

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

FRIDAY 19 JULY 2024, 10:00AM

Offices of the Lake District National Park Authority
Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 7RL

AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
10:00	1.	Welcome Welcome, Chairman's Introduction, and Apologies for Absence	For information
10:05	2.	Minutes of RFCC meeting 26 April 2024 and matters arising (<i>Papers</i>) To approve the minutes of the last RFCC meeting and to receive an update on any actions and matters arising	For approval
10:10	3.	Recent flooding incidents (<i>Information Item A</i>) To share reports on, and to discuss flood incidents across the North West in the last quarter.	For information
	4.	Addressing Surface Water Flood Risk	
10:20	4.1	Surface Water Risk – Extent and Content National Overview - What's already underway <i>Presented by Jonathan Hunter, EA National Surface Water and Water Industry Manager</i>	For information and discussion
10:35	4.2	NAFRA2 Update To receive an update on the delivery of NAFRA2. <i>Presented by Ben Lukey, EA NAFRA2 Project Executive</i>	
10:55	4.3	What's happening in other parts of the country? <i>Presented by Emily Athwal, EA Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager, London</i>	
11:15	4.4	What's happening already in addressing surface water flood risk in the North West and next steps To have a discussion on how we take the next steps in addressing surface water flood risk across the North West <i>Introduced by Adrian Lythgo, Chair of the NW RFCC and EA Area Flood and Coastal Risk Managers'</i>	For information and discussion
11:30		BREAK	
11:35	5.	Report from the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group (<i>Paper + Information Items B1 and B2</i>) To discuss and consider the recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group and an update on delivery of the RMA led schemes in the final two years of the programme <i>Introduced by Neville Elstone, Chair of the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-Group, Adam Walsh, EA Area FCRM Programming Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L) and RMA representatives</i>	For information, discussion and approval
12:15	6.	Coastal Update (Information Item C) <i>Presented by Carl Green Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group</i>	
12:30	7.	Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme Presentation (Information Item E) <i>Presented by Tom McCormick, EA FCRM Advisor, C&L</i>	
12:50	8.	Any Other Business	
13:00		CLOSE	

INFORMATION PAPERS

Info item A	Quarterly Flood Update Report	NW RFCC specific
Info item B	Papers from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting; B1 - Report to the sub-group B2 - National Allocations paper	NW RFCC specific
Info item C	Update from the North West and North Wales Coastal Group	NW RFCC specific
Info item D	Quarterly Update from United Utilities	NW RFCC specific
Info item E	Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme	NW RFCC specific
Info item F	National FCRM Update Paper	National EA
Info item G	Flood Risk Management Plan (2) Update	National EA
Info item H	Consultation on Automation of Flood Warnings	NW RFCC specific

Future RFCC meetings

18 October 2024 (Face to face meeting)
24 January 2025 (Virtual Meeting) TBC

Future RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group meetings

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

Site visit to the Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme

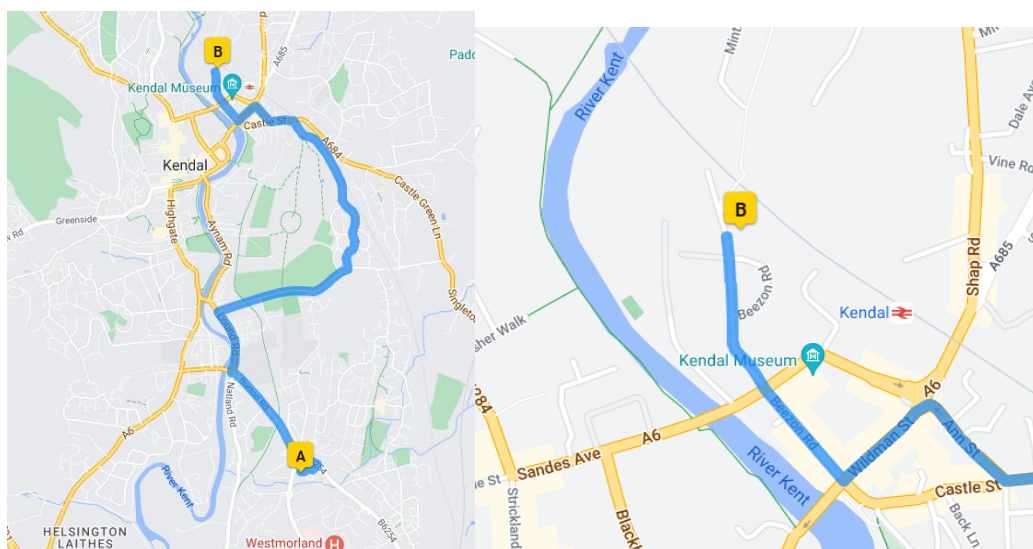
Following lunch we have arranged a site visit to the scheme, which is approximately 10 mins drive from the LDNPA offices.

We aim to leave the LDNPA at 2pm and travel to the Lidl car park at Kendal, where they have 10 car parking spaces reserved for our use and signed 'EA parking space'. Please put LA9 6BW in your sat nav, which will take you straight there.

When we arrive at the car park, please make your way to the Kendal Hub Offices, signposted, where we will meet at 2:20pm. Tom McCormick and his team will be there to meet us.

There will be a 1 hour walking tour of the scheme, which will bring you back to the same point for your onward journey home at approximately 3:20pm.

No PPE is required, however just make sure you have a waterproof jacket in case of rain.



North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 26 April 2024 via MS Teams

Attendees:

Members

Adrian Lythgo (Chairman)
Councillor Denise Rollo (Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Stephen Clarke (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor James Shorrock (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Richard Silvester (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Tricia Ayrton (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Karen Shore (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Nick Mannion (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Elizabeth Grey (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
Councillor Ian Moncur (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)
David Shaw (EA Appointed Member – Planning and Design)
Chris Findley (EA Appointed Member – Development and Sustainable Investment)
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) – part attendance
Paul Barnes (EA Appointed Member – Agriculture)

Environment Agency Officers Present

Ian Crewe, Area Director, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC)
Carol Holt, Area Director, Cumbria and Lancashire Area (C&L) - part attendance
Richard Knight, Area Flood Risk Manager, Cumbria (C&L)
Fiona Duke, Area Flood Risk Manager, Lancashire (C&L)
Nick Pearson, Area Flood Risk Manager (GMMC)
Ollie Hope, Area Flood Risk Manager (GMMC)
Martin Sibbit, Area FCRM PSO Team Leader (GMMC)
Sally Whiting, Senior FCRM Advisor (GMMC)
Crystal Orton, RFCC Project Manager (GMMC)
Rachel Harmer, RFCC Secretariat (GMMC)
Sarah Fontana, FCRM Capital Programme Co-ordinator (GMMC)
Andy Tester, FCRM Programming Manager (GMMC)
Gary Hilton, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (GMMC)
Debra Glover, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (GMMC)
Mia Mullender, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (C&L)
Rachael Broadhurst, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (GMMC)
Ayush Sheth, FCRM Programming Advisor (GMMC)
Chris Scott, FCRM Advisor (GMMC)

Local Authority Officers and observers:

Nick Rae, Westmorland and Furness Council
Jason Harte, Westmorland and Furness Council
Pieter Barnard, Cumberland Council
Andrew Harrison, Cumberland Council
Alison Harker, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Jane Hugo, Lancashire Strategic Flood Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes, Blackpool Council
Rachel Crompton, Lancashire County Council
Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Paul Wisse, Sefton Council
David Boyer, Warrington Borough Council
Matt Winnard, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Fran Comyn, Rochdale Borough Council
Imran Munshi, Blackburn with Darwen Council
Bea Beggs, Our Future Coast Programme Manager, Wyre Borough Council
Katie Eckford, Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator / Coastal Group Secretariat

Observers:

Tom De la Rosa, EA Senior FCRM Advisor, Adaptation and Resilience
Sharma Jencitis, United Utilities (UU)
David Kennedy, EA Senior FCRM Advisor (C&L)
Guy Metcalfe, Cheshire East Council
Ellie Rigby, Cheshire East Council
Junaid Bawany, Defra Finance Projects Team Review
William Morris, Chair of the Sunderland Point Community Association
Graham Harrison, Member of the public

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

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting and gave everyone a warm welcome.

Adrian advised apologies for the meeting had been received from Councillor Daniel Barrington (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Philip Cusack (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Carl Green (Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group); and Stewart Davies (EA Board Member).

Members noted Councillor Elizabeth Grey will be joining the meeting a little later.

Adrian welcomed the following speakers: Tom De La Rosa, EA Senior FCRM Advisor, Adaptation and Resilience, here to present item 5 – National FCRIP Programme Overview; Dave Kennedy (EA) and Jason Harte (Westmorland and Furness Council) presenting item 6 (CiFR) alongside Carolyn Otley, RFCC Member – Communities; Bea

Beggs, from Wyre Borough Council and Manager of Our Future Coast Programme, presenting item 7, Our Future Coast, alongside Susannah Bleakley, RFCC Member – Coastal Issues; and Chris Scott (EA) presenting the NAFRA2 Update.

Chris Wolstenholme (Chair of the Sefton Seafront Residents Action Group), William Morris (Chair of the Sunderland Point Community Association), Graham Harrison (Member of the public) and Junaid Bawany (Defra Finance Projects Review Team) were all welcomed as meeting observers.

Adrian referred Members to his quarterly Chair's Update paper, shared with Members on 2 April, and highlighted the steps that we as a Committee can take to try and influence policy and noted the content provides relevant context for a number of items in today's agenda.

Members heard that due to time constraints Adrian completed a personal response to the IDB (Individual Drainage Board) Regulations Review, stating that this represents his views rather than those of the Committee.

Members were reminded of the success of 8 North West projects successfully securing new national Natural Flood Management (NFM) funding (of 25 projects nationally), which were touched upon at the last Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting. Adrian advised that the Committee will follow their implementation with interest.

No Declarations of Interest have been received.

24 (12) Minutes of the RFCC Meeting held on 19 January 2024 and actions and matters arising

The Committee were advised the draft minutes of the 19 January meeting need to be slightly amended to reflect the attendance of Councillor Tony Brennan and Anthony Morley. With these amendments Adrian Lythgo asked if there are any further comments on the draft minutes.

Councillor Stephen Clarke raised the request made at the last meeting for the cost benefit information on the Billington and River Irwell at Kearsley Schemes'. Adrian advised it was his understanding this information was to be provided this week and Rachel Harmer advised there may be a slight delay in the information being sent out due to staff leave.

Councillor Stephen Clarke proposed and Councillor Nick Mannion seconded the minutes. The minutes of the 19 January 2024 RFCC meeting were approved by the Committee.

On matters arising Members received confirmation that:

- 1, The performance metrics being used by the Flood Poverty and Resilient Roch projects have been shared with RFCC Members.
- 2, The cost benefit ratio information on the Billington and River Irwell Schemes' will be sent out imminently.
- 3, Letters of thanks have been sent to former RFCC members Suzana Ilic and David Harpley.

There were no further comments or questions.

24 (13) Recent Flooding Incidents

Adrian Lythgo referred Members to the report provided on flooding in the last quarter, noting that it has again been a very wet quarter with a number of named storms but there have been relatively few properties flooded internally. He summarised that there have been 26 properties flooded across the five sub-regional partnerships. The North West has been relatively lucky compared to other parts of the country in this regard. While the number of properties flooded is relatively small, he reflected that each property flooded still has a very big impact.

Adrian recognised how busy risk management authorities have been during this period including operational teams operating assets which have been very much in use. Coastal areas have also been impacted with high winds coinciding with a number of high tides.

Adrian provided Members with the opportunity to comment on any flooding in their areas, or nationally. Councillor Stephen Clarke commented that even with the high tides and winds the flood defences at Fleetwood have worked superbly.

Members noted the position in terms of flood incidents for the last quarter.

24 (14) FCRM Successes 2023/24

For this item, Members received an overview of FCRM successes around the North West during 2023/24 from a variety of presenters. Adrian commented that it is worthwhile reflecting achievements and completions of different flood resilience interventions, to show the breadth of the work that the RFCC and its RMAs are involved in.

Cumbria:

Richard Knight provided an overview of progress on the Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme, advising that back in 2015 some 2000 properties were flooded in Kendal and surrounding villages. He advised the scheme is progressing well with 50% of the reaches in Kendal town centre complete and the installing of glass panels has

begun. Members were advised there have been great successes with media coverage, work with local Councillors and local flood action groups.

Andrew Harrison (now Cumberland Council) spoke on the Flimby scheme where in 2015 over 100 homes were affected by flooding. Members noted five watercourses come together at Flimby and the huge amount of work that has taken place to reduce the risk of flooding, including the installation of circa 75 leaky dams in Flimby Great Wood just above the village.

Andrew also reported back on the Holme village project to address surface water and groundwater issues, where circa 10 properties have flooded previously. Andrew provided an overview of the complexities of the scheme, which has taken approximately two years to complete.

Members noted Papcastle and South Street in Cockermouth as examples of Quick Win projects completed.

Cheshire Mid Mersey:

Ollie Hope spoke about the multi-agency emergency plan which has been agreed and implemented to support the effective functioning of the £7 Million Northwich Flood Risk Management Scheme, completed in 2017 to protect circa 400 properties from flooding. This collaboration between the EA, United Utilities (UU) and Cheshire West and Chester Council which was successfully implemented in 2023, now provides a much enhanced joint incident response capability for the community. The three parties have all jointly committed to fund an integrated catchment model for the town and will continue to work together on a long-term sustainable plan.

Warrington's EA-led Penketh and Whittle Flood Risk Management Scheme has benefitted from £1.25 Million of Local Levy support to help with scheme delivery, which will protect 221 properties along the Penketh and Whittle Brooks. Extensive habitat development is also incorporated into the scheme, situated next to the Trans Pennine Trail.

Lancashire:

Richard Knight provided a brief overview of the £55 Million Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme, providing enhanced flood protection to over 5000 homes and businesses. During the last quarter over 500 metres of flood wall has been completed and more recently the project has handed the Broadgate Gardens element back to Preston City Council marked by a ceremony.

Clare Nolan-Barnes provided an overview of two Quick Win projects installing sustainable drainage including rain gardens within the public realm. A Stanley Park building now has a sedum roof and a rain system installed, which feeds into a lavender bed enabling rainwater to bypass the drainage system; and as part of a partnership

project with UU at Fishers Field, SuDS features including rain beds are taking water from a changing room block.

Merseyside:

Ollie Hope provided an overview of the award-winning £20 Million West Kirby Flood Risk Management Scheme, delivered with a combination of funding from Grant-in-Aid, Local Levy and a significant contribution from Wirral Council. Members heard since completion the scheme has been called into action twice, notably in the last couple of months and in particular in the storm event on the 9 April.

Back in 2013 a storm flooded 12 properties, caused external damage to many properties and huge damage to the promenade. In the most recent event, one property was reported as flooded. In the longer term, accounting for sea level rise predictions, circa 500 properties will benefit from reduced risk.

Paul Wisse highlighted a couple of project successes led by Sefton Council. Sefton is the lead authority for the North West Coastal Monitoring Programme, which is part of a national network of coastal monitoring programmes that cover the coast of England and Wales. The programme is collecting data on coastal change and condition to support coastal management actions and delivery of actions within the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). Any coastal protection scheme will use this data to inform its design and delivery, and the monitoring programme has supported over £200 Million of investment in the North West since it began in 2011.

Secondly, in 2018, Sefton Council took the opportunity to update their surface water flood risk maps following the new climate change projections. They were able to combine funding from GiA and Defra's Boosting Action for Surface Water to get the whole borough model updated, which can be fed into the EA National surface water flood maps that are publicly available on the website. Paul advised these projects have identified key hotspot areas and a number of interventions are being recommended, some of which have fed into the Alt Catchment NFM Project.

Greater Manchester:

Nick Pearson highlighted the Horwich Town Centre Scheme led by Bolton Council looking at a combination of flood sources. An integrated model produced early on captured the flooding risk in a single model which provided an accurate understanding of the flood mechanisms. The scheme included improvements to highway drainage and new green space areas in the town. Members acknowledged the large amount of internal and external partnership working that took place throughout the project, which was nominated for an ICE (Institute of Civil Engineers) award.

Nick also provided an overview of the EA-led Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme, which has now been divided into two business cases. Littleborough

is the first phase of the project, which has been divided into two phases, the first of which will deliver a reduced flood risk to over 300 properties.

A number of Greater Manchester Quick Win projects were highlighted, including Lavington Avenue in Cheadle, Howard Street SuDs-enabled tree pits in Salford, and the incorporation of multiple small projects within the Oldham Town Centre regeneration plan.

Adrian Lythgo said he hoped that Members had found it useful to hear about successes across the region. Considerable work and effort has gone into each one to address some of the barriers and blockages to projects and schemes. Once a year it's very worthwhile looking in broad terms at what we've collectively delivered, from big to very small projects.

Adrian briefly referred to some successes and completed projects within the RFCC Business Plan including the Flood Hub website and the Unpave the Way Project which recently featured at the RHS Urban Show in Manchester and is to feature at the RHS Tatton Show in July. This project encourages people to have natural front gardens rather than hard surfaces. Adrian advised that Sally Whiting would provide more detail on the Business Plan later in the meeting.

Adrian Lythgo thanked all for their information. There were no further comments or questions.

24 (15) Flood and Coastal Risk Innovation Programme (FCRIP) National Programme Overview

Adrian Lythgo welcomed Tom De La Rosa (National EA Programme Manager), who provided Members with an overview of the innovation programmes taking place nationally, including:

- Adaptation Pathways Programme, which is supporting 5 strategic locations in England to develop long-term investment plans for climate adaptation
- Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme, which is testing and developing new ways to support communities at significant risk of coastal erosion.
- Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP), which is testing and developing new ways to support communities at flood and coastal erosion risk to transition and adapt to climate change.

The North West has three of the FCRIP projects including the Resilient Roch Project in Rochdale, CiFR (Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Project) and Our Future Coast.

The FCRIP programme projects are well underway and Members noted the involvement of circa 400+ partners nationally, including stakeholders, academics, industry bodies and the private sector. Currently these projects are funded until 2027.

