roles were established in April 2010, initially designed to support LLFAs in meeting the requirements of the new Flood and Water Management Act (2010). The roles have evolved over time and continue to provide essential co-ordination for the partnerships in their collective flood risk management roles, and more recently capacity and support for the implementation of the RFCC's Business Plan. An updated job description for the role was agreed by the RFCC in January 2021 which covers the core co-ordination role, support for the RFCC and its work, and the flexible partnership-specific element.

The model for these roles has always been that the RFCC provides approximately half of the funding for these posts with the remainder being shared between the lead local flood authorities within the partnership. The model has always been for a consistent level of funding for all partnerships, despite there being some variation in actual costs. This share of funding reflected that "core RFCC" requirements were only intended to be part of the role with local circumstances and choices dictating the specific remit and role of the postholders, and thus the grading of the roles. The RFCC's contribution has stood at £30k per year since the start.

**Contribution review**

In response to a request, it was agreed that we would carry out a review of the level of funding provided by the RFCC for the partnership co-ordinator roles to establish whether an inflationary increase is appropriate. This follows a precedent of small funding increases in recent years for other support roles partly or wholly funded by the RFCC.

As a second part to the request, the RFCC was also asked to consider whether it could provide a small additional fund (say £5K per year) for each partnership to cover additional running costs incurred, so as not to place a financial burden on the host authority or wider partnership.

A small review group consisting of the RFCC Chair Adrian Lythgo, the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Chair Neville Elstone, and two elected members, Councillor Tricia Ayrton and Councillor Karen Shore, was formed to consider the evidence and agree a proposal.

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING  
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To inform this exercise, data on basic salary and total estimated costs (including staff on-costs) was collated from the five host authorities.

The five partnership co-ordinator posts sit within different host organisations and the roles are assessed according to their own pay structures/scales. There is also some variation in the level and remit of the roles depending on local circumstances, based around the standardised job description agreed by the RFCC in 2021. This means there is a range of salaries.

Different methodologies were provided by the host authorities for the calculation of on-costs, resulting in a larger range of total cost values. These ranged from around 30% to 55% on top of Basic Salary, with an average of 43%. This is close to the EA normal on-cost rate of 45%.

Recruitment into these roles has proved challenging in some cases and this has been a factor in the salary levels provided. It is also recognised that the recruitment costs on the host authority are possibly not factored in, especially where recruitment has been challenging.

**Previous proposal**

A proposal was put to the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group in October 2023.

This proposal was for:

- an increased RFCC contribution of £34K per partnership per year for the three-year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.
- An additional sum of £5K per partnership per year to help support the effective running of the partnership, with some guidelines on appropriate uses of this funding.

The proposal of £34K was based on a standard on-cost rate of 50% on top of basic salary, estimated salary increases of 4.5%, 4% and 4% for the three years of 2023/24 to 2025/26 respectively, and based on an average of the estimated role cost across the five partnerships.

The matter was deferred from the October meeting at the request of one of the partnerships to allow for further discussions within that partnership on how the costs are shared between the LLFAs.

In the intervening period:

- Deeds of Variation have been put in place with the host authorities to allow them to claim the £30K of approved funding for 2023/24.
- Some supplementary information on the costs of the roles has been provided by two of the host authorities.

**Revised Proposal**



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The funding agreement is now proposed to cover the three-year period of 2024/25 to 2026/27. This brings it in line with other resources funded by the RFCC, allowing for a comprehensive review of resources at that point in time.

The review group proposes to retain the current model of setting a consistent and equal level of funding:

- For all five partnerships
- For each of the three years of the funding approval (2024/25 – 2026/27).

The following assumptions and factors have been applied as the basis for the revised proposal:

- A standard level of on-costs of 50% on top of Basic Salary.
- Assumed salary increases of 4% in 2024/25, 3% in 2025/26 and 3% in 2026/27.
- Provides a 50% contribution to the average estimated cost of the five roles (applying the above factors and assumptions).

Given that the RFCC was not able to conclude this review and apply the increased level of funding from 2023/24, we have also assumed a salary increase of 4.5% in 2023/24, and where there were any estimated shortfalls in 2023/24, these have been built into the proposed contributions for the coming three years.

The proposed RFCC contribution for each partnership for each of the three years is now **£37K**.

**Additional support funding**

Provision of an additional sum of **£5K** per partnership per year is also proposed to support the costs associated with the effective functioning of the partnership.

The provisos and principles applied to this additional support funding are as follows.

- The partnership co-ordinator will normally manage the use of this budget, with oversight and assurance provided by the partnership group.
- The additional sum will be built into the collaborative agreements between the EA and the host authorities, and will be claimed annually through the same invoicing arrangements as the funding for the co-ordinator role.
- This funding should not be used for any purpose where it would represent double-funding for any aspect of the on-costs associated with the co-ordinator role.
- Each host authority will be asked to confirm in writing each year that the funding is being claimed in accordance with these principles.

**Recommendation**

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are asked to consider and support the revised RFCC contribution of **£42K** per partnership per year, fixed for the next three years from 2024/25 to 2026/27, with this formally and explicitly split into:

- **£37K** for the co-ordinator role.
- **£5K** partnership support costs.

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This represents an additional Local Levy contribution from the RFCC of £60K per year into these vital roles and the sub regional partnership organisational structure.

## North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

26 April 2024

### Local Levy Strategy Refresh

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The RFCC are asked to follow the recommendation of the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group and approve the refreshed Local Levy Strategy.

### 1. Update

- 1.1. Since the discussion on principles at the January Sub Group meeting, the Strategy document has been updated and shared for final review via an MS Forms survey. A total of seven responses were received from a mixture of RFCC members and RMA officers.
- 1.2. The main feedback received was a reflection that the Local Levy Strategy is quite a high level document and more detail is needed to supplement this, focussing on how to request Local Levy and how the programme is managed. The development of a Local Levy 'handbook' is now underway which will be part of the new RFCC Sharepoint site, now expected to be launched during Quarter 1 of 2024/25.
- 1.3. Below is a summary of other comments received and how these have been taken into account.
  - There was a strong consensus that the structure of the Strategy document is logical and easy to follow.
  - The majority supported retaining a two-year timeframe for the Strategy document, when it will be reviewed again. A two-year timeframe has been retained.
  - Recognition of the need to involve appropriate managers from host authorities in the review of Local Levy funded posts and that in some circumstances it may be more appropriate for a Local Authority manager to lead the review. This has been added.
  - An ask for more clarity on the visibility of wider environmental outcomes has been incorporated. A brief comment has been added.
  - A request to clarify the timing of the next review of the amount of Quick Win funding provided by the RFCC. This has been added.
- 1.4. The final version of the Local Levy Strategy is provided as the appendix to this paper. The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group have considered and recommend approval of the Strategy.