Tom provided further insight into the Adaptive Pathways Programme, Community Partnerships and Governance, Growth and Finance, and Monitoring and Technology. He finished by highlighting the emerging resources and tools being generated from these national programmes.

Adrian thanked Tom for his presentation and acknowledged the breadth of the different sorts of projects. He asked in terms of taking the learning forward if there is a broad approach that can be shared for how some of the innovation will be mainstreamed including what this means for guidance around the strategy implementation.

Tom advised the Coastal Handbook will be the repository for coastal guidance and learning and an exercise of mapping out all project activities within this work programme has been done.

Members heard there is currently no single Resilience and Adaptation Strategy.

Rachel Crompton asked if the National Team can provide guidance to Local Authorities (LAs) to help adapt their approaches to groundwater flood risk and Tom advised this is available along with methodologies and case studies which may be useful to look at.

Paul Barnes advised it is interesting that groundwater can be affected by using NFM, and advised there also needs to be an examination of soil biology, so we can have a thorough understanding of it.

Adrian thanked Tom for his presentation. There were no further comments or questions.

24 (16) Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Programme (CiFR)

Jason Harte opened this presentation on the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience (CiFR) Project, hosted by Westmorland and Furness Council and covering all of Cumbria.

Carolyn Otley (RFCC Member) provided an overview of the six-year CiFR project, reflecting the stage they are at, involving developing the project and getting business cases through the system.

CiFR's is seeking to improve the overall flood and climate resilience of small rural communities that have suffered repeated flooding or that we know are at increasing flood risk. Work is being done building on existing partnerships and also trying to combine the existing strengths in Cumbria around NFM and evidence gathering, which is needed to achieve changes in policy and practice to make a lasting difference.

Dave Kennedy spoke about the challenges which have led to this project, including:

- Traditional hard flood defences being expensive and not financially viable for small communities.
- NFM has the potential to significantly reduce flood risk if done in a targeted way, but is hard to fund via existing routes.
- Funding packages need to be attractive to farmers and landowners as targeted NFM work is often on prime agricultural land.

Members received an overview of different approaches being taken:

- Modelling and monitoring work is being done in partnership with the hydrology team based at Lancaster University, led by Nick Chappell, where scientific led evidence will be gathered.
- Farming and Community Officers, in essence two Countryside Stewardship Advisers, paid for by the project, employed and managed through Natural England with guidance from the project are helping to clarify where to target our focus. Dave advised the Natural England involvement is critical as this provides a trusted intermediary to engage with the farmers.
- Blended finance is also being looked at, with a view to adding in funding from the farming community, private sector and potentially United Utilities.
- Building community resilience e.g. providing emergency services connections, running exercises to prepare for emergencies, running classes for school children.

A separate piece of work will be being done in conjunction with Manchester Business College to establish a financial value on societal resilience.

David advised on the locations across which a mixture of NFM and community resilience work is taking place, including Grasmere, Stockdalewath, Warcop and Crummock/Tom Rudd Beck and Bitter Beck, Kendal, Carlisle, Appleby, Cockermouth and Keswick.

Carolyn provided further details of the NFM and community engagement taking place in Grasmere, and an overview of what has changed during the first three years of the project, These include:

- Communities are increasingly wanting to talk about climate change and the impacts of it.
- Water quality has become an increasing topic of conversation and there is increased awareness of the improved water quality benefits of NFM measures in addition to reducing flood risk.
- Emerging payment rates within the Environmental Land Management Scheme are making it more attractive to farmers and landowners to use their land to store water.
- The National Resilience Framework has increased the focus on 'whole of society resilience'.

An interim review now is capturing learning from the first half of the project to inform the next three years.

David Shaw gave his thanks for the presentation and advised that he has been thinking about innovation and entrepreneurialism in terms of delivery, noting that some thought should be given to this. He also suggested linking with the Cumbria Community Forest.

Ian Crewe thanked Carolyn and David for their presentation, reflecting on his recent visit to Ullswater to see the work of the Cumbrian River Restoration Programme, which is similar in nature to this project. He remarked on EA farm visits taking place across the North West to discuss water quality on the farms and conveyed the feedback from farmers that they have found these visits very supportive. He remarked that he hopes there is an opportunity to continue this engagement with farmers to develop trust and encourage better collaboration with the farming community.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Jason, Carolyn and Dave for their presentation, which provided some real illustrations of what is underneath some of the headlines provided by Tom. There were no further comments or questions.

24 (17) 'Our Future Coast' Project

Bea Beggs (Project Manager) provided Members with a project overview, including objectives and scope, progress, learning to date and what the project is hoping to achieve in the future.

Members heard a pre-recorded presentation from Carl Green, as he had been unable to attend the meeting, reflecting the need for solutions to be built on the knowledge and understanding of those who have real stakes in the outcomes. He shared the ambition for solutions to have a low carbon value, to enhance biodiversity, as well as helping to adapt to the changing climate. Coastal communities and landowners are at the cutting edge of the climate challenge and a sustainable future cannot be realised by the hardening of coastlines - we must embrace the multiple benefits and adaptability of nature based solutions. Through an understanding of natural processes with communities at their heart, within the framework of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP), we must embrace a hybrid approach. Enabling this to happen is a long-term aim of Our Future Coast.

Carl introduced the 14 demonstration sites along the North West coast which will help to identify obstacles and barriers to implementation of nature based solutions and will help to develop a knowledge base across nine local authorities, environmental charities, landowners, statutory bodies, universities and communities.

Project challenges include resistance to change and new ways of working, constraints on skilled resources (including for the Project Manager role), and a low degree of readiness in terms of prior engagement with communities and stakeholders.

Progress highlights include;

- 4 sites set to complete by 2027
- An additional 4 sites with possibilities of delivery are being worked through.
- 2 learning sites will influence the methodology and objectives of the other OFC sites
- 3 further sites are developing and will form a legacy pipeline.
- Working with CoastSense Radar 8 deployments, which is looking at their artificial intelligence salt marsh assessments.
- Engagement processes have been tested and are live across all sites.

Susannah Bleakley advised she has been the community engagement lead on this programme and over the past two years has been working closely with site leads and with others to tailor engagement, choose the right approaches for the objectives and the context of the site. Members noted that for managed realignment sites, it has been about opening detailed discussions with landowners, leading into working with them to explore alternative finance. For other sites, for example a recreational beach, one of the first things has been to look at the community understanding and readiness, their understanding of climate change, and what that means for the site.

Community meetings and drop-in sessions have been organised for each of the projects and in total so far there have been 62 events involving 2,000 people. Members noted the engagement priorities for the projects and key learning from engagement and the need to start conversations as early as possible.

The next steps for the project were shared with Members, which include:

- Continuing to work with stakeholders to co-design, co-plan, and where possible, co-deliver
- To finalise delivery sites – complete option scoping and begin capital works
- Develop a series of project plans to form a legacy pipeline
- Monitoring review to explore gaps in learning
- Continue to partner with CoastSense including on the Saltmarsh Artificial Intelligence project
- Research with the University of Lancaster on adaptation pathways for bridging the gap between the SMP and the community experience.
- FCRIP projects working jointly on policy change.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Bea and Susannah for their presentation. He asked Members to think through the information provided on engagement so this can be picked up as we look towards refreshing the Business Plan.

There were no further comments or questions.

Adrian introduced the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group and their role for new Members and observers, including their making of recommendations to the full Committee.

Neville Elstone reflected on the significant engagement observed at the last Sub Group meeting and thanked Members of the Sub-group for the excellent meeting which had good debate.

Capital and Resource Maintenance Programme 2023/24

Andy Tester (EA Programme Manager) provided the national investment programme context and encouraged reflection on what has already been achieved over the last few years.

The Committee 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. Members 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.

Spend forecasts at mid-February showed the North West is 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 and examples were provided, supported by details in the report.

The Committee noted 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. 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, claims have been accepted with a total value of £6.382 Million from 15 projects. Members 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 causing disruption to delivery of the capital programme. Members 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

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

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

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.

Andy reported that the resource asset maintenance allocation for 2024/25 has not yet been confirmed but the indicative allocation is £12.1 Million which while an increase of £300k from last year, is a real terms 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. This year it will be slightly different in that it will cover both of the last two 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, Members 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 offset partnership funding pressures and an update on this will be provided at a future meeting.

Members 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.

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 Committee noted the North West has been successful in obtaining additional NFM funding through this programme and of the 40 successful projects nationally, 13 are in the North West. These 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
- 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

Local Levy Programme Update

Andy reported that the balance at the start of the 2023/24 year was £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 £1.8 Million 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.

Members noted 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.

Local Levy Requests for Funding

Following discussion and consideration at the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group, Andy Tester provided Members with brief overviews of two projects led by Cheshire East which are requesting Local Levy funding.

- Lindow Community Primary School, Wilmslow (Cheshire East) - £30k
- Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (Cheshire East) - £120k

On the latter request, Members noted 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. Andy 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. Members also noted further discussions with property owners regarding their responsibilities as riparian owners of the culvert will also take place.

Members noted the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group's recommendation to approve both funding requests and there were no questions or comments raised.

The Committee noted there had been a discussion at the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting regarding a Local Levy request for the Preston and South Ribble Scheme and there was an agreement for this to be deferred until the July meeting to allow time for the Lancashire Partnership Councillors to receive a more in-depth briefing on the scheme.

RFCC Business Plan Update

Sally Whiting provided Members with highlights from the report, following the more in-depth presentation at the recent RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group Meeting.

Members were advised 25 projects have been part of the Business Plan since the beginning and the majority of these are ongoing. Thirteen of those are in a good place, three are progressing a little slower than intended and there are two which are not currently progressing and one of these we are proposing to formally close down. Three projects are complete and four have already been closed down or merged into other

projects.

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 an underspend of around £340k, partly due to provision of budget which wasn't required such as the RMA Capacity Building Programme. This is good news as national training courses and budget have been tapped into, not requiring Local Levy funding.

Members noted in January 2024 they approved £1.2 Million for 2024/25 Business Plan work and the indicative Local Levy funding requirement of £1 Million for 2025/26.

Sally highlighted a number of successes coming from the Business Plan including:

- The Flood Hub website, which continues to grow year on year with significant increases in users and page views. There are dedicated resources working on the site developing content and social media campaigns
- Knowledge development and sharing projects – linking to both the Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan and the Flood Poverty Report.
- The Front Garden's Project and the securing of Leon Davis, a multi-gold RHS best in show garden designer to work with the project team to exhibit the sustainable garden project at the RHS Urban Show in Manchester and then the RHS Tatton Show in July.

Members then received the following proposed amendments to the Business Plan programme, the background and justification for which are set out in the paper and had been discussed at the Sub-group meeting.

- **ID3 – Wider benefits of FCRM schemes** – project close-down
- **ID12 – Front Gardens Project** – budget flexibility request of up to £10K

Members were reminded the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group 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 and therefore the RFCC were asked to note the approval for the budget flexibility request provided by the Sub Group.

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

Partnership Co-ordinator Review

Given that this review and a previous proposal has already been discussed by the Sub group at a previous meeting, and the revised proposal had been shared with the

partnerships in advance of the Sub Group meeting, Neville Elstone simply highlighted the funding proposal 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.

This amounts to an increase in RFCC contribution of £60K per year and Members noted the recommendation from the F&BASG to approve this increase this additional funding.

There were no further questions or comments.

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 maintenance programmes.
- Noted the current Local Levy position and latest spend forecast.
- Noted the approved capital and maintenance resource allocations for 2024/25 and the associated targets. (Recommendation in national allocation paper)
- Noted the updated capital allocations. (Recommendation in national allocation paper)
- Continued to support the EA and other RMAs in the delivery of the final 3 years of the current capital investment programme. (Recommendation in national allocation paper)
- **Approved** the request of £30k Local Levy funding for the Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- **Approved** the request of £120k Local Levy Funding for the Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works.
- RFCC Business Plan Update
 - **Approved** the closure of the ID3 – Wider Benefits of FCRM Schemes project.
 - Noted the RFCC F&BASG's approval of the ID12 – Front Garden's Project budget flexibility request for up to £10k of Local Levy.
 - **Approved** the £150k of Local Levy funding for the NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria) Project.
 - **Approved** the RFCC's revised contribution for the Partnership Co-ordinator Contribution - £42K per partnership per year, fixed for the next three years from 2024/25 to 2026/27 (£37k for the partnership role and £5k of partnership support costs).

24 (19) RFCC Local Levy Strategy

Members heard the draft Local Levy Strategy, which sets out our high-level principles and guidelines with respect to allocation of Local Levy funding, has been to the

Committee on a couple of occasions with proposed changes to its content and Sally Whiting presented the draft final version of the Strategy for approval.

In the future more details on how to request Local Levy and how the fund will be managed will be provided as part of the new RFCC Sharepoint site information. Members were asked to show their support of the draft final Local Levy Strategy, which was subsequently approved.

Resolved: The RFCC approved and supported the adoption of the final draft Local Levy Strategy.

24 (20) United Utilities Update

Perry Hobbs had to leave the meeting early and the UU update was deferred to the July 2024 meeting.

24 (21) NAFRA2 Update

Ollie Hope introduced this NAFRA2 overview which intends to establish a base level of understand for Members of what it will deliver. Further information will then be provided over RFCC meetings in July, October and January. Members were advised to email Rachel Harmer if they have any questions following the meeting.

Chris Scott advised from 2024 the EA will produce a new national assessment of flood risk (NAFRA2) that will help places better plan and adapt to future risks from flooding from river, the sea and surface water. Members heard the national flood risk assessment will enable us and others to make risk-based decisions, to understand where the key risks are in terms of flooding and be able to action any potential projects moving forwards. It will also allow us to understand what the impacts of our defences are, for example, so we can then understand the damages avoided and what the main economic benefit of investment might be.

Members heard the current NAFRA assesses the present-day flood risk from river and the sea, but doesn't include climate change, or risks that are in place by defences that have been put in place. NAFRA2 products will:

- Meet the FCERM Strategy Objective
- Provide updated Flood Zones for Flood Maps
- Be enhanced to include additional information such as climate change and flood depths

And from April 2025 the NAFRA2 system will:

- Support quarterly updates to published products
- Allow users to interact with data and a wide range of bespoke outputs
- Include additional functionality

NAFRA2 will be a single source for all flood risk data across every region of the country and improvements to our NAFRA information will provide:

- greater consistency
- a greater range of information, i.e. depths and velocities, climate change scenarios and greater assessment of impacts
- greater accuracy and precision
- greater flexibility and efficiency

Local Authorities have been given access to view the new web portal and there is still time for LAs to review and provide comments. The review of the product with the EA will commence in the next couple of weeks.

Adrian thanked Chris for this update and there were no comments or questions.

24 (22) Any Other Business

Adrian asked, having curtailed Bea and Susannah's presentation earlier in the meeting due to time restraints, if there was anything they wished to add or any questions that anyone wished to raise. Susannah advised the paper provides further information about acknowledging the scale of the challenge and resourcing engagement appropriately and again re-emphasised the point that adaptation is going to require long-term funding for long-term engagement.

Adrian thanked Susannah for her comments and advised this is quite intensive on both communities and organisations that are seeking to work with them. He highlighted that this is another call on the overall balance between capital and revenue funding and for this space to be effective it needs to be under continuing review.

David Shaw highlighted an item of AOB raised in the chat function by Paul Barnes, where Paul commented that we need to review the evidence in light of what we now see to re-examine our North West Shoreline Management Plan, particularly in light of the strategic loss of transport linked to BAE and Sellafield.

Adrian asked for this to be detailed under AOB and advised as the North West SMP has just been through a significant refresh and there is now a Cumbria Coastal Strategy which partly deals with some of those infrastructure threats which Paul relates to, he advised this will be picked up in due course and thanked David for highlighting Paul's comment.

Adrian thanked Members for their attendance to the meeting.

The next RFCC meeting will be held face to face in Kendal, Cumbria on 19 July 2024.

AGENDA ITEM 5

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 19 JULY 2024

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 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
Rachel Crompton	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr James Shorrock	RFCC Member - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Gerald Cooney	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Laura Boyle	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
David Shaw	RFCC Member – Planning and Design
Susannah Bleakley	RFCC Member – Coastal Issues
Kate Morley	RFCC Member - Conservation
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
Nick Pearson	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
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
Blessing Akinbola	Intern, EA FCRM, GMMC
Robert Taylor-Brookes	Officer, EA Programming Team Advisor, C&L
Dickon Wells	Officer, EA PCM Project Manager
Nick Rae	Officer – Westmorland and Furness Council
Pieter Barnard	Officer – Cumberland Council
Alison Harker	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer – Blackpool Council
Lorah Cheyne	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Sarah Wardle	Officer – Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Fran Comyn	Officer- Rochdale Council
Jill Holden	Officer - Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Dave Boyer	Officer – Warrington Borough Council
Matthew Winnard	Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Guy Metcalf	Officer – Cheshire East Council

Visitors:

Thomas Myerscough General Manager, Wyre Rivers Trust

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Neville Elstone opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance. He advised today's meeting will be spent partly on looking back at the first half of the capital programme, a look at how we are doing, and to look forward at the refresh process and what we still need to achieve in the last three years of the programme and for us to discuss how we can jointly achieve that.

He welcomed Thomas Myerscough from Wyre Rivers Trust who will be providing an update on the Wyre Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project and its innovative financing mechanism; Sarah Fontana providing an update on the work of the Capital Programme Co-ordinator. He highlighted that there is one Local Levy funding request for the Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme.

Rachel Harmer reported that apologies had been received from Councillor Mhairi Doyle (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership (SFRP), Councillor Stephen Clarke (Lancashire SFRP); Andrew Harrison (Cumberland Council); Councillor Jane Hugo (observer from the Lancashire SFRP); Councillor Laura Crane (observer from the Cheshire Mid Mersey SFRP); Bea Beggs (Our Future Coast Project Manager); Katie Eckford (SMP Co-ordinator); Ian Crewe (EA Area Director, GMMC) and Ollie Hope (EA Area Flood Risk Manager, GMMC).

We were advised that Councillor Stephen Clarke had nominated Rachel Crompton to attend the meeting and place any votes on his behalf.