## North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)

### Local Levy Strategy [FINAL DRAFT FOR APPROVAL]

**April 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

The North West RFCC first produced a Local Levy Strategy in 2020. We have refreshed it in consultation with constituent organisations 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 balance of Local Levy resource that is additional to what is raised annually but this is intended to reduce to ensure that resources raised are deployed on reducing flood risk. This reduction in balances will potentially constrain the size of the programme, and potentially individual project contributions. We want therefore to be clear on our priorities and ensure Levy funding is focussed on 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 capital 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**



## 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.**

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.**

These should be described in the briefing note requesting the funding. We are seeking to improve our capture and reporting of wider benefits from the investment programme.

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 delivery 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 would not generally expect Local Levy to be the majority funding source (over 50%) of the scheme. For Levy requests which exceed this 50% threshold, the Committee will have regard to the**

**extent to which funding is being drawn from other sources including the lead risk management authority's own resources.**

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

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

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.

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 within sub-regional partnerships, and with Environment Agency Programming teams, Environment Agency 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 currently stands at £100K per year. Spend against the allocation will be reported to the RFCC annually. The RFCC's annual contribution for Quick Win projects for the next investment programme period from 2027/28 will be reviewed during 2025/26.

### 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. To support the model of individual sub-regional partnerships leading on specific Ambitions of the Business Plan, because Local Levy investment in projects may provide more direct benefit in that sub-regional partnership area than in others, the RFCC applies a key principle of transferability and knowledge sharing to all Business Plan investment.**

All Business Plan projects are required to consider and maximise applicability across the North West, and projects should 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.**

**At appropriate intervals, the roles and their Local Levy funding will be formally reviewed. 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 reviews.**
- 2. An appropriate senior Environment Agency or Local Authority 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, and with input from the relevant manager(s) from the host authority(ies).**

## 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.**

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.**

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.

## 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.**

## 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 REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**  
**26 APRIL 2024**  
**QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENTS REPORT**

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

This report covers the period of 1 January to 31 March 2024.

**Cumbria Strategic Partnership**

Ten internal and 3 external flood incidents have been reported to the Cumbria Partnership this quarter, the majority of which were linked with named storm events - Storm Henk on 2 January, Storm Isha on 21-22 January and Storm Jocelyn on 23-24 January.

All the properties reported within Westmorland and Furness Council have suffered repeated flooding.

**Storm Henk (2-4 January 2024)**

During Storm Henk reports of internal flooding to residential properties were received across Cumbria in the following areas:

LA area	Community	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
C	Haverigg			1 (internal)		
C	Haverigg					4 (internal) (Main river and SW)
W&F	Barrow-in-Furness		1 (internal) 1 (external)			
W&F	Dalton-in-Furness					1 (internal) (Groundwater and OW)
	<b>Total</b>		<b>7 (Internal)</b>	<b>1 (External)</b>		

LAs: C (Cumberland Council), W&F (Westmorland and Furness Council)

Haverigg - An investigation is in progress by Cumberland LLFA for the flooding of 4 properties which occurred because of combined main river and surface water flooding.

**Flood event on 17 January 2024**

Reports of internal flooding at a school in Staveley (Westmorland and Furness) were received caused by a combination of surface water (highway) and sewer flooding. The school has flooded previously and on this occasion was not linked to a named storm.

LA area	Community	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
W&F	Staveley					1 (internal) (SW/highway and sewer)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1 (internal)</b>				

**Storm Isha – 21-22 January 2024**

Cumbria was less affected during Storm Isha, with only one report of internal flooding to a commercial property received. This property has flooded previously. This was due to a combination of ordinary watercourse and surface water (highway) flooding.

LA area	Community	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
W&F	Bowness-on-Windermere					1 (internal) (OW and SW/highway)
	Total	1 (internal)				

**Storm Jocelyn – 23-24 January 2024**

Reports received during this storm event related to one residential property that suffered internal flooding from a combination of ordinary watercourse and surface water (including highways).

LA area	Community	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
W&F	Tebay					1 (internal) (OW and SW inc highway)
	Total	1 (internal)				

**Flood event on 14 February 2024**

Report of external flooding from an ordinary watercourse affecting two residential properties was received. These properties experienced flooding previously during Storm Henk on 2-4 January 2024.

LA area	Community	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
W&F	Barrow-in-Furness		2 (external)			
	Total	2 (external)				

**United Utilities**

(Covers period from 17 December 2023 to 22 March 2024)<sup>1</sup>.

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic Severe weather	External hydraulic Severe weather
Cumbria	4	22	0	0

<sup>1</sup> 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

### Lancashire Strategic Partnership

Despite the heavy rainfall the Lancashire Strategic Partnership has minimal flooding issues to report.

At the March Strategic Officers' meeting, Blackburn with Darwen advised between January and February they experienced 5-6 storms in a 6-week period, of which there was minimal flooding. These storms generated 45 surface water flooding investigations, which resulted in screen and critical highway gulley cleaning.

### **United Utilities**

(Covers period from 17 December 2023 to 22 March 2024)<sup>2</sup>.

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic Severe weather	External hydraulic Severe weather
Lancashire	1	25	0	0

### Merseyside Strategic Partnership

LA/Area	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
Wirral			5 Internal and 3 External (associated with private drainage problems)  42 instances of highway flooding (all Key Route Network (KRN))		
Liverpool			6 instances of highway flooding due to blocked gullies		
Knowsley			2 External		
			48 instances of highway flooding (13 KRN, 35 non-KRN)		
Sefton			3 External		
			1 instance of highway flooding (KRN)		
			(Due to local blockages on the system)		
Total			5 (Internal) 8 (External)		

**Wirral** – It has been steadily wet over the last quarter with some internal and external property flooding. Investigations have shown that the cause is associated with private drainage problems.

<sup>2</sup> 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

## INFORMATION ITEM A

**Liverpool City** – Relatively quiet quarter. Some minor highways flooding with issues caused by blocked gullies.

**Knowsley** – Fairly steady wet weather conditions. Some flooding on the highways but no incidents that have caused any major issues. Restricted to fairly localised road closures, but the roads are quiet and therefore not caused significant disruption.

**Sefton** – A handful of flooding incidents this quarter most of which are related to local blockages on the system. One still under investigation is next to a canal. Unsure if seepage or overtopping from the canal or from the land at the rear of the area.

### United Utilities

(Covers period from 17 December 2023 to 22 March 2024)<sup>3</sup>.

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic Severe weather	External hydraulic Severe weather
Merseyside	0	3	0	0

### Greater Manchester Strategic Partnership

LA area	Community	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
Wigan	Hindley	6				
	<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (internal)</b>				

### United Utilities

(Covers period from 17 December 2023 to 22 March 2024)<sup>4</sup>.

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic Severe weather	External hydraulic Severe weather
Greater Manchester	0	5	0	0

<sup>3</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> 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

**Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Partnership**

As a result of Storm Henk, between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 the Environment Agency Issued 12 Flood Warnings mainly across the Cheshire area, which included Nantwich, Winsford, Bollington and Northwich Marina.

On 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024, spring tides affected resulted in us issuing 3 Flood Warnings across the Mersey Estuary at Warrington.

Between 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> March, spring tides resulted in us issuing 3 Flood Warnings across the Mersey Estuary at Warrington.

LA area	Community	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination
Cheshire East	Wilmslow, Whitehall Brook					2 Internal
Cheshire East	Calveley			1 Internal		
Warrington	Weaste Lane, Thelwall			Extensive highway flooding		
Warrington	Smithy Brow, Croft					
Warrington	Massey Brook Lane, Lymm					
Total	3 (Internal)					

**Cheshire East** – Two areas were impacted with 2 properties flooding internally as well as 1 flooding internally in Caverley from surface water runoff. This has triggered a S19 report focusing on the area of Whitehall Brook in Wilmslow, of which Cheshire East Council have started the preparation for and is a priority to be completed.

**Warrington**

A Storm Babet S19 report has been completed to final draft following successful partner consultation and has been provided to Warrington Borough Council Legal Department for review prior to publication.

There have been no reports of internal property flooding over the past few months, however extensive highway flooding has been reported over the past few months at the following locations:

- Weaste Lane, Thelwall
- Smithy Brow, Croft
- Massey Brook Lane, Lymm

Internal property flooding was avoided at the above locations due to action undertaken by Warrington Borough Council e.g. provision of sandbags / pumping etc.

**Cheshire West and Chester Council** – No flooding to report.

**St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council**

An assessment in the Wheatsheaf area is underway to deem whether a S19 report is required.



## INFORMATION ITEM A

**United Utilities**

 (Covers period from 17 December 2023 to 22 March 2024)<sup>5</sup>.

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic Severe weather	External hydraulic Severe weather
Cheshire	0	1	0	0

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<sup>5</sup> 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

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE****26 APRIL 2024****NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT****RECOMMENDATION:** The RFCC are asked to note the content of this report.

Recent storm events on the coast have tested and proven the value of the investment and management of our coastal assets. Reducing flooding and coastal risk relies on a combination of both hard (concrete and rock) and soft defences (beaches, saltmarshes and dunes). This hybrid approach working with nature and adapting to climate change involves both significant investment in capital works through the capital programme but also a whole life holistic approach. The changing climate is already causing significant impacts, with greater energy in weather systems influencing [extreme weather](#). We will need to support our coastal communities through this changing picture in the knowledge that we cannot buy ourselves out of this future. This will lead to increasingly difficult conversations, innovative solutions and long term thinking. The coastal group and RFCC are critical in delivering these messages, speaking as one voice and supporting those tasked with managing the process of adaptation on the coast.

Another important collaborative role highlighted by recent events is for Coastal Protection Authorities (CPAs), the EA, the Met Office and our communities to respond to emergency events. This requires improvements to resilience, communication, and joint working. Coastal events differ from other flood events in that they affect multiple communities across multiple district boundaries at the same time (all occurring over the 2-hour high tide period). This places significant stress on the responders and heavily relies on mutual aid from neighbouring inland authorities. Better information leading up to storm events including real time data to inform response is critical to minimise the impacts and warn communities in time to act. Building awareness of risk and developing appropriate community response plans potentially involving the movement of tens of thousands of people across our regions is an area for monitoring.

Understanding of flood and coastal risk and conveying this clearly is a key priority for CPAs and the EA. The development of the National Coastal Erosion Risk Management NCERM 2 and the National Flood Risk Assessment NaFRA2 will provide the risk in a much more understandable format and enable improved decision making. The Shoreline Management Plan Explorer has now been launched and we are working with planning colleagues to align planning policy, infrastructure investment and adaptation to climate change. This long-term Source to Sea investment journey which aligns future planning aspirations, hopefully enables a clear consensus pathway to a sustainable future.

## SMP

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.

Over the last quarter we have supported:

- The launch of the SMP Explorer Website [Home | Shoreline Management Plans \(data.gov.uk\)](#)
- The National SMP Planning workshop looking at the next steps (2024 – 2026).
- The Environment Agency's [independent peer review](#) of the state of play of Shoreline Management Plans to encourage their continuous improvement over future years
- The Coastal Conversations with Communities workshop.
- The development of the Coastal Practitioners Conference in Blackpool.
- The development of a Coastal Planning and Infrastructure workshop.
- The review of the Coastal Group priorities for 2024.

## NCERM2 risk mapping

- Local Authority output reviews have been taking place from January to March 2024/
- SMP Explorer will be updated to include the NCERMS later in 2024

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 Flood Risk Assessment

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.

## Coastal Group Health Check

The Coastal Group is undergoing a health check. We are looking 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 circulated a survey to help gauge the views of the group members to improve how the coastal group can support its members.

The purpose of completing the questionnaire was to identify areas in which the Coastal Group needs strengthening.

The responses of the questionnaire prompted a review of the coastal group structure and reporting mechanisms.

We have been:

- reviewing the current meeting agendas – local knowledge share vs strategic steer.
- reviewing the reporting mechanisms – reporting on priority actions identified in coastal strategy and SMP Action plan.
- reviewing the structure and governance of the coastal subgroups and over-arching NW Coastal Group.
- reviewing Coastal Group priorities.
- reviewing the Coastal Group Action Plan for 2024.
- developing a Coastal Group handbook.

### Dates for your diary

#### 22 and 23 May 2024:

- What: **UK Saltmarsh Forum**
- Where: Solway Firth Partnership at Crichton Campus, Dumfries.
- Hold the date, more info to follow.

#### 20 to 22 May 2024:

- What: **Estuaries & Coasts of North-west England**
- Where: Carlisle, United Kingdom
- More Info: [Estuaries & Coasts of North-west England, ECSA Focus meeting 2024 | Estuarine & Coastal Sciences Association](#)

#### 04 to 06 June 2024:

- What: **Flood and Coast**
- Where: Telford
- More Info: [Flood & Coast Conference and Exhibition 2024 - CIWEM](#)

#### 10 and 11 July 2024:

- What: **ReMeMaRe** - Restoring Estuarine and Coastal Habitats
- Where: Scarborough Spa, Scarborough
- More Info: [ReMeMaRe 2024 — OCF - Ocean & Coastal Futures Ltd \(corsizio.com\)](#)

#### 17 and 18 July 2024:

- What: **Second Annual Conference on Nature Based Solutions using Carbon and Biodiversity Credit Funding**
- Where: University of Lincoln.
- More Info: [Please visit the conference website for more details.](#)

## Our Future Coast

The great news is we have appointed a project manager Bea Beggs who is now two months into her role and is full of enthusiasm to drive the OFC project forwards. Bea has experience of the project before through Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

## Acceleration Programme

An acceleration programme has been agreed by the project board which will see increased support for the Hoylake site, sand trials to shape dune systems at Fylde. The team also plan to complete community resilience assessments by summer 2024.