2. Feedback from the RFCC Meeting on 26 April 2024 and actions since

Adrian Lythgo provided this reminder of the business discussed at the last RFCC meeting, first welcoming the new Councillors to the meeting and introducing himself. He reminded Members that the last meeting was focussed quite heavily on the Flood and Coastal Risk Innovation Programme, where we had feedback from two of the projects that are in the North West. Since then he advised he has talked to the project teams in more detail and these projects will continue to feedback as we go forward.

Adrian spoke on the significant North West investment programme constructing flood defences, whether those be hard or natural defences. He recognised the focus we already have on the delivery challenge and noted he had touched upon this in his quarterly Chair's report circulated on 5 July.

As a result of the impact of Covid, in terms of the very high inflation the capital investment programme has been facing, we have got into a position where our delivery of properties better protected in this six-year programme is very much loaded to the back end of the programme. This is true to a degree with the Environment Agency (EA) led part of the programme and is very much the case with the Local Authority (LA) led side of the programme. He advised that this will be looked at during this meeting, to consider how we can support each other through this process.

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Adrian recognised the recent General Election and the new Government, where there could be significant policy announcements in the flooding space. He advised in the meantime we will continue with the current programme to make sure we get people better protected from flooding.

There were no further comments or questions.

3. Investment Programme Update

Adam Walsh introduced himself as the EA Programme Manager for Cumbria and Lancashire, and provided a presentation which included the outturn from 2023/24, the in-year programme; and, what the refreshed bid for the final two years of the programme is looking like.

Capital programme 2023/24

Adam reported the number of properties better protected as 3269, against a target of 3532. This target had included a nationally estimated 20% uplift to incorporate non-residential properties which did not reflect reality in all cases, especially some of the larger schemes. While the final outcomes did fall slightly short of the uplifted target, without the uplift the target would have been met. Adam provided a breakdown of the top three schemes reducing the risk to the most properties.

In terms of spend, RMAs in the North West spent £100 Million against a total budget of £107 Million. Members heard that £4.5 Million in Partnership Funding was deferred into future years to take advantage and maximise the Grant in Aid (GiA).

For the GiA element the EA had a total overspend of £2.16 Million (agreed with the National Programme Management Office) and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) had a total underspend of £3.3 Million. Overall, spend was within 1.3% of the budget – a good result.

For 2023/24 the North West claimed capital efficiencies of £10.1 Million.

Adam provided a bit more detail on the biggest spending projects in 2023/24, noting that the top five projects accounted for half of the year's spend and the top 13 projects accounted for circa 70% of the overall spend.

Adam provided an overview of the first three years of the current six-year programme, which commenced in April 2021.

Adam referred back to forecast estimates for properties better protected at the start of the programme. At the start of the programme we were aiming to better protect 29,000 properties in the first three years of the programme. Projects were in development, carrying out ground site investigations and detailed designs, and the costs and scheme viabilities were at very early stage. The actual number of properties delivered in years 1-3 has been 9,775. We noted the incorrect figure of 7,693 given in the written report, which was missing one of the years. Adam provided a few example schemes to help explain the reasons for the changes and the re-scheduling of scheme completion and hence outcome delivery.

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On spend in the first three years of the programme, Adam highlighted the significant investment in the North West of £318 Million, of which £282 Million was GiA representing around 11% of the national £5.2 Billion of GiA available.

On capital efficiencies, we have achieved £11.5 Million against a target of £28.2 Million. We noted the challenges arising from COVID and a change to the reporting process, acknowledged there is still work to do and Adam advised that by the end of the six year programme we should have claimed around £61 Million in efficiencies.

Adam presented a slide showing the top 10 schemes delivering properties better protected, spend and efficiencies claimed in the first three years of the programme .

Councillor Ged Cooney asked a question about the timeframe of the whole programme, the timeframe covered by the data provided, and asked whether we are also looking at the programme for the current years. Neville confirmed that this was a look back to the first three years of a 6-year programme for which targets are set each year.

There were no further comments or questions.

Programme Overview for 2024/25

Adam reported a revised 2024/25 properties better protected target of 2,929, an update from the target set out in the written report, which has now been accepted by national as better reflective of our latest programme and forecasts. Forecast figures at mid-May 2024 indicated the North West will better protect 3,343 properties from flooding this year, exceeding the revised target.

In terms of funding for this year, Adam advised the total for the North West is £108.76 Million, which includes £98.4 Million of GiA, £7.66 Million in Local Levy and £2.67 Million of Partnership Funding contributions.

The mid-June forecast indicates we are expecting to draw down £113.09 Million, which is £4.3 Million more than allocated. At this stage in the year we would want the forecast to exceed the available funding by at least 10% to provide an over-programme. The current forecast is approximately £6 Million short in terms of providing this level of over-programming which in itself presents a risk. Adam presented a slide showing the top 13 schemes for 2024/25 in terms of spend which represents around 70% of the programme.

We also noted a range of other risks to delivery of the programme.

Fiona Duke was asked to illustrate some of the delivery risks by describing the proposed Fleetwood Scheme where complex issues relating to land ownership transfer and fishermen refusing access to the site to enable ground investigation work to take place, are preventing the scheme from progressing. It is likely this scheme will need to be paused by 12 months to allow time for the land sale and enforcement action, delaying the better protection against flooding for 556 properties. There will be a formal decision on the Fleetwood Scheme at the EA Delivery Board next week and then a meeting will take place with Wyre Borough Council.

Adam recognised that this is helpful as it highlights the sorts of risks there are around schemes in the programme where slippage of one of two large schemes could represent a large proportion of the programme outcomes. There is focus nationally on the 'priority programme' of the largest

schemes better protecting more than 500 properties and we similarly in the North West place particular focus on these schemes.

Adam then reported on the Resource Maintenance Programme for 2024/25 explaining that the final allocation has not yet been confirmed. He presented the indicative allocation (£12.4 Million) provided at the April meeting. Operational teams will be continuing to deliver to that indicative budget and the spend forecast will be reported at the October RFCC meeting.

Capital Programme Refresh Bid

Adam explained that so far, we've looked back at the first three years of the programme, and the current year's programme, and this section is now looking ahead to the funding allocation for the final two years of the programme and the process to refresh the programme information to inform that. By looking at both the final two years, this will provide more stability in the programme and clarity of focus. Risk Management Authorities are being asked to review the programmes for both of the final two years.

Adam presented a summary of the draft bid for 2025/26 and 2026/27 by partnership which is an early look at the indicative programme which is still being reviewed.

Adam highlighted the high levels of investment indicated by the draft bid of £160 Million in 2025/26 and £150 Million in 2026/27. This is significantly higher than the size of programme we have been delivering in recent years (£100 – 110 Million) and will be a major challenge to deliver with the current delivery model and resources available. The North West programme still carries a lot of risk until the end of the current six-year programme, including risks around resources, rising construction costs, permitting challenges, planning permissions required and reliance on others such as utilities and major service diversions, amongst others. We do seek to build in some over-programming but we also need to account for any slippage of schemes from the current year into the latter two years as well. The draft bid will continue to be reviewed with ongoing discussions with RMA colleagues, supply chain partners and project teams, and is likely to change before it is submitted at the end of July. The final bid will be presented at the October RFCC meeting to inform Local Choices. Only the first year will be endorsed by Committee in October and consented in January, with the second year being made visible to Members.

We were provided with the detail of the top ten projects, by bid value, for GMMC Area and for C&L Area. For GMMC Area the ten projects form 79% of the total bid value and the remaining 21% is being delivered by a further 52 projects, and similarly for C&L Area the top ten projects form 75.5% of the total bid value and the remaining 24.5% is being delivered by a further 101 projects. Adam explained why often the delivery of outcomes does not occur in the years where there is significant expenditure.

Adam presented a summary slide showing the level of investment in the first three years, the current year and the remaining two years of the programme.

Kate Morley asked if this picture with a few schemes representing a large proportion of the programme spend was typical for a six year programme or whether this scenario had been exacerbated by the pandemic's influence. Adam explained that to some extent it is typical but it is even more so currently due to some of the bigger projects in the programme deriving from the major floods in 2015, where a number of communities were hit really hard. This led to some

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additional funding being made available for these schemes, which are in delivery now. This is coinciding with some big coastal schemes and some projects addressing assets which are close to the end of their design life. The number of major schemes in the programme currently is unusual and delays on just one of two of these can lead to large underspends and reduced outcomes. We heard there have been other pressures too including inflation, the war in Ukraine, availability of material, material costs going up.

Councillor Nick Mannion advised Cheshire East Council has similar pressures and asked if it is feasible to have 'shovel ready' projects that we can start to progress if the larger projects start to slow down. Adam advised this is feasible and this is where the element of over-programming comes in, however there is a need to be cautious as we don't want to divert funding to projects that aren't fully developed and therefore have some risk themselves. There is also a risk that from the desire to try and maintain a more stable programme nationally for the final two years, there might be a call to re-allocate funding from projects which are lower confidence to projects elsewhere in the country if confidence levels are shown to be higher.

Adam then presented a slide which provides a breakdown of properties to be better protected by other RMAs (primarily Local Authorities) over the next three years (2024/25 – 2026/27). This graph shows the very significant contribution that North West LA-led projects make to the overall national programme, largely in the final year (2026/27).

Adrian Lythgo reinforced this point and reinforced why there is a need to be really clear about what is deliverable over the final two years of the programme. He recalled the end of the last six-year programme when as an RFCC we carried out an exercise to try and identify risks to delivery. He remarked again that if we start to slip on some of these projects, we will lose that investment from the North West and it will go somewhere else in the country.

He proposed that a similar exercise to the one done previously be carried out, so we can help LA colleagues make sure these projects are delivered in the final two years of the programme and particularly in the last year of the programme. Adrian advised that a process will be put in place but suggested that some of the key large projects provide an overview at upcoming RFCC meetings to identify if any support is needed to aid delivery.

In the MS Teams chat it was noted that Carl Green advised of the full certainty in the delivery of the 9,780 homes by the Wyre Beach Management Scheme within the programme period.

There were no further comments or questions.

We considered and recommend that the RFCC:

Capital and Resource Maintenance Programmes

- Notes the outturn of the 2023/24 capital programme
- Notes the summary of delivery for the first three years of the capital programme
- Notes the progress on delivering the 2024/25 capital and resource maintenance programmes
- Notes the latest draft bid of the capital programme refresh for 2025/26 and 2026/27

Local Levy Programme Update

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Adam Walsh provided an overview of the Local Levy programme balances, income, actual and forecast spend for both the 2023/ 24 and 2024/25 financial years, details of which were provided in the report and in the presentation. We noted the 2023/24 figures are still subject to a year-end audit process.

Adam highlighted that we are now seeing the Local Levy balance reduce now, as a result of in-year spend exceeding the income.

The latest spend forecast for 2024/ 25 is £8.533 Million. The expected remaining balance at the end of the financial year is £7.113 Million, which is down from £12.216 Million at the start of 2023/24. From the income and expenditure graphs, it can be seen that, looking ahead to the upcoming years, the balance is not now forecast to drop below zero as it was previously. This scenario also includes the Local Levy request for the Preston and South Ribble Scheme, indicating that the request is affordable.

There were no further questions or comments.

Local Levy Funding RequestPreston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme - £2 Million

Neville Elstone gave a brief introduction to this request which had seen briefings at the last two Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meetings. He advised that at the last meeting, the Lancashire Partnership requested the deferral of the decision to allow additional time for them to visit the scheme and understand it better. Neville advised that this site visit had taken place and he understood the Partnership were impressed and were keen to see it move ahead. A slide of the key financial and outcome figures for the scheme was shared.

Councillor James Shorrock confirmed they had visited the site with the Project Team and were very impressed with the work, which is progressing well, including the detailed finishings and additional opportunities for improvements being taken. He advised that the Lancashire Partnership are now very happy to support this Local Levy request to allow completion of the project.

Neville Elstone thanked Councillor Shorrock for this and welcomed the increased engagement and scrutiny from the partnerships in schemes.

Adam advised with regard to the number of properties to be protected by the scheme, slight differences might be seen between the slide and the papers. 3600 properties and 600 businesses are benefitting from reduced risk but not all are moving between risk bands and cannot all therefore be reported as outcomes.

Fiona Duke advised the scheme stage has been very well received by the public and the project itself is now moving to the next phase upstream.

We considered and recommend that the NW RFCC:

- Notes the out-turn details for 2023/24, current position and latest spend forecast for the Local Levy Programme
- Approves the £2 Million Local Levy ask for the Preston and South Ribble FRMS, which will bring their total Local Levy scheme contribution to £5 Million.

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Votes in favour: Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Kate Morley, David Shaw, Councillor Shorrock, Councillor Cooney, Councillor Boyle, Councillor Rollo, Councillor Brennan, Councillor Mannion and Rachel Crompton. (There were no abstentions or objections)

RFCC Business Plan Progress Report

Sally Whiting introduced herself and the RFCC's Business Plan for new Members. She provided a brief overview of progress on the 2022 – 2025 programme of 21 projects which are either live or complete. She provided a brief explanation of the reasons behind the four projects rated Amber, and the one rated Red.

She reported on the final spend for 2023/24 which was £908K against an allocation of £1.4 Million, slightly lower than the forecast reported in April, mainly due to some internal account miscoding which meant the funding was taken from GiA.

She highlighted an updated allocation for 2024/25 of £1,337K which now includes the proposals approved by the RFCC in April. This was funding for the new NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria), and the increase in the RFCC's contribution to the costs of supporting the partnerships (partnership Co-ordinator role and additional support costs). We noted the current forecast is for £1,441k to be claimed, accounting for unclaimed allocations that will carry over from 2023/24.

The indicative investment need for 2025/26 is just over £1 Million.

For the benefit of new Members Sally provided a few highlights on recent successes associated with Business Plan projects including:

- The Flood Hub website which is now consistently receiving views exceeding 25k per month.
- The Unpave the Way project - a campaign to encourage greener and more sustainable front gardens so as to divert water from the drainage system and benefit the natural environment. We heard the project had a stand at the RHS Urban Garden Show in Manchester in April and will be showing a full garden exhibit at the RHS Tatton Flower Show in July. The garden will then be relocated to Whitaker Park in Rawtenstall.
- The Flood Poverty Project, led by Rochdale Council and the National Flood Forum (NFF) is now complete and a knowledge sharing workshop is taking place on 18 July, which is actively seeking to attract a wider group of stakeholders representing other sectors who have important roles to play e.g. housing, insurance.

In the MS Teams chat function, Clare Nolan-Barnes commented on how great the Unpave the Way project is and asked for a discussion to consider how this project can be rolled out following this initial piece of work.

Neville thanked Sally for her report and there were no questions or comments.

We considered and recommend that the NW RFCC:

- Notes the 2023/24 outturn for the RFCC Business Plan projects
- Notes the updated 2024/25 funding allocation which includes the RFCC approvals given at the April meeting.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 19 JULY 2024

4. Investment Programme – review of information provided to the RFCC, Sub-groups and Partnerships

Andy Tester provided an overview of a piece of work the EA has recently commenced to review the information provided to Tactical and Strategic Flood Risk Partnership Group meetings, Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meetings and RFCC meetings, following feedback received from stakeholders and partners on the length and accessibility of the current reports. This seeks to achieve a more consistent approach across the partnerships.

Following recent consultation with the Partnership Co-ordinators, a Task and Finish Group has been established to improve the information and data being provided, to ensure it is appropriate to the audience and relevant to the discussion and decisions that are required.

We noted updates on the project will be provided and we should start to see some changes within the papers for the October meetings.

Adrian Lythgo advised it is worth adding that when there are new Members to the Committee there are often comments on the volume of papers, particularly when dealing with the investment programme. One of the things the task and finish group are looking at is how we can use effective summarised data to try and make information more accessible without losing any of the detail we statutorily have to consider.

There were no questions or comments.

5. RFCC Business Plan Project Highlight – Wyre Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project

Tom Myerscough provided an overview of the Wyre Natural Flood Management (NFM) Project and its progress so far. This is an innovative project which is delivering NFM interventions to reduce the flood risk to a community, but more notably is trialling a new mechanism for financing the project, involving funding from investors (institutional impact investors and HNWI individuals) which is repaid by “buyers” (EA, UU, Wyre Council, the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, and FloodRe) who are beneficiaries of the ecosystem services provided by the interventions. It also includes support from the Woodland Trust for hedgerow creation and woodland creation via Grow Back Greener fund.

In his presentation Tom provided information on:

- What the project involves
- Key milestones
- How it will be paid for through the special purpose vehicle (Wyre Community Interest Company)
- The importance of working effectively with farmers, landowners, land managers and communities
- Benefits of the approach being taken
- Landowner engagement
- NFM delivery
- Interventions
- Performance monitoring
- Maintenance and long-term planning (including the funding for this)
- Evidence of performance of the NFM interventions

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 19 JULY 2024

- Photos of the NFM interventions
- Reflections, which included the importance of soils and their capacity for absorbing and slowing the flow of water.

Kate Morley remarked this is a fascinating project and asked Tom if he was to design the investment model again would he do anything differently. Tom advised he would have to do things differently now due to the way the finance sector is. He advised interest rates for this kind of work are up towards 15%, so you would now need to look at how you use private finance. It may be a smaller amount of funding to start with and then as the project evolves you can look towards getting further investment from other private sources.

Chris Findley thanked Tom for his presentation and asked how the investors and beneficiaries were identified for the project. We heard this was done at the start of the investment readiness process and the beneficiaries were quite easy to identify because they are local organisations that we work with already or are key organisations such as the EA and United Utilities (UU). In terms of the identification and contracting of investors, this was carried out by Triodos Bank, who have groups of investors that they use for social investment.

David Shaw remarked on what was an interesting presentation and asked about the sustainability of the model beyond the 9 years and what the investors get in return. Tom explained that the contract model means that everything will be delivered and paid for after nine years, so the investors have got their money back and the interventions are in the catchment. It is then up to the sellers, who are the farmers, and the buyers to work out whether they want to extend this project to 20 years and then 50 years, provision for which is included in the current agreement. Tom explained that in terms of a return on investment for the investors, they receive a 6% return on their investment, which is paid for through the buyers who put the money back in.