Fylde Sand Dunes – Graeme Skulcher (ecological review) and Margaret Dickinson (environmental review) are completing their investigations. Graeme will be including recommendations for future monitoring plans. Ground truthing of ecological assessment will be completed this summer and the ecological report will be further updated then as required.

## Engaging Our Communities

We have updated the engagement strategy to reflect what we've learned. We've summarised this into a single page 'Engagement Priorities' shown below.



## Monitoring and Research

Building on the innovative radar monitoring of OFC sites we will be appointing a monitoring lead who will link coastal monitoring and research proposals across the region. We are working with NOC on the CoOpt research project and will be supporting the deliberative workshop on 6th of June 2024. The team is also supporting a DEFRA innovation project proposal for Biodiversity and Ecosystems Assessment using the Coastal Observations Networks of Sensors (BEACONS).

## Sharing Good Practice

The team undertook our first Our Future Coast Lunch and Learn on 22 February on CoDesign, the saved session link can be found [here](#)

Jacobs have produced a report on behalf of Our Future Coast on Compensation and Coastal Erosion Assistance Grant. This seeks to provide clarification on the situation with regards to compensation for owners of properties or business that are at risk of being lost to coastal erosion.

### **Working in Partnership**

The team are preparing the Spring workshop which will be held on 23 May at Wyre Civic Centre it will focus on ELMs and Adaptation pathways.

### **Key Updates**

- April's Board Meeting – Appointment of new board members, approval of Hello Lamp Post, approved monitoring lead appointment and changes to acceleration programme.

### **Training in 2024**

- Natural England follow up on Habitat Regulation Assessments and consenting process following successful workshop in Morecambe.

### **Our Future Coast team**

- Bea Beggs, OFC Project Manager [Bea.Beggs@Wyre.gov.uk](mailto:Bea.Beggs@Wyre.gov.uk)
- Susannah Bleakley, Comms and Engagement Lead, [Susannah@SBleakley.com](mailto:Susannah@SBleakley.com)
- Joseph Earl, Engagement Officer North hosted by Morecambe Bay Partnership, [Joseph@morecambebay.org.uk](mailto:Joseph@morecambebay.org.uk)
- Nicola Parkinson, Engagement Officer South, hosted by Lancs. Wildlife Trust [nparkinson@lancswt.org.uk](mailto:nparkinson@lancswt.org.uk)

### **North West Coastal Centre of Excellence**

We are developing a proposal for the North West Coastal Centre of Excellence. This proposal is currently exploring a framework for the centre, its key activities, structure, and the resources required together with a reporting mechanism to the coastal authorities and the RFCC.

### **Coastal Issues**

The outcome was a summary report prepared by Jacobs which includes information on the Coastal Erosion Assistance Grant (CEAG).

Coastal Practitioners Conference will take place in Blackpool on 15 – 16 May where we will be showcasing the great work undertaken in the region.

### **Carl Green – Chair, North West and North Wales Coastal Group**

# North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee



## April 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 Uuw 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](mailto:DWMP@uuplc.co.uk).

### 2. Flooding Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 17 December 2023 and 22 March 2024. 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	1	0	0
Merseyside	0	3	0	0
GMCA	0	5	0	0
Lancashire	1	25	0	0
Cumbria	4	22	0	0

### 3. Uuw Business Plan for 2025–2030

In October 2023, we published our business plan for 2025–2030 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.

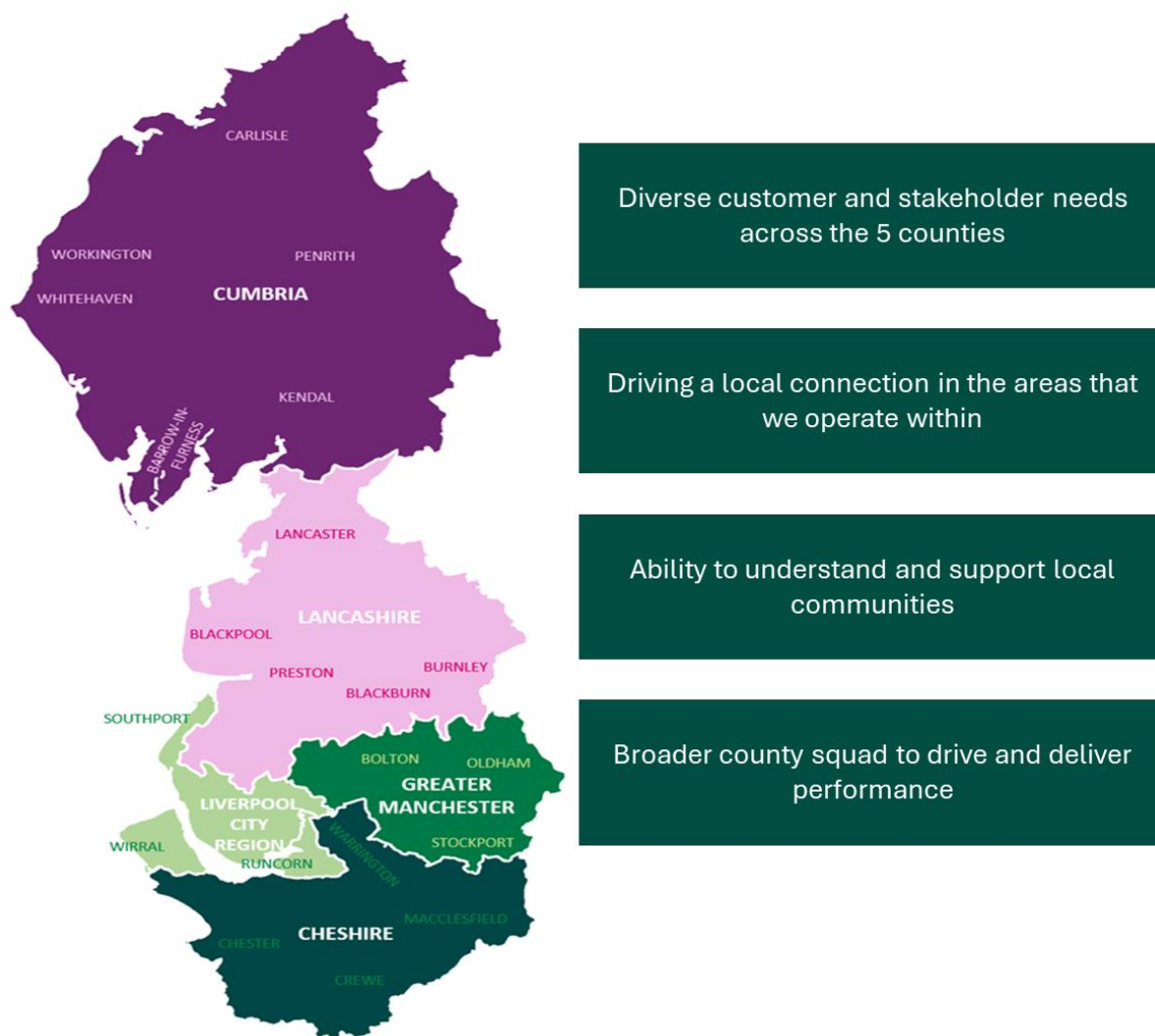
At the heart of this, we are adopting a Five County Business Model approach, one for each area of the North West. We hope that by setting out our plan this way, we make our investment programme and the benefits it delivers more meaningful to customers. We call it place-based planning and it involves us working in partnership with other organisations to develop cost-effective investment and planning in local areas. This approach means we can identify the right solutions and develop tailored outcomes which deliver for local people and the needs of the environment.