Adrian thanked Tom for his presentation and advised this is a very impressive project, the NFM interventions of which are readily replicable around some of our major conurbations. The evidence shows that it is working. He also reflected on the difficulty that the exact financial model used would not be replicable now. One of the things the project has demonstrated is how difficult it is for organisations to sign up to long-term revenue commitments. This is one part that will be hard to replicate in future deals.

Neville also very much reinforced the importance of soils in managing water and is heartened by the payment rates which seem to be coming (as part of the Environmental Land Management Scheme).

There were no further questions or comments.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING – 19 JULY 2024

6. Capital Programme Co-ordinator (CPC) and Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (LA CPA) – Update Priorities and Areas of Focus

Sarah Fontana provided an overview of the support that is provided for North West Local Authorities in their capital project delivery by her as the Capital Programme Co-ordinator and the team of five Local Authority Capital Projects Advisors (LACPAs).

She provided some outcome and spend figures for 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 to illustrate how really significant the delivery of Local Authority schemes is to the success of the overall North West programme.

She provided some detail on the current areas of focus for the LACPAs including: intensive working with LAs to support business case development and grant claims; providing 1-2-1 training where required (including on the use of two different pieces of software that LAs need to be able to use during the refresh); and providing ongoing project level support, which varies from LA to LA due to the varied levels of skills, experience, expertise and resources. We noted access to EA Frameworks can also be facilitated, where it's appropriate for project delivery.

She relayed some lessons learned from 2023/24 including: earlier submission of business cases and claims, and more accurate forecasting and early warning where things change.

She highlighted the priorities for the coming months, mainly associated with the investment programme refresh, working with LAs to make sure projects are deliverable.

There will also be a training plan developed for LACPAs, wider FCRM staff so that they can support their use of new tools with LA partners. New tools to be launched over the next few months include: a stakeholder and beneficiary mapping tool, which will enable an outline to be drawn round potential scheme benefit area and then any beneficiaries in an areas will be highlighted; a new economic assessment tool, which will enable the economic benefits of the schemes to be much more easily calculated; a new strategic approach tool kit, which will look at where there is more than one source of flood risk to see how we can look at better protecting properties and how we can calculate benefits to make sure that if we need more than one scheme to be developed to better protect the properties that we can enable that to happen. NAFRA2 will also be launched later in the year.

In addition to that there will be training and mentoring of the LACPAs by Sarah including the new LACPA for Lancashire who is currently being trained and brought up to speed so he can effectively support the Lancashire Partnership. We also noted there is a national Sharepoint site which is the main point of contact for anyone, internal or external colleagues, working on flood risk capital projects.

Sarah noted the feedback that she had received earlier in the year with regard to visibility of her role and that of the LACPAs, and hoped that today's update has provided an insight into their work. We noted that updates will be provided at future meetings.

Adrian thanked Sarah for her report, advising that he had taken over the Chairing of the meeting as Neville Elstone had to leave. He advised he has seen feedback from a couple of the Partnerships that they are starting to see the visibility of the benefits of this work and that the identification of new priorities has started.

Fiona Duke recognised the increased working relationship both she and Richard Knight both have with Sarah, who has been extremely supportive and there are now regular meetings in place with Blackpool, Blackburn with Darwen and Lancashire County Council and they are looking to set up similar meetings for Cumbria.

Adrian asked, in the interests of time, if any LA colleagues have any feedback for Sarah then to contact her offline. Adrian thanked Sarah for her update and there were no further questions or comments.

7. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting of the FBA Sub-Group on 12 April 2024

The draft minutes of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting held on 12 April 2024 were proposed by Carolyn Otley and seconded by Councillor James Shorrocks and taken as a true record of the meeting.

There were no further comments or matters arising.

8. Any Other Business

There were no further items of business discussed.

9. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting is 4 October 2024.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
19 JULY 2024
QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENTS REPORT

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

This report covers the period of 1 April to 30 June 2024.

Cumbria Strategic Partnership

Local Authority area	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
		Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
4 April 2024 – Storm Kathleen								
W&F*	Barrow			2 external				
22/23 May 2024								
Cumberland	Carleton				1 unknown whether internally or externally flooded			Commercial property (service station)
Cumberland	Corby Hill						3 internal	
Cumberland	Carlisle (city)				9 internal 7 external			
Cumberland	Crosby on Eden						2 unknown whether	

INFORMATION ITEM A

							internally or externally flooded	
Cumberland	Cumwhinton						4 internal 2 external	
Cumberland	Dalston		5 internal		2 internal 1 external		1 unknown whether internally or externally flooded	
Cumberland	Gaitsgill			4 internal 7 external				
Cumberland	Great Corby			6 internal			1 unknown whether internally or externally flooded	
Cumberland	Hawksdale							4 properties external flooding, resulted in access issues. No internal flooding. Flood source not yet determined.
Cumberland	Heads Nook						1 unknown whether internally or externally flooded	
Cumberland	Houghton				1 external			
Cumberland	Newby Cross				1 internal			
Cumberland	Scotby		6 internal	6 internal				
Cumberland	Stockdalewath		15 internal					

			9 external					
Cumberland	Thackwood							Access road flooding
Cumberland	Thursby		8 internal					
Cumberland	Wetheral				1 external			
W&F	High Bridge, Dalston		8 internal 2 unknown whether internally or externally flooded					
			42 internal 9 external 2 unknown whether internally or externally flooded	16 internal 9 external	12 internal 10 external		7 internal 2 external 5 unknown whether internally or externally flooded.	

*Westmorland and Furness Council

4 April 2024 – Storm Kathleen

The external flooding reported was as a result of a localised heavy rainfall overwhelming an ordinary watercourse. This was the second time flooding was experienced in this location following a similar incident in February 2024.

22/23 May 2024

This extreme weather event occurred overnight on 22/23 May 2024 and caused significant flood impact across Cumbria. Most of the properties impacted lie within Cumberland Council, although the extent of flooding extends across the administrative boundary into Westmorland and Furness Council.

As of 9th July, 121 properties are thought to have been affected by flooding, and investigations are ongoing to verify this. The figures reported in the table above reflect confirmed flooding and should not be interpreted as final confirmed numbers.

A yellow weather warning was in place locally. Intense rainfall in the Stockdalewath catchment was experienced overnight (22/23 May 2024) with 90mm rainfall falling in a 20-hour period. This caused river levels to rise rapidly, with a calculated peak of 3.3m, exceeding the range on the Stockdalewath river gauge and the highest level previously recorded (in 2005). This prompted a **Severe Flood Warning** and **National Emergency Alert** to be issued. This is the first time a national emergency alert has been issued for flooding in the country.

In addition to the flooded properties, there was a lot of external flooding and vehicle damage, with impact to farmland in the catchment still being established. This incident has highlighted some issues that need wider consideration including the timing of flood warnings, impact of poor mobile phone reception, speed of onset, lack of eligibility for national grants for small communities. With greater recognition as our climate changes, intense rainfall events are becoming more common, and it is likely that more communities will be similarly affected in future.

A joint (Cumberland Council / Westmorland and Furness Council) Section 19 flood investigation is currently underway.

Lancashire Strategic Partnership

There have been no flooding reports from Blackpool Council or Lancashire County Council.

There was no significant flooding to report from Blackburn with Darwen Council.

Merseyside Strategic Partnership

Local Authority area	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
		Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Wirral	West Kirby	2 internal* 1 external						Flooding to South Promenade highway.

This incident happened as a result of high tides in early April.

*The numbers are to be confirmed by Wirral Borough Council as the incident is still under investigation.

Greater Manchester Strategic Partnership

Local Authority area	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
		Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Rochdale	Rochdale				5			

This incident on 26 May 2024 was caused by a localised thunderstorm. The cause was likely to have been hydraulic i.e. the storm exceeding sewer design capacity.

Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Partnership

Local Authority area	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
		Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Cheshire West and Chester	Chester		2					
Warrington	Warrington		1					

These flood incidents happened during high tides in early April. Three properties were flooded, all from river flooding according to Environment Agency figures.

United Utilities

Below is the summary provided by United Utilities of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 22 March and 25 June 2024. This is unverified data at this time, and so the numbers are likely to fluctuate until the regulatory data is signed-off for the full year FY24 regulatory reporting for Ofwat. 'Severe 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	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	6	0	6
GMCA	25	19	77	5
Lancashire	18	15	2	10
Cumbria	9	25	2	3

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2024

North West Investment Programme

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

8th July 2024

1. Purpose




- 1.1 This report to the Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group provides progress on delivering the in-year (2024-25) capital and resource investment programmes, including the RFCC's Business Plan.

The FBASG are asked to:

- Note the progress delivering the 2024-25 capital and resource programme
- Note the current / future position of the Local Levy Programme and latest spend forecast
- Note the update and funding proposals on the RFCC Business Plan

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

2.1. Overview

			
	Properties to be better protected	Partnership funding	Efficiency savings
National Overview	We are investing £5.2 billion over the six years to better protect an updated target of two hundred thousand properties	We have secured approximately £1.5 billion of partnership funding contributions	Efficiency savings figures for the last 3 years i.e. 21-22 to 23-24 was £68.5 million against a cumulative target of £132million for the six year programme.
North West Overview	North west has protected in total 7,693 properties in the years 21-22 to 23-24.	Approximately 10% of the North West Programme is made up of partnership funding	£11.5 million of efficiencies were claimed by North West in the years 21-22 to 23-24

2.2 2023/24 Capital out- turn summary

North West		BUDGET	End of year	
		BUDGET (£k)	ACTUALS (£k)	VARIANCE
GIA	EA	£76,938	£79,100	£2,162
	RMA	£17,838	£14,490	-£3,348
	TOTAL	£94,776	£93,590	-£1,186
LOCAL LEVY	EA	£5,705	£4,878	-£827
	RMA	£987	£493	-£494
	TOTAL	£6,692	£5,371	-£1,321
PF	EA	£3,240	£1,405	-£1,835
	RMA	£2,746	£0	-£2,746
	TOTAL	£5,986	£1,405	-£4,581
TPE	EA	£85,883	£85,383	-£500
	RMA	£21,571	£14,983	-£6,588
	TOTAL	£107,454	£100,366	-£7,088

2.2.1 For the 23-24 financial year, the NW had a total budget of £107 million out of which we spent £100 million. The total underspend was £7 million of which £4.5 million of partnership funding (PF) contribution has been deferred to a future year to maximise GiA in year and to align with funding profiles and required agreements.

We delivered within 1.3% of our Grant in Aid allocation.

Properties better protected

Area	Target	Claimed
CLA: Cumbria and Lancashire	2361	2082
GMC: Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Cheshire	1171	1187
Total	3532	3269

2.2.2 For the year 23/24 we had an overall target to protect 3,532 properties out of which we claimed 3,269 properties across both the areas. Overall, we are pleased to claim 3,269 for 23/24 following a difficult year of delivery. As stated in the April report, targets for each project increased by 20% to account for Non-Residential Properties (NRP). We found this was overestimated for major projects and impacted the overall target.



Efficiencies claimed 23-24

Area	23/24
CLA: Cumbria and Lancashire	£6,052,955
GMC: Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Cheshire	£4,061,992
Total	£10,114,947

2.2.3 North West overall claimed efficiencies of approximately £10 million in the year 23-24.

2.3 2024-25 Programme

What outcomes are we delivering?


		* North West Target	North West Forecast	Actual to date
		3,516	3,343	0

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

2.3.1 Initial targets for 'properties better protected' have been set for 2024/25. Measures for non-residential properties and properties better protected from increased levels of risk due to climate change were introduced for this programme.

2.3.2 Whilst targets are set by Environment Agency Area, rather than RFCC, the unofficial Northwest RFCC properties better protected target for 2024/25 is 3,516. This comprises of GMMC 2,401 and CLA 942. Forecast figures at mid-May 2024 indicate the Northwest will better protect 3,343 properties from flooding this year. See Appendix A. Targets will be confirmed by National at the end of June and we will provide further detail at the next RFCC meeting.

2.3.3 Are we spending the funding we have secured?

	Capital funding available	Capital forecast
	£108.759 million	£113.090 million

The total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2024-25 programme is £108.759 million. This includes £98.427 million of central Government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid), £7.66 million of Local Levy and £2.67 million of Partnership Funding Contributions. Sources of partnership contributions include local authorities themselves, European Regional Development Funding, and other government departments such as the Department for Education and the Department for Transport.

2.3.4 Forecasts at mid-June 2024 show that we are expecting to draw down £113.090 million this year. This is ~ £4.3 million more than allocated.

2.3.5 Risks: 2024-25 (this financial year)

- Potential increase in the cost of materials (inflation), impacting scheme costs and therefore viability
- Material purchase and lead times could delay delivery
- Ongoing resource challenges
- Planning permission and BNG (Biodiversity Net Gain) requirements from January 2024
- Transition to new frameworks is ongoing which may result in delayed delivery and therefore reduced spend and outcome measure delivery
- There are two projects delivering 56% of the proposed properties target this year - Preston South Ribble (500) and Radcliffe and Redvales (1,460). If these projects are delayed it will significantly impact our properties target this year.

What level of efficiency are we demonstrating?

2.3.6 The deadline for Q1 efficiency submissions is 28th June. Details will be reported at the next meeting.

2.4 2025-26 Programme Refresh

2.4.1 The Annual Refresh of the FCRM Capital Investment Programme is ongoing. Final bids for 2025-26 are due to be submitted at the end of July.

2.4.2 This year's annual refresh of the capital programme will look at the final 2 years of the programme combined. This will provide more stability in the programme and clarity of focus for the final years. The committee are asked to review the programmes for the final 2 years, however only the first year will be endorsed by committee in October, followed by consent in January with the second year being made visible to members.

2.4.3 The draft bid for 2025/26 and 2026/27 by partnership is shown in the table below. The final bid will be presented at the October RFCC meetings along with local choices.

Partnership	EA/LA	No. of Projects (both years)	TPE 25-26 (£k)	TPE 26-27 (£k)	Expected rOM
Cumbria	EA	21	22,730	23,618	82
	LA	28	13,647	11,658	509
	Total	49	36,377	35,277	591
Lancashire	EA	35	30,649	48,199	737
	LA	27	19,630	28,019	12,121
	Total	62	50,279	76,218	12,858
Merseyside	EA	2	200	800	29
	LA	12	6,035	6,080	392
	Total	14	6,235	6,880	421
Greater Manchester	EA	18	25,506	9,211	575
	LA	14	4,776	2,092	877
	Total	32	30,282	11,303	1,452
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	EA	5	3,037	3,476	5
	LA	12	1,620	1,771	293
	Total	17	4,657	5,247	298
Cross-Partnership	EA	19	33,000	14,698	45
	LA	0	0	0	0
	Total	19	33,000	14,698	45
Total North West	EA	100	115,122	100,002	1,473
	LA	93	45,708	49,621	14,192
	Total	193	160,830	149,623	15,665

2.4.4 The NW programme still carries a lot of risk until the end of the current six-year programme. There are risks around resources, rising construction costs, permitting challenges, planning permissions required and reliance on others such as utilities and major service diversions, amongst others. As we are approaching the end of the programme we are starting to build the next programme and this is a work in progress. We have a small number of projects in the future programme with certainty around

deliverability and therefore, any delays in delivery in this programme will result in limited opportunities, at this stage, to accelerate or introduce new projects into the programme over the remaining two years. In our bid we are taking account of these risks and we'll be applying a level of over-programme that will support deliverability of both spend and outcome measures. The above is part of ongoing discussions with Risk Management Authority (RMA) colleagues, supply chain partners and project teams.

A brief overview of the top spending projects and new projects requesting funding will form part of the presentation at the FBASG meeting in July.

3. NW RFCC Local Levy programme for 2024-25 and beyond

3.1 Current position 2024-25

3.1.1 The North West RFCC started the 2023-24 financial year with a total Local Levy resource of £16.628 million (£4.412 million income plus £12.216 million carried forward from 2022-23 including interest on balances). We have spent £6.047 million Local Levy in 2023-24 with £10.581 million remaining in balances at the end of the year.

Summary of Local Levy income and spend

2023-24	
Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)	
Cash balance at start of year	12.216 *
Local Levy income	4.412
Total available balance	16.628
Allocation	8.153
Actual Spend	6.047
Variance to allocation	2.106
Remaining cash balance at year end	10.581

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

3.1.2 The North West Local Levy balances at the start of 2024-25 are £16.646 million (£4.544 million income plus £10.581 million carried forward from 2023-24 and interest earned on balances of 0.521 millions). Latest forecast for 2024-25 is £8.533 millions with expected remaining balance of £7.113 millions at the end of the financial year.

Details of the programme allocation and forecasts for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are shown in Appendix B.

2024-25	
Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)	
Cash balance at start of year (expected)	10.581
Expected interest from 2023/24	0.521*
Local Levy income (4.412 + 3%)	4.544
Total available balance	16.646
Latest forecast	8.533
Expected remaining cash balance at year end	7.113

* Estimated interest from 2023/24 balances.

3.1.3 The below graphs show the income & expenditure scenario. In the last report in April 2024 the scenario dropped below zero in 2026/27.

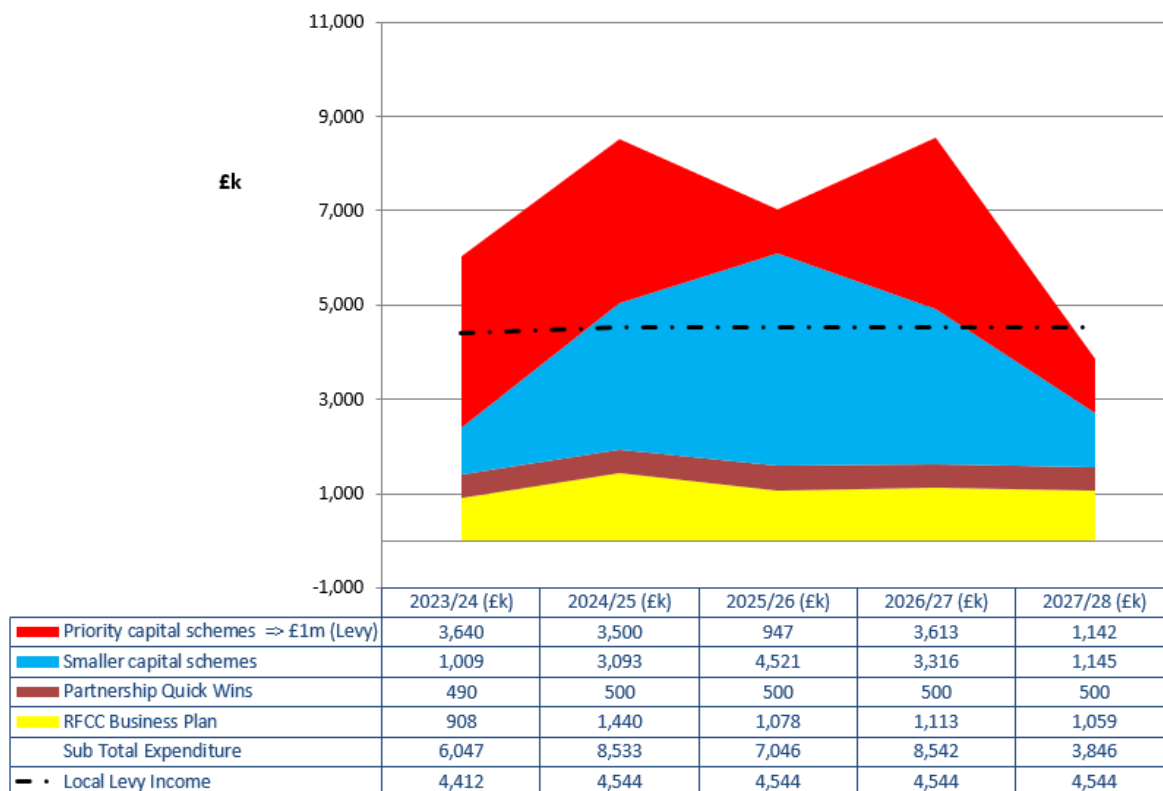
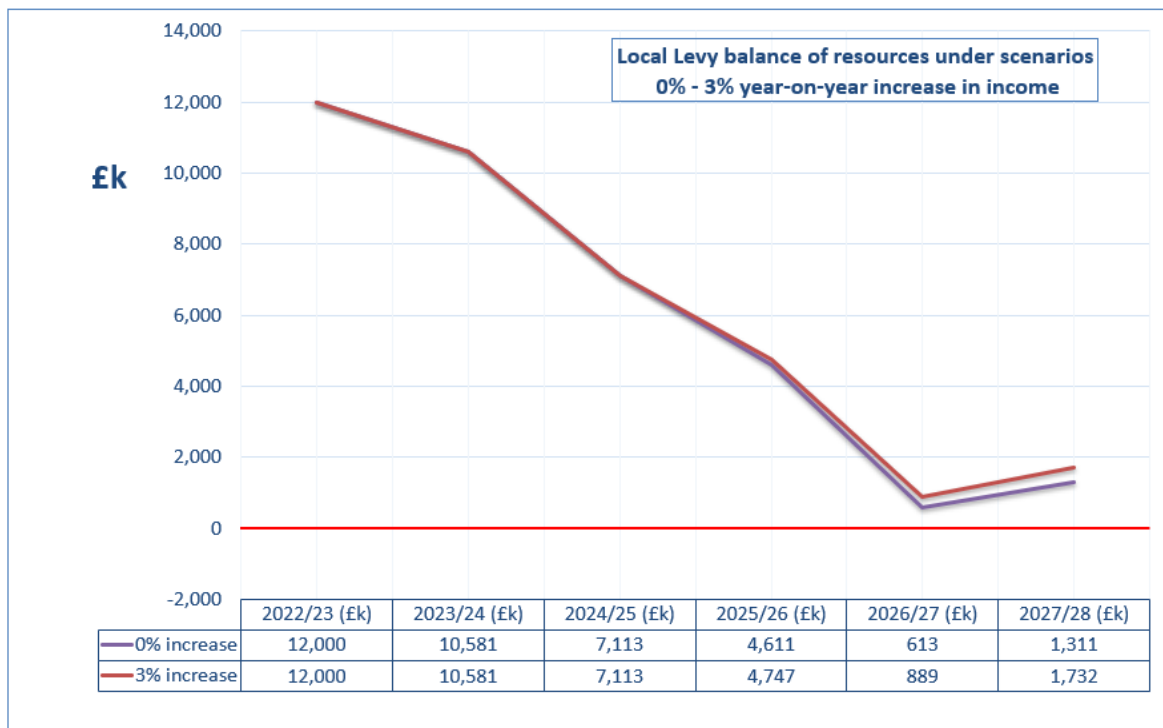


Chart above shows the level of Local Levy forecasts by activity classification per year.



The graph above shows the expected Local Levy balances at the end of each year based on the latest forecasts. In the last report in April 2024 the scenario dropped below zero in 2026/27. This is no longer expected as several projects have underspend in 2023/24 and several projects have been deferred or cancelled.

3.2 Requests for Local Levy support for FCRM schemes

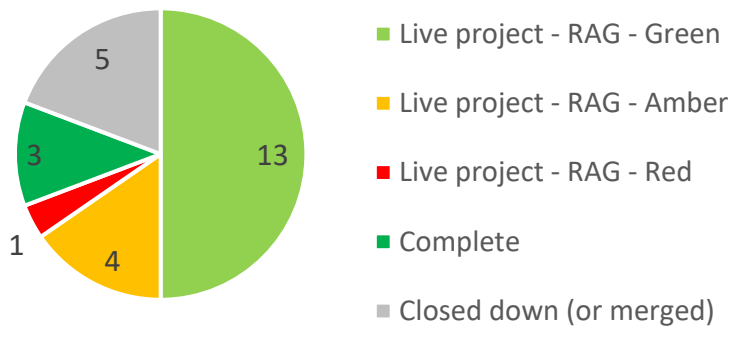
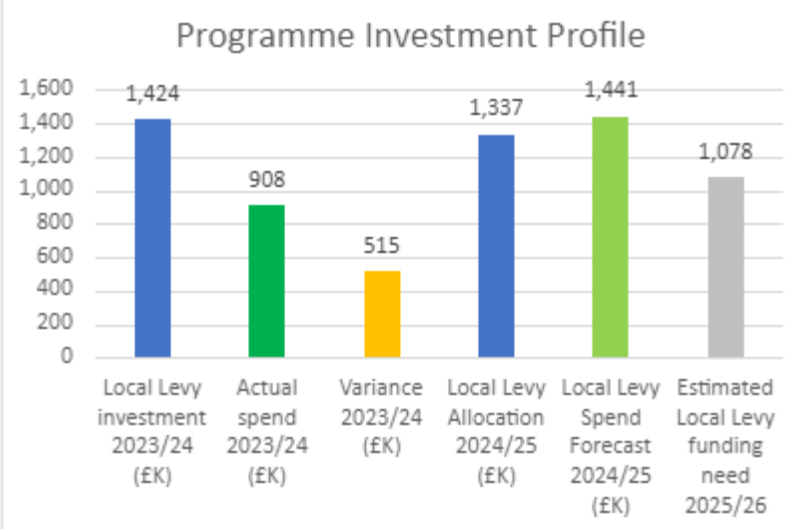
- 3.2.1 Appendix C provides the briefing note which was provided in April on the Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS). This request was submitted at the April RFCC FBASG meeting to increase the Local Levy support contribution by £2m, from £3m to £5m which represents 6% of the project total cost.
- 3.2.2 At the April RFCC FBASG meeting it was agreed that a decision on the request to support the Preston and South Ribble FRMS with an additional £2m in local levy funding be deferred until the July FBASG meeting. The Lancashire Partnership requested a site visit and a meeting with the project team ahead of a decision being made. This site visit took place in early May and attendees were impressed with the work being done.

Asks of the FBAG:

- To note out turn details of 2023/24
- To note the current position and latest spend forecast of 2024/25.
- Note and recommend for approval the additional £2m LL for Preston and South Ribble RM Scheme

4. RFCC Business Plan (Local Levy funded)

4.1. Progress Dashboard

<p>Project RAG Summary (26 projects)</p>  <p> ■ Live project - RAG - Green ■ Live project - RAG - Amber ■ Live project - RAG - Red ■ Complete ■ Closed down (or merged) </p>															
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress overall. • 26 projects approved to date, 18 currently live <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 Progressing well (Green) • 4 Issues/Delays (Amber) • 1 Not currently progressing and under review (Red) • 3 complete • 3 closed down, 2 merged. 															
<p>Programme Investment Profile</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Value (£K)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Local Levy investment 2023/24</td> <td>1,424</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Actual spend 2023/24</td> <td>908</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Variance 2023/24</td> <td>515</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Levy Allocation 2024/25</td> <td>1,337</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Local Levy Spend Forecast 2024/25</td> <td>1,441</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Estimated Local Levy funding need 2025/26</td> <td>1,078</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Category	Value (£K)	Local Levy investment 2023/24	1,424	Actual spend 2023/24	908	Variance 2023/24	515	Local Levy Allocation 2024/25	1,337	Local Levy Spend Forecast 2024/25	1,441	Estimated Local Levy funding need 2025/26	1,078
Category	Value (£K)														
Local Levy investment 2023/24	1,424														
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Local Levy Allocation 2024/25	1,337														
Local Levy Spend Forecast 2024/25	1,441														
Estimated Local Levy funding need 2025/26	1,078														
<p>2023/24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved allocation: £1,424K • Actual spend: £908K • The £515K variance is due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) funding which was allocated but not required and will not be required in a future year (£321K) B) funding which was not able to claimed in 2023/24 but which has been rescheduled for claim in 2024/25 (£137K) C) was paid from FCRM GiA due to account coding inconsistencies and is not expected to be adjusted (£125K) D) £69K of claims where the allocation was in a previous year. 															

4.2. Investment for 2024/25

- 4.2.1. In January 2024, the RFCC approved Local Levy investment in Business Plan actions in 2024/25 totalling £1,187K.
- 4.2.2. At the April 2024 meeting, the RFCC approved investment for an additional project – the NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria) which requires £90K allocation in 2024/25.
- 4.2.3. At the same meeting, the RFCC also approved an increase in the RFCC's contribution to the costs of supporting the partnerships (partnership Co-ordinator role and additional support costs). The increase from £30K per partnership per year to £42K requires additional allocation of £60K.
- 4.2.4. These two figures have been added to the original approved allocation for 2024/25 to make a revised allocation total of £1,337K.
- 4.2.5. The current forecast is for £1,441k to be claimed, accounting for unclaimed allocations that will carry over from 2023/24.

4.3. Indicative investment need for 2025/26

- 4.3.1. The indicative investment need for 2025/26 is just over £1 million. Almost all of this (£1,018K) relates to Local Levy funding allocations that the RFCC has already approved, or which maintain some of the fundamental flood resilience services we are currently providing (e.g. The Flood Hub website, supported direct engagement with at-risk communities. This will need to be considered and factored in when the Business Plan is refreshed.

4.4. Ambition level summaries

2023/24 Investment profile by Ambition			
Ambition	Local Levy allocation (£K)	Actual spend (£K)	Variance (£K)
Accessing investment and funding	220	20	200
Building community resilience	250	291	-41
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	111	25	86
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	224	112	112
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	619	460	159
	1,424	908	515

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	1	1	0	0	3
Building community resilience	5	4	1	0	0	0
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	5	2	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
	26	13	4	1	3	5

A full project-level breakdown of 2023/24 allocation and actual spend, and 2024/25 allocation and forecast spend is provided as Appendix B.

A brief summary of finances and progress on all Business Plan projects is provided as Appendix D.

4.5 2024-25 EA Resource Maintenance Programme

4.5.1 As of the time of the report we haven't received our official Resource allocation for 2024/25. This is now expected in early July.

4.5.2 Below is the table that shows indicative resource allocation that was included in the last RFCC papers.

FCRM GiA resource maintenance Indicative allocation by RFCC	
RFCC	2024/25 current Indicative allocation (£m)
North West	12.4
Anglian Eastern	8.5
Anglian Great Ouse	4.9
Anglian Northern	11.4
Northumbria	2.8
Severn and Wye	4.2
South West	5.3
Southern	11.4
Thames	20.1
Trent	16.3
Wessex	8.5
Yorkshire	14.4
Total	120.2

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Properties better protected – 2024-25 forecasts (and targets for info only)
Appendix B	North West Local Levy 2023/24 and 2024/25 – Updated Programme
Appendix C	Local levy request for Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme
Appendix D	RFCC Business Plan – Project summaries

Scheme Name	Partnership	2024/25 Forecast	2024/25 Target (for info only)
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	Cheshire	12	12
Adder Hill Great Boughton	Cheshire	3	3
Badgers Rake Lane, Little Sutton	Cheshire	5	5
Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	13	13
Biggins Road, Kirkby Lonsdale	Cumbria	0	2
Blencarn Park, Rockcliffe Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria	0	28
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	Greater Manchester	66	66
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Lancashire	0	44
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	Merseyside	12	12
Cote Beck, Halton Flow Control	Lancashire	0	6
ENVDebrisScreensGMMC	Cross-Partnership	0	0
Etterby Terrace, Carlisle	Cumbria	0	16
Ewan Close, Barrow in Furness	Cumbria	68	68
Golburn Clough, Greenfield Oldham	Greater Manchester	6	6
Greenbank, Ambleside	Cumbria	7	
Greystoke Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	20	20
Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	Cumbria	15	15
Highgate Kendal Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria	0	71
Harwood Road Culvert	Greater Manchester	20	20
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	Cheshire	26	26
Kents Bank Road	Cumbria	18	
Kirkby Stephen Combined Flood Risk	Cumbria	0	5
Kirkland Road, Ennerdale Bridge	Cumbria	0	18
Lindale Road Grange over Sands	Cumbria	23	23
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023 (CLA)	Cross-Partnership	415	415
Lumb Brook, West View, Rossendale	Lancashire	50	
Manchester Restoration of Open Channels of Ordinary Watercourses	Greater Manchester	13	13
Norbeck Park, Cleator Moor	Cumbria	0	39
Old Mill Place, Tattenhall	Cheshire	10	10
Penketh and Whittle FRM Scheme	Cheshire	221	221
Preston and South Ribble	Lancashire	500	500
Radcliffe & Redvales Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester	1,460	1460
Rinkfield, Kendal Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria	16	

Ryles Pool Culverted Ordinary Watercourse	Cheshire	10	10
School Lane, Staveley	Cumbria	12	
Sefton Strategic Surface Water Management Plan Delivery Programme	Merseyside	10	10
Shap Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme	Cumbria	28	25
Silloth Groyne Replacement	Cumbria	0	56
Smithy Brow, Croft, Warrington	Cheshire	3	3
Spittal Farm, Wigton	Cumbria	9	
St Annes Seawall	Lancashire	0	
Stanfordham Drain (Culvert Investigation)	Merseyside	45	45
Tebay Surface Water Alleviation	Cumbria	16	
Tributaries of Poynton Brook, Poynton	Cheshire	20	20
Walkden Climate Resilient Neighbourhood	Greater Manchester	11	11
Warwick Bridge PFR Scheme	Cumbria	16	
Whalley Surface Water Improvement Scheme	Lancashire	0	71
Whiston Lane Flood Alleviation Scheme	Merseyside	20	20
Whitehaven Harbour Flood Defence Capital Replacement	Cumbria	131	95
Woolston Park FRM Scheme	Cheshire	13	13
TOTAL		3343	3516

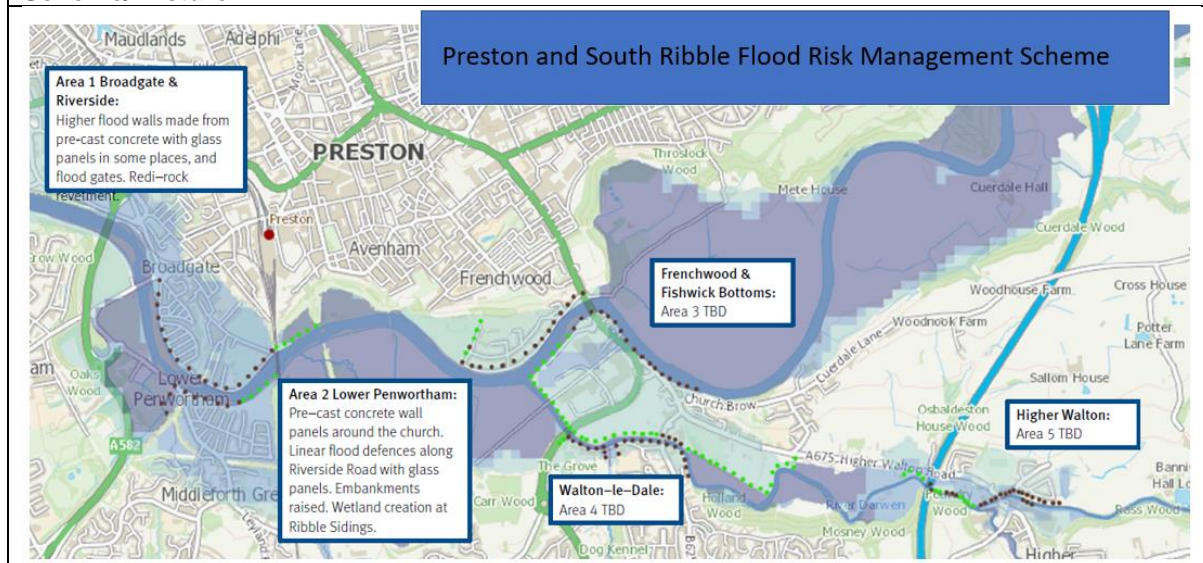
Partnership	Number of schemes forecasting properties better protected in 2024-25	Total 2024-25 Forecast	Total 2024/25 Target (for info only)
Greater Manchester	6	1,576	1576
Merseyside	4	87	87
Cheshire	10	323	323
Cumbria	22	392	494
Lancashire	6	550	621
Cross-Partnership	1	415	415
Total	49	3,343	3,516