At the same time as improving services and investing in the security of infrastructure to respond to the challenges of climate change and population growth, we are also able to deliver real opportunities for the

North West too, a chance to drive inward investment, provide great quality skilled jobs and ignite a regional economy.

Each county has its own dedicated team, known as 'squads', featuring representatives from key business areas across UUW. The approach will help ensure that we take a joined-up approach: bringing together different parts of the business to improve communication and work more closely together as a stronger team with a shared vision. We believe this approach is unique in the water industry and will help us succeed in AMP8. For example, a county squad will allow for cross-working between water and wastewater colleagues, capital delivery teams and the Better Rivers delivery team.

Some of the benefits to taking this approach are highlighted below:



We are still in the process of establishing the Five County Business Model approach and understanding what we need in place to deliver the ambitious plan and further information will be provided in due course.

You can find out more about our business plan and a summary for each of the five counties 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/>).



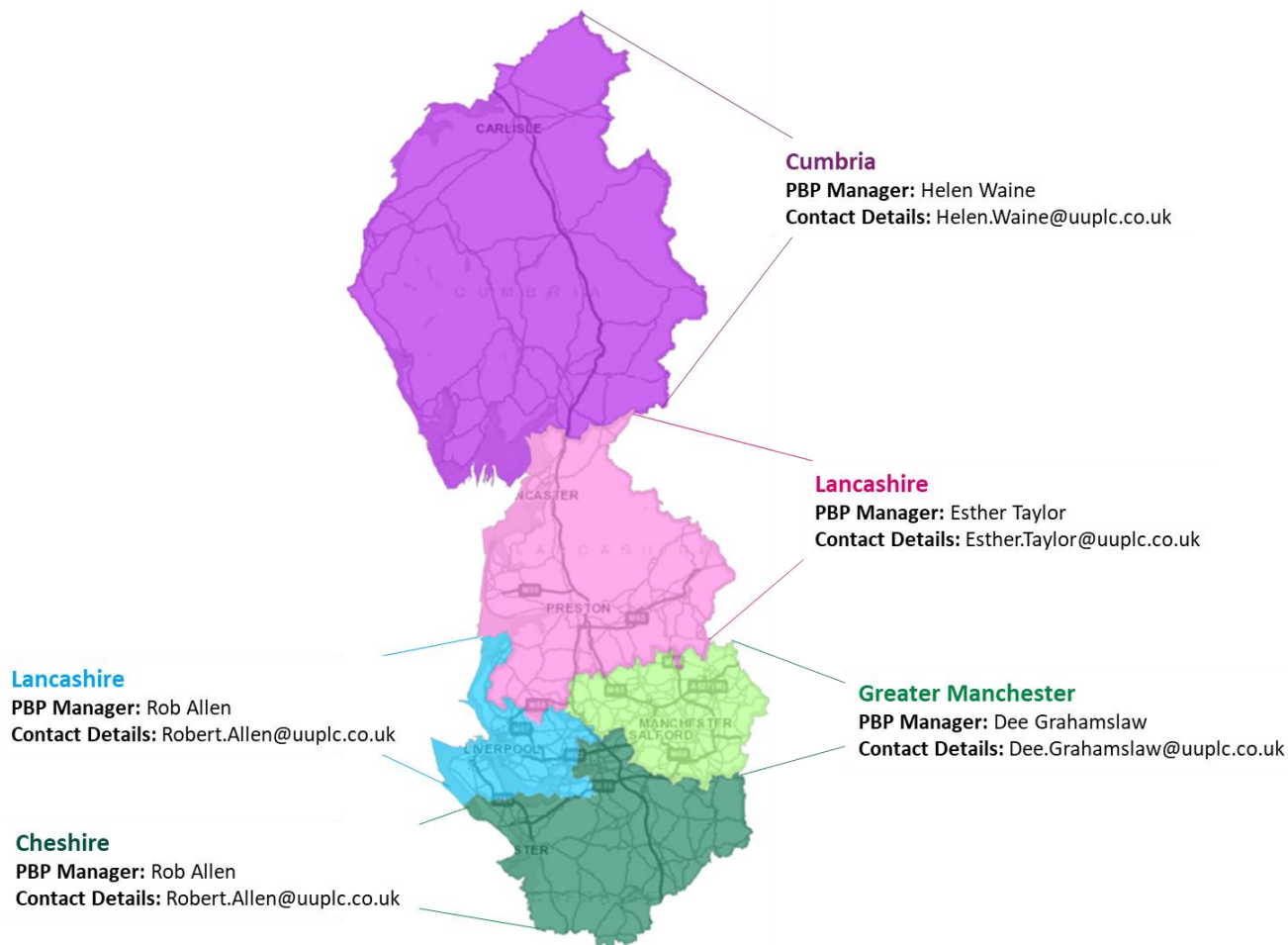
#### 4. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

Between November 2023 and February 2024, we worked alongside other water companies and the regulators (Consumer Council for Water (CCW), Environment Agency, Defra and Ofwat) to help inform what the next iteration of the DWMP (cycle 2) may look like over the course of six workshops. Current timescales suggest the cycle 2 guidance will be available in Autumn 2024, however in the meantime the DWMP team continue to work with others across the business shaping our approach to long term risk, investment planning and the Five County Business Model approach.

#### 5. Place-based Planning

The place-based Planning (PBP) approach is no longer a pilot, and we are formally adopting a county based approach moving forwards into AMP8 (as highlighted in section 3 above). This confirms our commitment to grow the place-based planning capability which will drive our partnership working across the entire North West region to bring about multiple benefits to society and the environment. As a reminder, place-based planning looks to work with partners to tackle complex, long term and system level challenges that cannot be addressed in organisational silos.

The PBP Managers will engage with potential partners much earlier to identify opportunities to integrate, enable more catchment and nature-based solutions and deliver wider benefits. They will continue a lot of the great work that has been established during the pilot phase and future quarterly reports will include updates on existing partnership working and new opportunities. The PBP Managers will be getting out across the counties over the next few weeks and months, but feel free to reach out in the meantime using the contact details on the map below.



## 6. Better Rivers Project

In March 2024, the national Storm Overflow Reduction Plan (SODRP) was published setting out almost 9,000 improvements to reduce spills from storm overflows. The plan meets or exceeds all Government targets and represents the most expansive programme for overflows in the world.

The plan outlines the contents of water companies' proposals, results and timeline; there is also a link to an interactive map, which shows the current plan for every single storm overflow in England. This allows you to filter by water company, catchment, river basin and type of water body, among others, and also provides a high-level view of planned investment, forecast impact, and expected solution.

The plan can be accessed on the WaterUK website here: <https://www.water.org.uk/overflows-plan>.

**Note:** The data should be considered as a snapshot in time. Investment, projects and results will all continue to evolve as proposals move through the approval process with government and regulators and investigations into specific locations take place.

For U UW, this is the biggest investment of its kind and will bring a massive reduction in sewer pollution entering the region's waterways. By 2050 the goal is to ensure that storm overflows, the relief points that prevent sewers from backing up and flooding homes and businesses in heavy rain, each operate less than 10 times a year. Work has already started at some of the highest priority sites and by 2030 more than 430 storm overflows will be improved.

Below shows what this looks like for the North West:



More information on our Better Rivers programme can be found on our corporate website including case studies, our plan for the North West for 2025-2030 and FAQs (<https://www.unitedutilities.com/better-rivers/>).

## 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 more than 90 applications from both internal and external sources. The scheme deadline will remain open until all funding has been allocated. We are still receiving some potential external and internal schemes to review for the green recovery benefits criteria, however unless schemes are already approved through planning and a delivery route identified it is unlikely they will be delivered on time within the funding criteria parameters. This is now restricting some schemes from the funding source.

Fourteen schemes have been awarded funding with a further two schemes that look promising currently under investigation for meeting the funding criteria. The schemes in flight will have an average U UW contribution of 24% and provide a partnership contribution rate more than £25 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 £59.7 million natural capital benefit for the Northwest.

The schemes under delivery include major public realm improvements in town centres across Greater Manchester including Oldham, Bury, Bolton, Stockport, Stretford, Altrincham and Walkden. These schemes 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.

Schemes underway in the Fylde catchment include a natural flood management scheme for the Brock and Tributaries watercourses, aimed at helping the river locking in St Michels-on-Wyre. In addition, a substantial tree pit scheme has been agreed across Blackpool town centre, which is currently the town with the lowest green spaces in the UK.

Working in collaboration with external third parties continue, with an additional two schemes close to being agreed as part of the funding criteria for Green Recovery. The focus for the remaining money is within the Eden Catchment to ensure we meet the objectives set out in the Green Recovery submission; these schemes currently being evaluated will aim to meet the criteria.

Internally we have had less success in identifying schemes that are constructable and can meet the funding criteria whilst maximising the reduction of water we receive into the network. Given our time constraints, we are now focussing on understanding how best to identify the SuDS opportunities moving forwards using our corporate data and internal learnings to enable us to move quickly into a position where we can successfully identify from our data where our benefits to our network and thus customers will be achieved.

# RFCC Update – March 2024

INFORMATION ITEM D
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## 1. Flooding update and our flood services

### Flood events

#### Storms Gerrit and Henk

- On 2 January 2024, outbreaks of heavy rain moved north-eastwards across northern England falling on catchments already saturated from Storm Gerrit. The Met Office named this Storm Henk, which also brought strong winds of up to 81mph (recorded at Exeter Airport in Devon) across other parts of the country.
- Over 102,000 properties have been protected across the country. Around 2,500 properties have reported as being flooded.
- The heavy rainfall following Storm Henk has affected communities across the UK, with the worst impacts being seen in widespread areas across the Midlands, including in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire; in parts of the West Country, including Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire; and in other areas.
- Parts of the country had a month’s worth of rain in the first four days of January, and that rain fell on already saturated ground. Several of our biggest river systems—the Trent, Thames, Severn and Avon—saw record levels, or close to record levels, as they drained huge volumes of rain from across their catchments.
- We played a leading role in responding to Storm Henk and worked with partners to protect our communities. Our teams have been out on the ground assessing flood damage and starting recovery work.

#### Storms Babet Ciarán update – October/ November 2023

- We now estimate approximately 4,300 properties were flooded during storms Babet and Ciarán in October and November 2023, with around 140,000 properties better protected by flood and coastal risk management schemes.
- According to the Met Office, Storm Babet saw the third wettest three-day period in a series for England and Wales since 1891.

## Engaging with stakeholders and communities

- During the autumn and winter storms Babet, Ciaran, Gerrick and Henk, we kept our key stakeholders (including NFU, ADA, National Flood Forum, water companies, RFCCs) informed of the flood situation and our response both at an area and national level. Our area teams have been on the ground informing and supporting local communities and partners.
- Philip Duffy visited Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire area on 5 January 2024, meeting staff at the Area Incident Room in Lincoln and the Short Ferry Depot.
- The Prime Minister visited Osney Island in Oxford on 7 January to see the temporary barriers and pumps deployed by Environment Agency staff to protect residents from flooding. Also on 7 January, Alan Lovell joined Environment Secretary, Steve Barclay and Environment Minister, Robbie Moore to speak with farmers and farming businesses in Lincolnshire, hearing how flooding has affected farmers and the local community.
- Our communications and engagement teams updated MPs in affected areas and used social media to warn and inform local people and visitors of the continued risk of flooding.
- Caroline Douglass, Executive Director for Flood and Coastal Risk Management, took part in interviews with 5 Live Breakfast, BBC Breakfast, the Today Programme and LBC News to provide an update of the national picture and warn and inform during Storm Henk.

## Flood services

### Flood awareness campaign update - Weston-super-Mare

- On 15 January 2024 we launched a new communications [campaign](#) in Weston-super-Mare to raise awareness of flooding and inform residents of the simple steps they can take to prepare.
- A series of free drop-in events were held across Weston during January and February. Residents were encouraged to speak with specialists from the Environment Agency and North Somerset Council about flooding and actions they can take to prepare and protect themselves.
- This campaign follows our successful annual national flood awareness week - Flood Action Week - which took place w/c 20 November 2023.