Appendix B	North West Local Levy 2023/24 and 2024/25 – Updated Programme
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Partnership	Scheme Name	LRMA Name	2023/24 Allocation (£k)	2023/24 Actuals (£k)	2024/25 Allocation (£k)	2024/25 Forecast (£k)	Comments (deferred / cancelled)
Cumbria	Kendal Appraisal Package - Kendal	Environment Agency	1,430	1,468			
Cumbria	Low Crosby Pumping Station	Cumberland Council	450	0			Reprofiled to 2025/26
Cumbria	Mill Beck, Barrow in Furness	Environment Agency	130	0			Project is not going ahead this CSR
Cumbria	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	Cumbria CC	100	100	100	100	
Cumbria	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	Environment Agency	87	0	40	40	
Cumbria	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	Environment Agency	70	0	10	10	
Cumbria	Soutergate Beck, Kirkby-in-Furness	Environment Agency	70	0			Project is not going ahead this CSR
Cumbria	Warcop	Environment Agency	20	0			Project is not going ahead this CSR
Cumbria	Appleby Flood Risk Management Scheme	Environment Agency			1,500	1,500	
Cumbria Total			2,357	1,568	1,650	1,650	
Lancashire	River Calder, Padiham	Environment Agency	1,000	1,000	300	300	
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	Environment Agency	700	0	300	1,000	700k reprofiled from 2023/24 to 2024/25
Lancashire	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Lancaster City Council	100	81	100	100	
Lancashire	Wyre Investment Readiness Project (ID2)	Environment Agency	45	20	45	35	
Lancashire	Preston and South Ribble	Environment Agency			2,000	2,000	
Lancashire	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	Environment Agency		3	20	20	
Lancashire Total			1,845	1,104	2,765	3,455	

Partnership	Scheme Name	LRMA Name	2023/24 Allocation (£k)	2023/24 Actuals (£k)	2024/25 Allocation (£k)	2024/25 Forecast (£k)	Comments (deferred / cancelled)
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Penketh & Whittle	Environment Agency	1,000	1,006			
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	115	0	247	7	
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council	100	103	100	100	
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (Ryle Street Culvert upgrading and clearance works)	Cheshire East Council			120	120	
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme	Cheshire East Council			30	0	£30k forecasted for 25/26
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			1,215	1,109	497	227	
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	1,200	1,172	1,500	1,200	
Greater Manchester	River Irwell, Kearsley	Environment Agency	150	0	396	396	
Greater Manchester	Golburn Clough, Greenfield, Oldham	Oldham Council	131	0			
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	Manchester CC	100	103	100	100	
Greater Manchester	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	20		50	0	project is not going ahead this year. £50k would be spent in 25/26.
Greater Manchester Total			1,601	1,275	2,046	1,696	
Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	Liverpool City Council	100	103	100	100	
Merseyside Total			100	103	100	100	

Partnership	Scheme Name	LRMA Name	2023/24 Allocation (£k)	2023/24 Actuals (£k)	2024/25 Allocation (£k)	2024/25 Forecast (£k)	Comments
Cross Partnership	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - GMMC (ID16)	Environment Agency	197	197	197	197	Please refer Appendix D for business plan projects
Cross Partnership	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - C&L (ID16)	Environment Agency	143	132	143	143	
Cross Partnership	Building Community Resilience - C&L (ID5-7)	Environment Agency	125	115	125	125	
Cross Partnership	Building Community Resilience - GMMC (ID5-7)	Environment Agency	125	115	125	125	
Cross Partnership	Innovation and Change Fund (Balancing line for remainder of BP investment)	Environment Agency	125	0	13	0	
Cross Partnership	Asset data sharing and mapping project (ID4/13)	GMCA	100	44	145	156	
Cross Partnership	Support for Partnership Officers - GMMC (ID16)	Environment Agency	90	60	90	126	
Cross Partnership	Potential investment and mapping project (ID1)	GMCA	75	0	25	45	
Cross Partnership	Innovation and Change Fund (Balancing line for remainder of BP investment)	Environment Agency	75	0	13	0	
Cross Partnership	Support for Partnership Officers - C&L (ID16)	Environment Agency	60	30	60	84	
Cross Partnership	Front Gardens project (ID12)	Environment Agency	54	48	86	93	
Cross Partnership	Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme (SMP Co-ordinator) (ID16)	Sefton Council	50	0	50	100	
Cross Partnership	Managing Water at Catchment Scale with Nature - C&L (ID9/19)	Environment Agency	45	8	15	0	
Cross Partnership	Support for North West RFCC (Business Plan Implementation) (ID16)	Environment Agency	30	30	30	30	
Cross Partnership	GM IWMP - Knowledge Sharing (ID9)	Environment Agency	30	17	0	0	
Cross Partnership	Highways SuDS Design Guide (ID21) LDW 43496	Salford Council	20	20	0	0	
Cross Partnership	Mersey Forest NFM Tech App Collab (GMMC-led) (ID9A)	Environment Agency	15	0	0	62	
Cross Partnership	North West RFCC Floods Conference	Environment Agency	12	0	12	0	
Cross Partnership	Managing Water at Catchment Scale (GMMC)	Environment Agency	9	0	15	0	
Cross Partnership	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	Environment Agency	0	0	118	90	
Cross Partnership	Flood Poverty Project (ID8)	Rochdale Council	0	61	0	6	
Cross Partnership	Support for Coastal Adaptation (Coastal Centre of Excellence ID17)	Wyre Council	0	0	0	25	
Cross Partnership Total			1,379	875	1,259	1,406	

Scheme/ Picture**Introduction/ Background**

The Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme is a £80M (approx.) project covering 9km² 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 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 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

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 on areas 1 & 2 and ongoing modelling & economic assessment for areas 3, 4 & 5.
FDGiA	42.4	Projected to increase when economics are recalculated based on final scheme design and new PF Calc.
FDGiA Booster	15.8	
Dept of Education	0.9	
Other Gov. Dept.	12.83	This includes the additional £10M allocated in August to account for price rises as a result of necessary design changes 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.

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 D	RFCC Business Plan – Project summaries
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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
ACCESSING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING									
ID1	Investment mapping project	Amber	<p>This project is looking at the range of potential investment sources available for flood resilience measures, primarily for LAs, collating them into a data tool, collating experiences and case studies on sourcing investment, and exploring options for making detailed information on these more accessible and easier to identify.</p> <p>Consultants (Jacobs) were procured via GMCA The project is behind the original schedule by a couple of months but is in progress. Engagement with stakeholders is ongoing, due to complete in the Autumn. Project completion estimated end of 2024/25.</p>	75	0	25	45	0	45
ID2.1	Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms - Wyre Catchment CIC	Green	<p>The project has a target to complete 100% of NFM interventions by March 31st 2025. Some of this still remained to be contracted but during March project officers worked with land managers to finalise contracts for delivery in Year Three. Delivery is underway and based on the contracts signed with landowners it is expected that delivery through the Wyre NFM project will achieve 100% of its 70Ha target by March 2025.</p> <p>Further clarity on the payment terms has been established this year, summarised as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The contract is 9 years with defined payments for each buyer as per their specific contract. 	45	20	45	35	45	100

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The payments increase in line with inflation each year. These payments are prorated based on the actual delivery and maintenance that has been completed at the point of invoice each year. This meant each buyer paid 2.4% of their contracted fee in year one and 14.9% in Year 2 (reflecting the amount delivered at the invoicing point). The money not charged in the first 2 years is now lost to the CIC. It is not a delayed payment etc. it will now not be charged. (This was planned for in the original budgeting based on the 3 year phased delivery). The CIC is currently predicting the charge for 2024/25 will be 77.8% of the contracted charge in line with expecting delivery. By March 2025, delivery is expected to be at 100% after which invoices will be for the full contracted amounts for the remainder of the contract. <p>A presentation on the learning from the project will be provided to the Sub Group meeting in July 2024.</p>						
BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE									
ID5	The Flood Hub	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This year continues to see significant growth in pageviews and users, reflecting the ongoing active management and development of the site's content. The site is now regularly getting over 20,000 page views per month with the April number 85% up on April 2023. 	115	100	115	115	115	430

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 277 other websites now link to the Flood Hub as a trusted info resource. Ongoing development of content and improvements to the structure of the site continue including usage monitoring. The FCERM scheme sections continues to grow, be updated and are well used. During 2024/25, more detail will be shared on smaller scale Quick Win projects. Social media campaigns run during Q1 were 'Property Flood Resilience (PFR) and Business Flood Resilience focus weeks. A Types of Flooding focus week was scheduled for June, but has been rescheduled to w/c 8th July to comply with pre-election guidance on communications. The work programme for 2024/25 has been agreed by the Steering Group and includes new content on careers in the sector, development of the NFM section of the site, more coastal content, and more education packages including practical activities for outdoor settings. 						
ID5A	The Flood Hub - National expansion	Amber	We are exploring a small-scale trial with one other RFCC. That RFCC are currently working up their requirements for their sections of the site and costs are being estimated. The exercise is slightly behind schedule but we are operating at the pace at which the other RFCC can progress as the trial will be subject to that RFCC supporting the Local Levy	0	0	0	0	0	0

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
			investment required. No additional cost will be incurred by the North West RFCC for any of the changes made.						
ID6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	Green	<p>Support has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restructuring the coastal sections/pages of the Flood Hub Building in content on Our Future Coast project Social media comms campaign on coastal flooding and erosion Direct community engagement supported by Newground has been with coastal communities. Ongoing liaison and support for the Coastal Group as required. <p>Coastal-focussed content and activity is being built into the work programme for 2024/25</p>	10	10	10	10	10	40
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	Green	<p>This quarter has been quieter than usual on proactive community engagement due to the need to comply with pre-election guidance on communications. Before/within this, the Newground team have supported RMAs with community engagement in St Helens and Wigan. They also attended the Lancashire LRF Community Resilience Group meeting with the Building Resilience Together project panel.</p> <p>Newground have continued to support the public through the Flood Hub enquiry service on topics including Property Flood Resilience and watercourse maintenance. More detail will be provided to the RFCC on this valuable public service provided in due course.</p>	124.55	120	124.55	124.55	124.55	489

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
			The work programme for 2024/25 has been agreed by the Steering Group and includes developing a more visible, shared programme of proactive community engagement, ongoing social media campaigns, and the development of a shared RMA North West communications plan on flood resilience.						
ID8	Flood Poverty Project	Green	Work is substantially complete. Findings report has been finalised and is currently being published. 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 being held on 16 July.	0	60.5 (prior yr alloc)	0	6	0	127
MANAGING WATER AT CATCHMENT SCALE WITH NATURE									
ID9	Whole catchment approach - GM IWMP Learning	Complete	Project and sharing of learning is substantially complete. IWMP partners continue to take opportunities to share the learning more widely, including at the recent Flood & Coast Conference.	30	16.57	0	0	0	16.57
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	0	30	62	30	120
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	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.	12	0	12	0	0	12

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
			Consideration of a possible engagement event to focus on land management and flood risk is now under active consideration by the Cumbria partnership.						
ID22	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	Green	Support for this new project was approved by the RFCC in April 2024. Project set-up and initiation now underway.	0	0	90	90	60	150
ACHIEVING CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE									
ID10	Evidence gathering – Climate resilience within planning and development	Green	2022/23 Liverpool University student projects successfully completed in January 2023 and recommendations considered by Steering Group to inform future work. Reports will be uploaded to Sharepoint site once launched and are available on request. A second round of projects was carried out by the next year's students focussing on planning conditions and enforcement. The draft reports are still to be reviewed.	50	0	0	0	0	0
ID12	Action campaign – Unpave the Way	Green	This is the renamed '(not) paving over front gardens' project. Project well underway. We exhibited a Rainwater Capture 'cube' at the RHS Urban Show in Manchester in April 2024. The current focus is on preparing for a project show feature garden at RHS Tatton in July 2024. There is significant comms and awareness raising running alongside, supported by partner comms leads. Multi-medal winning garden designer Leon Davies is working with the project on both RHS exhibits.	54	48	86	93	54	195
ID4/13	Data sharing and mapping of	Green	Project being led jointly by Greater Manchester and Merseyside partnerships. Consultants Arup procuring to support. Project is taking an in-depth look at existing asset	100	44	145	156	0	200

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
	flood risk and drainage assets		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. Phase 1 work and report complete. Phase 2 engagement and report well underway. Project is on schedule. Presentations on findings will be provided to RFCC later in the year.						
ID21	Highways SuDS Design Guide	Green	Project being jointly led by Transport for Greater Manchester and GM Combined Authority with a reference group providing the opportunity for input from a wide range of stakeholders. Design guide will be largely generic and transferable to other partnership situations. Project is substantially complete. An overview presentation is expected to be provided to the RFCC later in the year.	20	20	0	0	0	20
INCREASING RMA CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION									
ID14	Local authority capital project delivery challenges	Complete	Project considered complete as a specific Business Plan action. Ongoing activity is now through the LA Capital Project Advisers and ID15 (Capacity Building Programme)	0	0	0	0	0	0
ID15	Risk management authority capacity building programme	Green	Local Levy has been made available to support this but last year funding was obtained from EA national team to deliver training to NW RMAs on Business Case development. NW staff are feeding into national provision of training and capacity building, including making links with other areas across the country to share training and learning opportunities.	50	0	25	0	10	10

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
			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	<p>Partnership Co-ordinators – In April 2024, the RFCC approved an increased level of funding to 2027. All five roles are filled and ongoing.</p> <p>LA Capital Project Advisers – One of the five roles is currently vacant following a staff sabbatical and recruitment challenges.</p> <p>Capital Senior Co-ordinator – Previous postholder was confirmed in the role and work is ongoing.</p> <p>Support for RFCC Business Plan implementation – Role ongoing.</p> <p>Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator – Role ongoing.</p>	569	460	629	679	629	2,337
ID17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - Develop business case	Amber	Project carried over from previous years. Project is behind schedule, largely due to capacity available from key staff members and due to the change in the role of Coastal member on the RFCC. There has been some exploratory work done including survey and workshop. The work to date is being consolidated so that next steps can be established.	0	0	0	25	0	25
ID18	RFCC Sharepoint site	Amber	Development of the initial launch content of the site is substantially complete but the launch is behind schedule due to a temporary loss of project management resource on another project and the need for the key resource on the Sharepoint site to be temporarily refocussed. The launch is now expected to take place during the next quarter.	0	0	0	0	0	0

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	2023/24 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2023/24 Local Levy Actual (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Alloc (£K)	2024/25 Local Levy Forecast (£K)	Estimated Local Levy need 2025/26 (£K)	Total Local Levy anticipated investment (2022 – 2026) (£K)
Projects closed down: ID2.2 - Investment in the development of innovative green finance mechanisms - Project RAINCOAT ID3 - Assessment and valuation of wider benefits of flood and coastal erosion risk management schemes ID11 - Effectiveness of Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) advice on planning applications									

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2024**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING****8 JULY 2024****FCRM INVESTMENT PROGRAMME REFRESH AND LATEST UPDATES****Recommendations:**

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

1. Note the latest FCRM investment programme position.
2. Support the annual refresh of the investment and asset maintenance programmes.
3. Support and feedback on the delivery confidence of other risk management authority (RMA) schemes.

Headline messages:

- Due to the timing of the general election, no formal announcement has yet been made on the revised properties better protected target or confirmation of schemes to benefit from the Affordability Allowance and Frequently Flooded Allowance. We are continuing to work with Defra on this.
- This year's annual refresh of the capital programme will look at the final 2 years of the programme combined. This will provide more stability in the programme and clarity of focus for the final years. RFCCs are asked to review their programmes for the final 2 years, however you will only be asked to consent to your regional programmes of work for just 1 year in October (as normal), albeit, with sight of the second year.
- This year's annual resource maintenance allocations will be based on the outcome of the Spending Review process.
- The process to prepare next year's programmes (2025/26), and the key role RFCCs continue to play at each Committee meetings, is set out in appendix A.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the latest position with regards to the Flood & Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) capital programme and sets out the process to refresh the capital and asset maintenance programmes to plan and prepare for next financial year. The cycle of activities for the year is set out in appendix A.

2.0 Latest delivery position

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2024

- 2.1 Since the start of the capital programme in April 2021, together the Environment Agency (EA) and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) have better protected over 88,000 properties (figures correct as of April 2024). During 2023/24 a total of 28,921 properties have been better protected, against an EA corporate target of 28,000. A total of 297 schemes have completed since the start of the programme. A range of other wider benefits have also been delivered including creating or improving over 2,500 hectares of habitat and enhancing over 180km of rivers. To date, only 34 natural flood management projects have been undertaken and we are keen to see this improve.
- 2.2 Following winter storm events, currently 92.4% of EA high consequence assets are at their target condition. This is a decrease from 92.6% in April. Third party high consequence assets have seen a similar trend falling to 89.7%.

3.0 Capital programme – latest position

- 3.1 We were anticipating a government announcement in May on the reset of the capital investment programme, which would have included confirming the 200,000 properties better protected target for the current 6-year programme, the Affordability Allowance (to support Partnership Funding gaps) and the remainder of the Frequently Flooded Allowance. Due to the calling of the general election, the announcement has yet to go ahead. We are continuing to work with Defra on the next steps.
- 3.2 Environment Agency Area teams have been asked to prioritise delivery of projects which contribute to the 200,000 properties better protected target, and alongside this to achieve as many environmental outcomes as possible and to build natural flood management into projects where possible. We would welcome the RFCC Committees support in achieving this through your local discussions during summer, especially with other Risk Management Authorities (see para 3.4).
- 3.3 Work on a national 'pipeline' (projects which start in the next investment period from April 2027) is ongoing to identify the best places and interventions for future investment. This will ensure we are in a good place to transition to the next programme using the broad range of resilience interventions and striking the right balance between looking after existing assets and building new ones.
- 3.4 Following a discussion with the capital programme portfolio lead RFCC Chairs, we are supporting a delivery confidence review of other RMA schemes. This will be led by RFCCs with Environment Agency support.
- 3.5 Projects have realised efficiencies that total £69 million so far in the current programme. This equates to around 3% against a funding condition of 10% efficiencies for Grant in Aid spend to be realised for the whole programme. Every project should be challenged to deliver efficiencies so value for money is demonstrated and our investment across the whole 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 were 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

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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/guidance/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.