### Next Flood Warning Service in 2025

- During the past year, we have undertaken a procurement process to choose a supplier to replace our Flood Warning System. We are pleased to announce [Leidos](#) as the new supplier for the Next Warning Service.
- Along with their partners, [Intersec](#) and [CogWorx](#), they will start developing the service and launch it in 2025. This will be the third version of the Flood Warning System since 2006 – one of our vital services to help inform people about flooding.
- The service they will be supplying is already in use in France, Germany, and Croatia, covering around 30% of the European Union. It is used to warn people about various risks, such as floods, natural disasters, and industrial incidents.

## 2. FCERM capital programme update

### FCERM capital programme reset

- We have submitted a proposed reprofile of the capital programme to Secretary of State. The proposal would reset the target to 200,000 properties better protected, spending the full £5.2bn by March 2027.
- As part of the proposal, we would re-invest £150m of the current capital departmental expenditure limit (CDEL) settlement to reduce partnership funding gaps. This would support around 40 projects that have funding shortfalls and we have finalised this list following a review by project teams.
- We have set this out in the updated Business Case that was approved by Defra Investment Committee on 24 January and with HMT on 12 February 2024.
- We launched the second round of bids for the Frequently Flooded Allowance (FFA). We have now reviewed the bids against eligibility criteria and are working with Defra to the successes projects. We expect around 50 projects will benefit from the second round of the funding.

### Successful NFM projects

- In September 2023, the Defra and the Environment Agency announced the new £25m programme to mainstream nature-based solutions to flood resilience. The fund closed for applicants on 10 November 2023.
- There was huge interest from a wide variety of applicants across England. Our NFM Programme team completed the assessment of the bids and received ministerial approval of 40 new NFM projects across England, which will start benefitting from this funding this year.
- On 23 February 2024, Minister Robbie Moore [announced the successful projects](#). The programme will build on and embed learning from our [£15 million NFM pilot programme](#), and help meet the aims of the [National FCERM Strategy](#) and the Government's [policy statement on flooding and coastal erosion](#).

## 3. Delivering the FCERM strategy and roadmap: January – March 2024

### FCERM strategy updates

- Together with our partners, we are continuing to make good progress against the commitments outlined in the [FCERM Strategy Roadmap](#).

### Launch of Shoreline Management Plan Explorer

- Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) contribute to meeting the ambitions of the [National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#) of creating climate resilient places and a nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change.
- On 30 January 2024 the Environment Agency [launched Shoreline Management Plan Explorer](#) (SMP Explorer), with over 250 coastal practitioners attending the launch webinar. SMP Explorer makes SMPs easier to access, understand and use.
- It is aimed at coastal managers and planners, but SMP Explorer will also be accessible to members of the public and will be updated regularly. The improved National Coastal Erosion Risk Map will be added to SMP Explorer later this year.

## Surface water flood risk

- On 15 January 2024, Julie Foley, our Director of Flood Risk Strategy and Natural Adaptation [published a blog](#) on our work on surface water flood risk management. Lead local flood authorities (local councils) are responsible for managing surface water flood risks on the ground. But we also recognise the important ‘strategic leadership’ role the Environment Agency can play, alongside our day-to-day operational role for managing flood risk from rivers and the sea.
- We are actively leaning into this leadership space, and we have already taken positive actions through our [Roadmap](#) for delivering the national [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy](#). We have supported 41 lead local flood authorities to enhance local surface water flood risk mapping, following £3.5 million in grants from government.
- We have also worked with Defra to inform the Government’s response to the [Surface Water Review](#) produced by the National Infrastructure Committee, published on 13 March 2024.

## Property flood resilience

- We have made further progress on our property flood resilience (PFR) work. As a result of a recent procurement exercise the PFR Framework 2024 contract has identified suitable PFR service delivery partners for the national programme of PFR projects. The PFR Framework 2024 went live on 29 December 2023.
- This follows publication on 28 September 2023 of an [updated appraisal process](#) for property flood resilience schemes to be more proportionate to the costs and risks involved.

## Rural Flood resilience Partnership

- With the NFU, we have committed in the [FCERM Strategy](#) to working together to ‘establish a rural resilience partnership focused on helping farmers and land managers adapt to a changing climate. The partnership will look at how farming practices can enhance flood resilience in rural areas alongside sustainable food production’.
- The Environment Agency and NFU have worked closely together to create this Partnership. A Partnership Agreement was finalised earlier this year, with both the Environment Agency and NFU signed-up as partners alongside Country, Land & Business Association; Association of Drainage Authorities; Action with Communities in Rural England; and Natural England. We hope to launch the partnership later this year.

## Biodiversity net gain

- From [12 February 2024](#), the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) mandatory, bringing in new requirements for projects on our FCERM capital programme 2021 – 2027 that require planning permission.
- We and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) will need to meet these new requirements and achieve statutory BNG that will be monitored and managed for at least 30 years.
- In November 2023, Defra published [guidance and draft regulations](#), and the government laid the first of the [BNG regulations](#) to be considered and approved by parliament. You can keep up to date with the latest BNG news on this [Defra blog](#) and [Natural England blog](#).

## 4. Working with FCERM stakeholders: January – March 2024

### National Audit Office report on resilience to flood risk and Public Accounts Committee

- On 17 January 2024 the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) [published their report](#) on the inquiry into resilience to flooding. This follows the publication of the [National Audit Office \(NAO\) report on value for money](#) in FCRM on 15 November 2023.
- The [PAC met](#) on 27 November 2023 to discuss the findings from the NAO report and other issues related to flood risk. The questions focussed on the areas of maintenance, planning and the target for the programme. Philip Duffy and Caroline Douglass along with Tamara Finkelstein and David Hill from Defra attended the meeting.
- We are considering the PAC recommendations and are working with Defra to formally agree actions we are Defra will take in response to the PAC.

### NAO report on resilience to extreme weather and PAC

- On 21 February 2024, the PAC [held an evidence session](#), following the NAO report into resilience to extreme weather. The witnesses were Matthew Clarke, Cabinet Office Resilience Director, Roger Hargreaves, Cabinet Office COBR Unit Director, Clive Martin, Head of Government Risk Profession, Penelope Endersby, Met Office Chief Executive, and Tamara Finkelstein, Defra Permanent Secretary.
- The Committee examined how resilient the UK is in light of recent storms, and focused on the importance of adaptation and resilience. The Committee and panel discussed the National Adaptation Programme, roles and responsibilities during emergencies, work to understand and forecast extreme weather events (including the new National Flood Risk Assessment – NaFRA2) and investment in flood and coastal defences. You can watch the full session [here](#).