4.0 Annual refresh of the 6-year capital programme

- 4.1 This year's annual refresh of the capital programme will look at the final 2 years of the programme combined. The intention is to provide more stability in the programme and clarity of focus for the final years. However, the formal process is not changing, and RFCCs will be asked to consent to the implementation of their regional programmes for just 1 year in October as normal, albeit, with sight of the second year.
- 4.2 Supplier frameworks, who design and build our flood schemes, should be engaged throughout the refresh process to understand project deliverability, timing, costs, and resource needs. This applies for projects sponsored by any RMA, whether planning to use Environment Agency frameworks or other delivery routes.
- 4.3 The July Committee meeting is the opportunity for RFCC members to review any proposed new projects or changes to the existing programme and make any representations before it is submitted to the National Portfolio Management Office to create a nationally prioritised programme. This is a key step in the development of the capital programme and RFCCs are asked to discuss and support the annual refresh.
- 4.4 The majority of the allocation for the capital programme so far has been created using an existing prioritisation method based on partnership funding score.

5.0 Surface Water

- 5.1 To enable easier access to funding for surface water projects, work has begun to bring the costs and benefits of multiple sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) opportunities into one appraisal. A new investment model will enable RMAs to bring together multiple discrete SuDS interventions into a mini programme with one business case, one benefit cost ratio, proportionate evidence requirements and light-touch assurance. This simplified approach should improve access to funding and support continued investment over multiple years. It may be possible for a small number of projects to benefit from this approach towards the end of the existing capital programme.
- 5.2 New training will be made available to RMAs in the summer on partnership funding, making your economic business case and mapping and modelling. For the first time, these eLearning modules, previously only available to Environment Agency staff, will be made available to other public sector organisations on the Skills Academy section of the Supporting Flood and Coastal Projects SharePoint site. This is another small step of an initiative to share training more widely and these complement the material already available to RMAs including videos, interactive workshops and webinars. Non-

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Environment Agency staff will need to register to access the site by emailing [project support](#).

6.0 Asset maintenance programme

- 6.1 Funding levels for 2025/26 will be set through the Spending Review process and the corresponding budget setting exercise between the Environment Agency and Defra. This will impact the scale of asset maintenance, decommissioning, and Highland Water Contributions¹ that we can undertake. It is expected that we will start to understand more around Spending Review dates once the General Election has passed and any new government is in place.
- 6.2 Local teams have started working to develop submissions for 2025/26 maintenance, and wider asset, needs. Through summer, these will be reviewed and an initial look at allocation scenarios will be created by applying a consistent prioritisation process. This process will ensure that operational field teams are funded, our legal and health and safety obligations are met, and that funding goes to the highest priority assets.
- 6.3 An added complication for both the capital and resource programmes in 2025/26 will be the ongoing response to the 2023/24 winter events. We have created capacity within existing programmes to deliver key repairs following the winter events; but these will continue into 2025/26; with other new repairs needing to be prioritised versus existing asset needs.
- 6.4 The further input of RFCCs is requested into initial conversations on the use of local funding (ahead of future meetings) and the areas where they want to ensure that funding submissions are put forward.

7.0 The Stakeholder and Beneficiary Mapping Tool

- 7.1 The Stakeholder and Beneficiary Mapping Tool is nearing completion, with a rollout anticipated during August and September 2024.
- 7.2 Professor Colin Mellors (Yorkshire RFCC Chair) has kindly agreed to be an RMA Sponsor for the tool, which will be free to use for Local Authorities, Lead Local Flood Authorities, and Internal Drainage Boards.
- 7.3 The tool will help to identify stakeholders, beneficiaries and potential contributors who are in the early stages of project development, or projects in flight with growing need for partnership funding. Please visit the [SharePoint site](#) for regular updates, to contact the team and for more information.

8.0 Recommendations

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

1. Note the latest FCRM investment programme position.

¹ Highland water contributions are enabled under Section 57 of the Land Drainage Act 1991. An IDB may make an application to the Environment Agency for a contribution in relation to the quantity of water which that district receives from lands at a higher level outside of the Board's district. It provides funding to contribute to additional water management pressures and therefore additional pumping/maintenance required to manage water from higher in a catchment entering an IDB's Drainage District.

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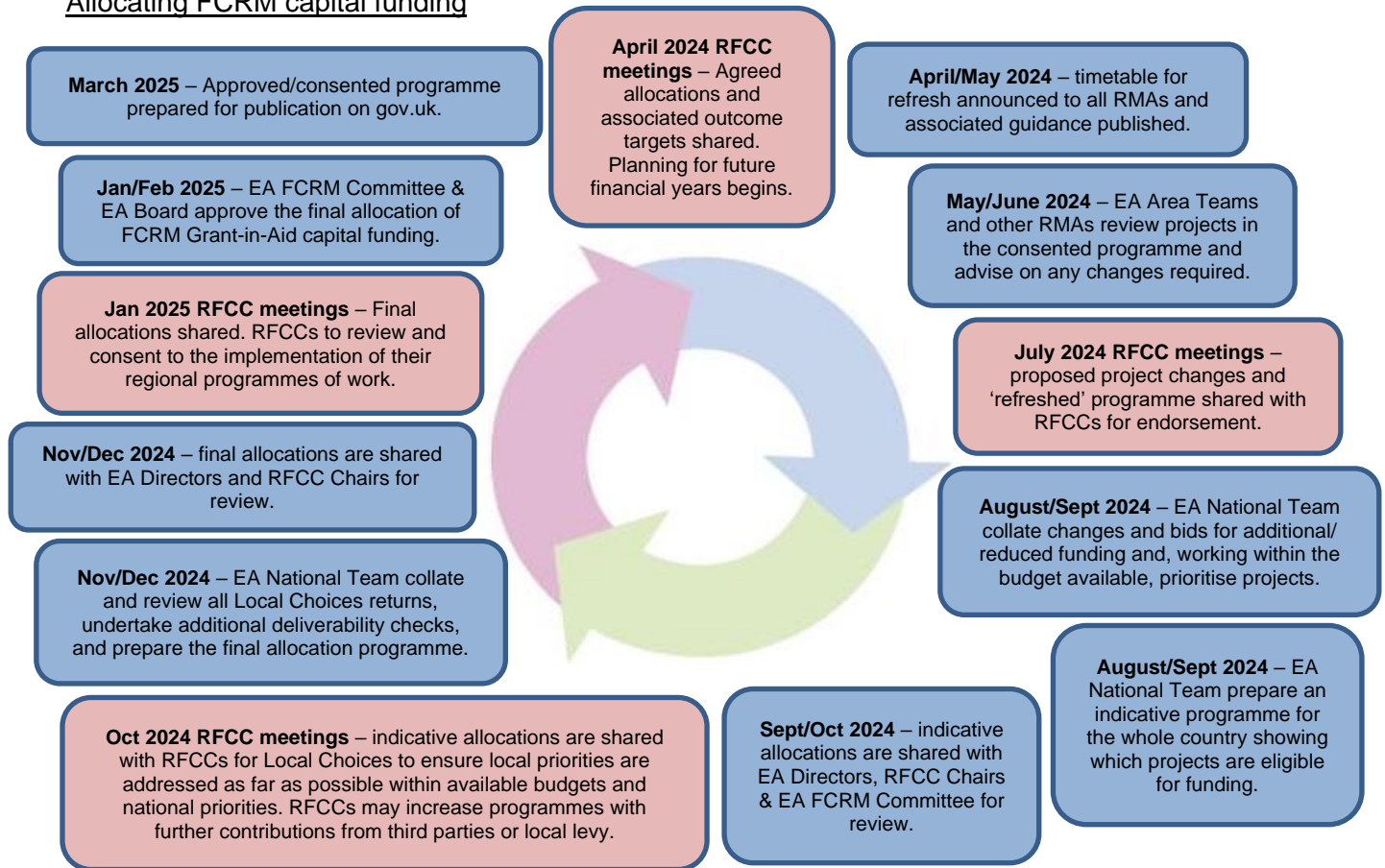
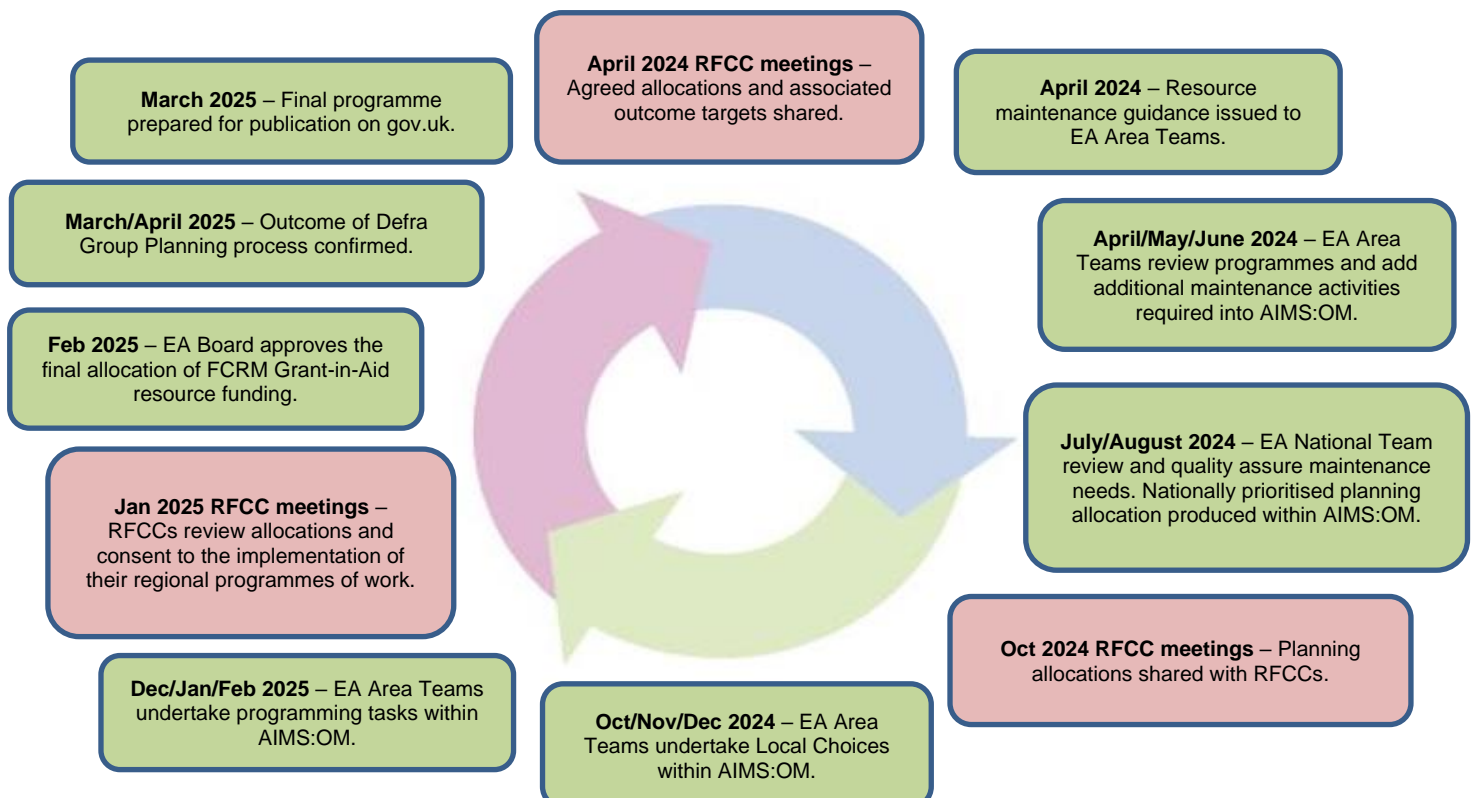
2. Support the annual refresh of the investment and asset maintenance programmes.
3. Support and feedback on the delivery confidence of other RMA schemes.

Dan Bond
Deputy Director Portfolio Management Office
20 June 2024

Appendix A: Process for allocating funding

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2024

Appendix A: Process for allocating funding

Allocating FCRM capital fundingAllocating FCRM resource maintenance funding

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**19 JULY 2024****NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT****RECOMMENDATION:** The RFCC are asked to note the content of this report.

A warm welcome from the coast on a new dawn for British politics. What has struck me throughout all the campaign has been the limited attention to the issues of climate change adaptation, flooding and sea level rise from any of the parties. Perhaps this is representative of the public's focus on immediate issues, or the scale of the issue appears too great. There is a significant need to change this focus and offer opportunities and pathways to a better future by planning for future scenarios and adapting to the challenge of climate change to provide a future of optimism rather than that of fear.

The Flood & Coast conference certainly rose to this challenge and offered hope through successfully implementing adaptive practice on the coast and inland. Communities were very much at the heart of the good practice that was being presented both in identifying, resolving and delivering practical measures. However as noted these were mostly pilot schemes delivered through "one off" initiatives (more pilots than Heathrow) rather than the large scale at pace delivery that is needed.

The pathway to greater resilience was a core theme at the Coastal Practitioners Conference hosted by the North West. This allowed the region to highlight the great work and significant investment that has occurred in the region since the conference was last here in 2015. This has seen over £200 million of investment on the coast and delivery of 8% of the national outcome measures. The conference also provided the platform to showcase the learning and success achieved through the Our Future Coast project. What was particularly pleasing to note from the conference was the greater diversity of attendance, a younger mixed sex audience from a variety of backgrounds and skills. It certainly bodes well for the future that the skills required to deliver an exciting and essential programme of coastal adaptation and place building is finding a wider pool of cohorts. A common theme raised throughout the conference was the requirement to deliver through community, cross-sector and partnership working, all swimming together. A challenge but one we are in a great place to deliver on. As a coastal group we have been developing links across the infrastructure sector and working with colleagues across the environmental and NGO sectors to break out of silos and embrace opportunities for joint benefits.

The nation hasn't had a significant coastal flood for several years, which may explain the lack of public and political focus on this issue. However coastal floods are amongst the most dangerous natural hazards globally. In the UK, coastal flooding is one of the highest priority risks for civil emergencies (Cabinet Office, 2015) and in the North West it remains the highest risk outside of pandemic flu on the LRF risk register. Recent floods (e.g., over the winter of 2013/14 and 2019/20 which other than good fortune could have been significantly worse) have demonstrated the ever-present threat of serious flood impacts in coastal regions. Improved coastal defences and forecasting tools have reduced the risk (and to date have prevented significant loss of life) but this is counterbalanced by accelerating mean sea-level rise and storminess associated with climate change, as well as continued decline in the extent of natural habitats like saltmarshes, shingle beaches and sand dunes. The work of the coastal group, the RFCC and partners is critical in raising this risk and ensuring the necessary attention and resource is put into this critical area.

Coastal Group Activities

1. Coastal Planning and Infrastructure

We held a coastal planning and Infrastructure Workshop in April 2024

Aims:

- To have various discussions with infrastructure providers about how the North West North Wales coastal group can support capacity building in the region.
- To identify ways to encourage infrastructure providers and large landowners to make better use of Shoreline Management Plans in their investment decisions.

Discussion Points

- **How important is coastal risk to you?**
 - Coastal risk is important to the resilience of rail, highway, utility, natural as well as nationally significant assets.
 - For others, coastal risk is not as important because the percentage of coastal assets are small. However, if we can understand the criticality and vulnerability of those smaller coastal assets, then we can start to build a picture of, what may seem as small insignificant assets, are in fact connected to a wider network of nationally important infrastructure.
 - It is therefore important to recognise the bigger picture and avoid focusing on our own smaller scale priorities, which is what the National Digital Twin Programme does.
 - In the North West and around the country, assets are being impacted from both directions. We need to better manage water inland and at sea and view both systems holistically.
 - We acknowledge that nature *is* an infrastructure asset.
 - It was noted that there is a tendency to deal with risk only when its urgent and unfortunately risk and priorities are not always aligned.
- **Funding of Asset Protection**
 - In the FCERM World, funding follows the risk, and works well where there are significant benefits for people, properties, and businesses. It works less well where there are fewer benefits to people and properties.
 - We need to value things differently, especially the value placed on nature and habitats.
 - We currently need to be looking elsewhere to implement the SMP policies that don't currently align with present funding mechanisms.
 - Partnership funding contributions can be challenging at times and shareholders and regulatory bodies can often be barriers to this.
 - We also recognise that the alignment of funding programmes differs with time and purpose.
 - There is a need for a long-term funding plan that incorporates different funding opportunities.
 - During the workshop we explored the potential for a central funding pot.
- **Accommodation of Infrastructure**
 - Long term planning on any development is required to mitigate against coastal risks.
 - The use of coastal change management areas should also be used more effectively to avoid inappropriate development in areas where coastal change is significant over the next 100 years.
 - There is a legacy of infrastructure (and landfills) along the coast, but how do we maintain the existing infrastructure?
- **The Natural Environment and Designated Sites**
 - The North West North Wales coastline is over 900km in length, and ~120km was assigned to Managed Realignment in the short term epoch, increasing to ~270km in the medium term epoch.
 - How can we plan for sustainable infrastructure development particularly where policy looks towards Managed Realignment or No Active Intervention?
 - How can we plan for maintenance and protection of infrastructure within designated sites?

Next Steps:

Map critical infrastructure and interconnectedness on the North West & North Wales coastline.

The Need:

There is a need to encourage infrastructure providers and large landowners to make better use of Shoreline Management Plans in their investment decisions, by better understanding the criticality, vulnerability, and interconnectedness of infrastructure, whilst understanding any long-term impacts from future flood and coastal erosion risk.

How will the project fulfil this need?

- We will bring together resources in a collaborative and cost-effective way.
- We will map coastal infrastructure and their connectedness in the North West.
- We will undertake stakeholder analysis to understand who needs to be involved to map infrastructure from various sectors – food, medical, fuel, water, power distribution networks.
- We will establish a collaborative working group consisting of representatives from local government, environmental organizations, and infrastructure providers (drainage, transportation networks, and utilities etc) to identify and map existing infrastructure on the coast.
- We will identify and map infrastructure and the SMP policies on the coast for individual sectors.
- We will then map the interconnectedness of assets between sectors and cross sector dependencies.
- We will use open-source data to gather additional detail data on coastal infrastructure, including the current state/conditions of coastal infrastructure.
- We will develop a comprehensive database or GIS mapping system to document and visualise the current state of coastal infrastructure, highlighting areas in need of improvement or investment.