### EFRA Committee hearing on flooding

- On 20 February 2024, Julie Foley, FCRM Strategy & National Adaptation Director, [gave evidence](#) to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee on flooding. Julie sat on the panel alongside Tracey Garrett, National Flood Forum Chief Executive, Martin Lines, Nature Friendly Farming Network Chief Executive, and Emily O'Brien, Deputy Chair of Local Government Association's People and Places Board.
- The Committee examined how the government, Environment Agency and other risk management authorities are working together, along with private landowners such as farmers, to manage flood and coastal risk.
- The Committee and panel also discussed a wide range of topics including our work on flood warnings, flood risk modelling and mapping, surface water flood risk management, property flood resilience measures, and partnership funding mechanisms. You can watch the full session [here](#).

### Alan Lovell NFU speech

- On 20 February 2024, Alan Lovell was a [keynote speaker](#) at the [National Farmers Union \(NFU\) Conference](#). Alan spoke about our work with farmers, and the future for farming and the environment.
- The Prime Minister also gave a speech at the event, where he spoke about the issue of flooding on farmland and the flooding support in place. The Prime Minister [announced](#) further support schemes, including £75m of funding to Internal Drainage Boards (which was again [referenced](#) in the Spring Budget on 6 March 2024) to protect agricultural land and rural communities from flooding.



## **Flood and Coast and Excellence Awards 2024**

- Flood and Coast 2024 will be held at Telford International Centre from 4- 6 June 2024.
- The Environment Agency is leading day one of the conference programme with sessions featuring coastal resilience and integrated water management. The opening session will include a keynote address from Robbie Moore MP, Minister for Water and Rural Growth, and an address from Baroness Brown of the Climate Change Committee as part of the afternoon session.
- We will have an Environment Agency stand at the exposition showcasing our work across digital innovation, engineering, coastal resilience, skills and much more.
- We are also working with international partners to organise a schedule of events outside of the main programme of Flood and Coast to explore and progress new opportunities for partnership working.
- The Environment Agency Excellence Awards closed for nominations in February 2024. We had an impressive 93 entries across the 7 categories. We will be announcing the projects that have been shortlisted soon.

## **Engaging with FCRM suppliers**

- Environment Agency Chief Executive, Philip Duffy, will be hosting a roundtable event with lead commercial suppliers and senior members of the Environment Agency FCRM leadership team on 8 April 2024.
- Suppliers invited are: Arup, Bam Nuttall Ltd, Jacobs UK Ltd, Volker Stevin Ltd, Jacksons Civil Engineering Group Ltd, Atkins Realis Ltd, Kier Integrated Services Ltd and Jeremy Benn Consulting Ltd.

## **New training for RMAs to support flood and coast project development**

- In Spring 2024 eLearning modules to support flood and coast project development will be available to other risk management authorities (RMAs) for the first time.
- This is part of a package of actions to support other RMAs to develop projects for the flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) capital investment programme.
- 17 new eLearning modules will be available from the [FCERM Skills Academy](#), part of the [Supporting flood and coastal projects](#) SharePoint site. Topics include how to make your economic case, partnership funding, using natural capital approaches, and mapping and modelling.

## **5. International: January – March 2024**

### **Rock bags used for emergency dam repairs in the Netherlands**

- In January 2024, our Dutch partners Rijkswaterstaat, working with the Dutch Military, successfully used 4,000kg 'rock bags' for emergency repairs to the Bosscherveld spillway dam near Maastricht.
- The use of rock bags was trialled with partners as part of the 'Living Lab' under the 'Interreg project Polder2Cs' in 2021. The Environment Agency put forward the initial proposal to trial the method after using it for emergency embankment repairs in the UK.
- Rock bags are flexible nets filled with rocks or riprap that can be used to manage and protect against erosion. They are for instance used near railways, rivers, and foreshores. The bags are heavy enough to place in fast-flowing waters without the bags being pushed out of position, and they can be craned into position or attached to Chinook helicopters, allowing them to be lowered into position from the air.
- Further information on the Living Lab trial can be found [here](#).

## 6. FCERM publications and announcements: January - March 2024

### Environment Agency newsletter

- The [fourth edition](#) of the Environment Agency Newsletter was published on 28 February 2024. 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 our Chief Scientist, Dr Robert Bradburne, with our science strategy, research and technology being the focus.
- You can sign up to the newsletter [here](#). Please share this through your networks and encourage others to subscribe.

### Latest Current Magazine and Innovation Supplement

- The latest editions of [Current Magazine](#) and [Innovation Supplement](#) are now available.
- Current Magazine is produced to promote innovation, share, and standardise across the flood and coastal community. The adjoining Innovation supplement is recognition of the growing importance of shared innovation for collective benefit. You can find past editions [here](#), and you can subscribe [here](#).

## 7. Flood scheme openings and updates: January – March 2024

### Restoration of Gloucester flood embankment

- On 19 January 2024 we [completed restoration](#) works of a flood embankment in Gloucester which helps to better protect around 50 properties from flooding. The work has been carried out to repair and upgrade the 60 metre earth embankment which is part of the Horsebere Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme after slippage reduced the level of protection provided to properties. The project has increased the life of the flood defence and has produced an asset that has a very low maintenance requirement.
- We worked closely with Gloucester City Council on the restoration of the scheme which continued to better protect homes from flooding during the recent Storms Babet and Henk.

### River Thames Scheme – Consultation and construction partner update

- The statutory consultation for the River Thames Scheme (RTS) ended on Monday 4 March 2024. Attendance at our in-person and online events has been impressive, with our first weekend event in Shepperton attracting 500 attendees. More information can be found on the consultation webpages: [Consultation | River Thames Scheme](#).
- We are also seeking a construction partner and expect to shortlist candidates in the next few weeks. The key principles for construction, once work begins in 2026, are 'renew, reuse, and recycle'. Work will involve excavating large volumes of materials and waste, which we plan to reuse and recover where possible.
- Please visit our website to keep updated on the latest scheme news: [River Thames Scheme](#).

### **Property flood resilience measures completed - Kent**

- In March 2024, [a scheme was completed](#) protecting 119 properties in the community at significant risk of river-flooding in East Peckham, Kent. Measures installed include flood doors, demountable barriers, automatic airbricks and pumps. 92 per cent of eligible property owners signed up to the property flood resilience (PFR) scheme, and are now better protected.
- In addition, a further 49 properties in Five Oak Green had PFR measures installed. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council secured 'repair and renew' funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This was targeted at homes affected by flooding during Storm Ciara in February 2020.

### **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 Business and Stakeholder Management team**

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March 2024