2. SMP Refresh into Action

- The SMP refresh project has now come to an end.
- The SMP Explorer website was launched in January to make SMPs more visible and accessible.
- We are now moving towards the delivery of epoch 2 (medium term 2025-2055) SMP policies.
- The Coastal Group would like to report on the delivery of SMP policies from epoch 1 by the end of 2024.

SMP Task Groups

- The SMP Refresh Task and Finish Groups have completed many, but not all, of the actions required for the SMP refresh process.
- Resources, time, and funding pressures have unfortunately restricted the progress of the Task and Finish Group actions.
- The SMP Peer review recommendations will require support and pooled resources to help take forward the elements of this work.

SMP Peer Review Recommendations

[Shoreline management plans independent peer review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/shoreline-management-plans-independent-peer-review)

SMPs could be strengthened by:

- Securing greater political membership and community buy-in for their action plans.
- Improving how climate triggers points and adaptation pathways inform the transition between different SMP management approaches across epochs.
- Identifying where coastal change management areas (CCMAs) could be established.
- Engaging better with local infrastructure providers.
- Being clearer about how they are guiding current FCERM investments.
- Being clearer about how they are guiding the next generation of coastal projects.

- developing long-term investment plans to fulfil the commitments set out in the SMP action plans.
- Improving long-term planning for the protection of the natural environment.
- Including the Habitat Compensations and Restoration Programme (HCRP) to better support the delivery of SMP management approaches and action plans.

3. Other activities:

- We have Supported the development of the Coastal Practitioners Conference in Blackpool.
 - Showcasing what has been achieved in the North West through funding and investment.
 - Understanding further action towards a more resilient coast.
 - Thinking about where we need to adapt on the North West coast.
- We attended the Flood & Coast Conference in June 2024
 - Encouraging to see Coastal issues high on the agenda.
 - There was a focus on engaging with communities through co-design,
 - It highlighted the importance of coastal adaptation planning and working with nature.
 - It showcased innovative approaches developed through the Coastal Transition Accelerator and flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation programmes.
- We have undertaken a Coastal Group Health Check
 - We circulated a questionnaire to the coastal group members and received 22 responses.
 - We are exploring how we can align the goals of the Coastal Group with the goals set out in the national FCERM strategy, the RFCC business plan, coastal risk management Strategies and the actions set out in the SMP.
 - We have improved how partners report at the subgroup meetings, through a map-based approach.
 - The coastal group are the delivery mechanisms for the SMP, so partners will report on priority actions identified in their coastal strategy and SMP Action plan.
 - We are also developing a Coastal Group Handbook and reviewing the Coastal Group Action Plan for 2025.

Please see below an SMP summary sheet for the North West regions with a coastline and/or estuary.

The summary sheets provide information on the SMP policies across the short, medium, and long term time horizons. They also provide a summary of the SMP Action plan progress for the following regions:

- Cumbria
- Lancashire
- Merseyside
- Cheshire Mid Mersey

Cumbria

The North West and North Wales coastline is over 920km in length. Cumbria's coastline makes up approximately 420km of the North West coast (45%). In the short term, 156km of Cumbria has adopted Hold the Line coastal management policies, 95km for Managed Realignment and 169km for No Active Intervention.

The length of adopted SMP management approaches changes as we move into the next time horizon, the medium term (2025 - 2055). We see that the length of coast assigned to Hold the Line and No Active Intervention drops to 77km and 167km, while Managed Realignment increases to 176km.

The long-term approach for Cumbria is to have 89km managed by Hold the Line, 141km managed by Managed Realignment and 189km managed through No Active Intervention. To understand what this means specifically for these areas, please look at the management intent on the SMP Explorer [website](#).

Figure 1.1 and 1.2 below shows the location and length SMP policies that were adopted in 2011. However potential future policy changes, as identified through new studies and monitoring, are not considered here.



Figure 1.1: Map of Cumbria showing the SMP Policies for the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 – 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105) time horizons.

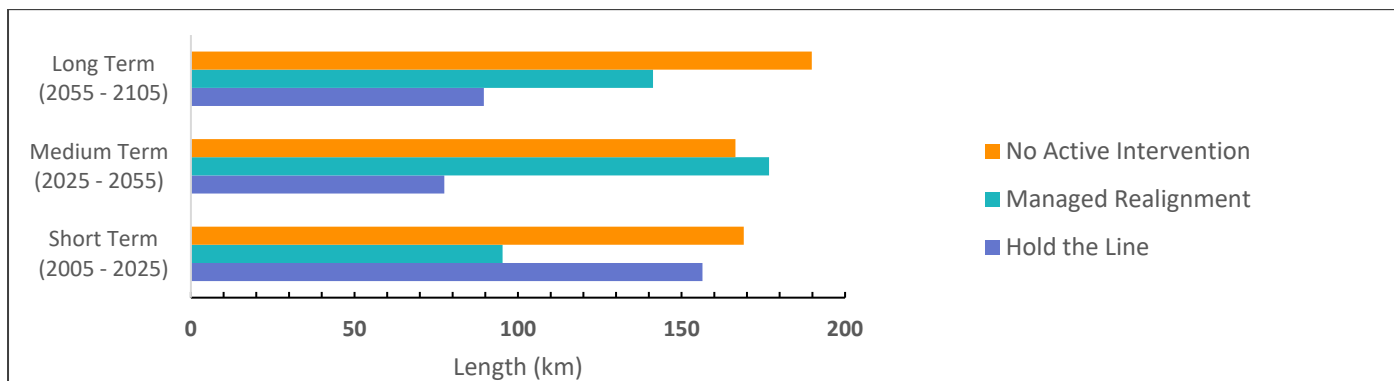


Figure 1.2: Length SMP Policies for Cumbria across the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 – 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105) time horizons.

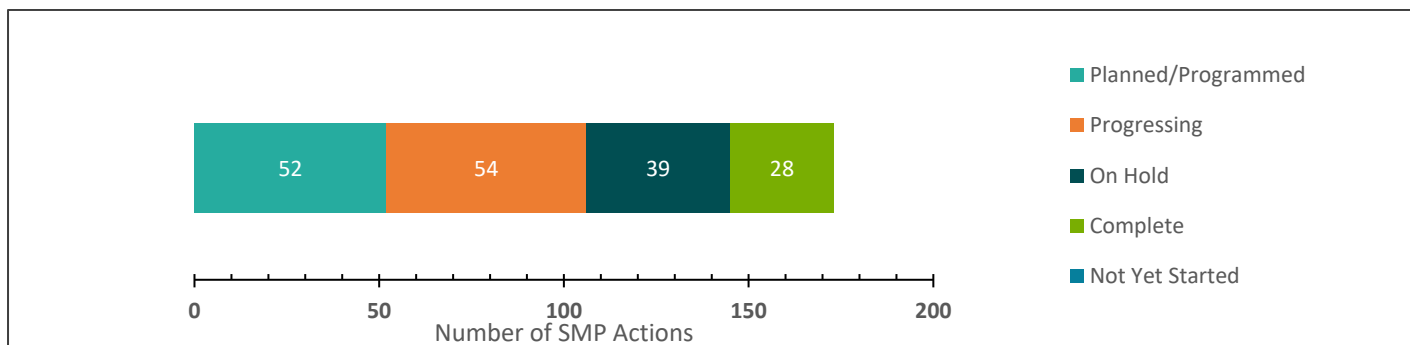


Figure 1.3: Number of SMP Actions and their progress status.

Lancashire

The North West and North Wales coastline is over 920km in length. Lancashire's coastline makes up approximately 227km of the North West coast (25%). In the short term, 178km of Lancashire's coast has adopted Hold the Line, 7km of Managed Realignment and 41km of No Active Intervention.

The length of adopted SMP management approaches changes as we move into the next time horizon, the medium term (2025-2055). We see that the length of coast assigned to Hold the Line and drops to 149km, while Managed Realignment increases to 37km. The length of coast assigned to No Active Intervention stays the same at 41 km.

The long-term approach for Lancashire is for 119km to be managed by Hold the Line, 66km by Managed Realignment and 41km managed through No Active Intervention. To understand what this means specifically for these areas, please look at the management intent on the SMP Explorer [website](#).

Figure 2.1 and 2.2 below shows the location and length SMP policies that were adopted in 2011. However potential future policy changes, as identified through new studies and monitoring, are not considered here.

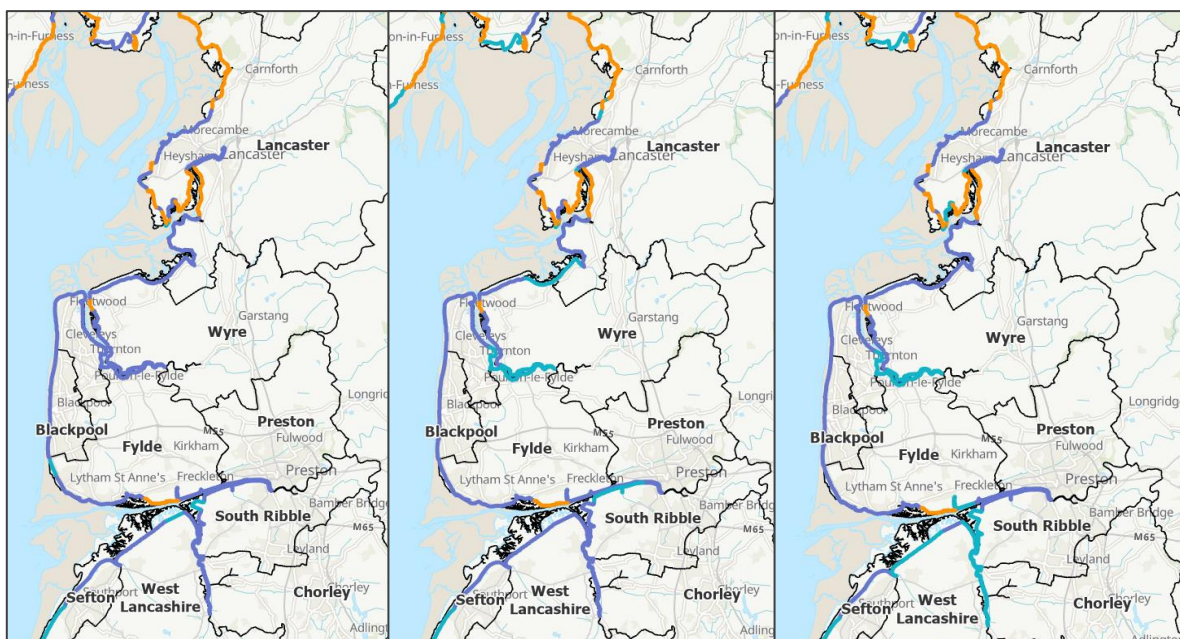


Figure 2.1: Map of Lancashire showing the SMP Policies for the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105) time horizons.

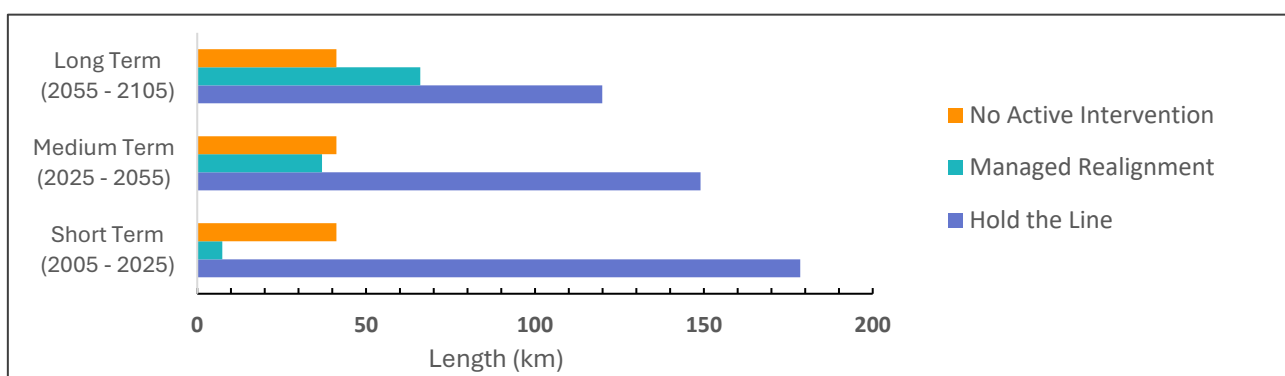


Figure 2.2: Length SMP Policies for Lancashire across the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105) time horizons.

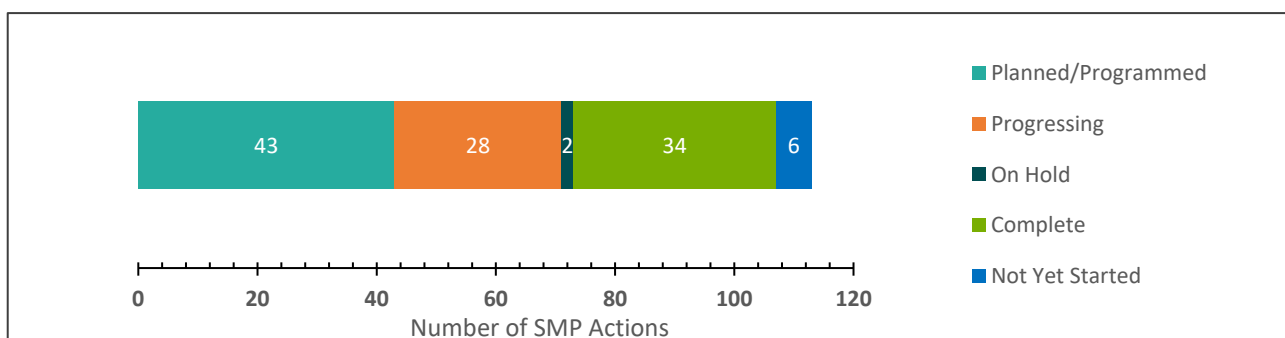


Figure 2.3: Number of SMP Actions and their progress status.

Merseyside

The North West and North Wales coastline is over 920km in length. Merseyside's coastline makes up approximately 108 km of the North West coast (12%). In the short term, 95km of Merseyside's coast has adopted Hold the Line coastal management policies, 18km for Managed Realignment and 18km for No Active Intervention.

The length of adopted SMP management approaches changes as we move into the next time horizon, the medium term (2025-2055). We see that the length of coast assigned to Hold the line and drops to 94km, while No Active Intervention increases to 19km. The length of coast assigned to Managed Realignment stays the same at 18 km.

The long-term approach for Merseyside is to have 89km managed by Hold the Line interventions, 21km by managed realignment and 21km managed through No Active Intervention. To understand what this means specifically for these areas, please look at the management intent on the SMP Explorer [website](#).

Figure 3.1 and 3.2 below shows the location and length SMP policies that were adopted in 2011. However potential future policy changes, as identified through new studies and monitoring, are not considered here.

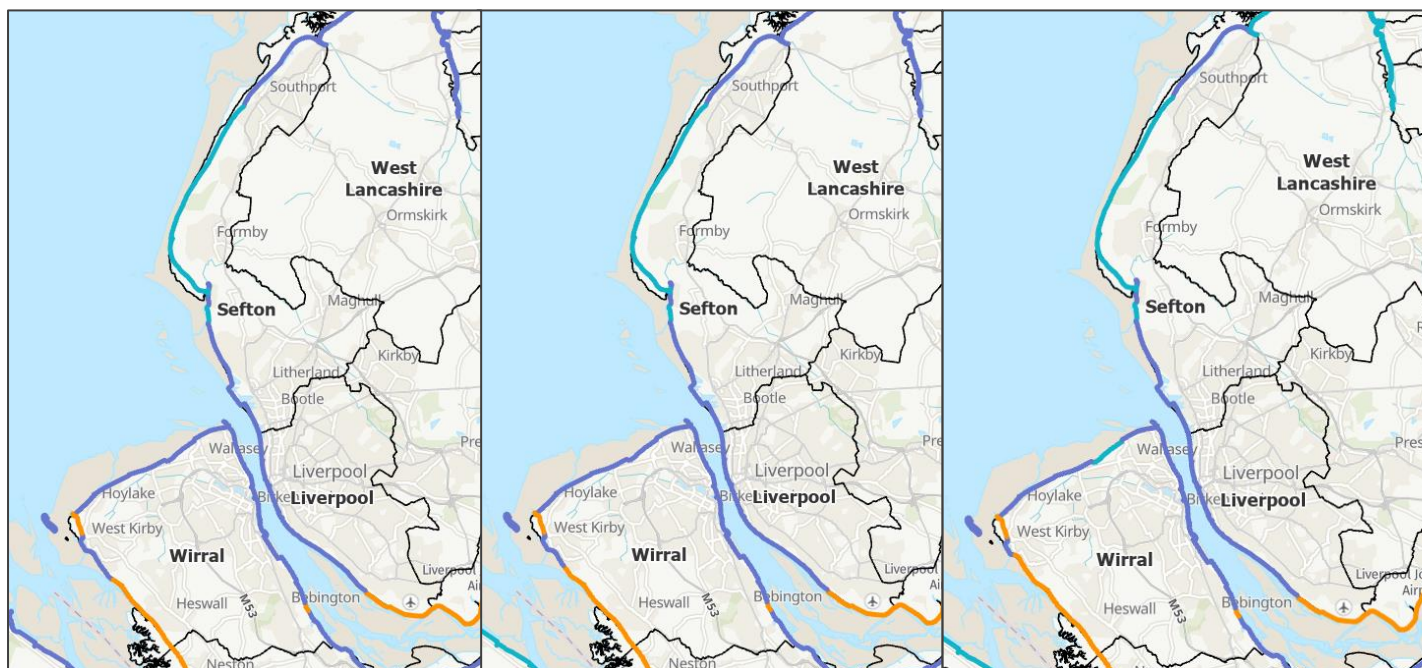


Figure 3.1: Map of Merseyside showing the SMP Policies for the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 – 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105) time horizons.

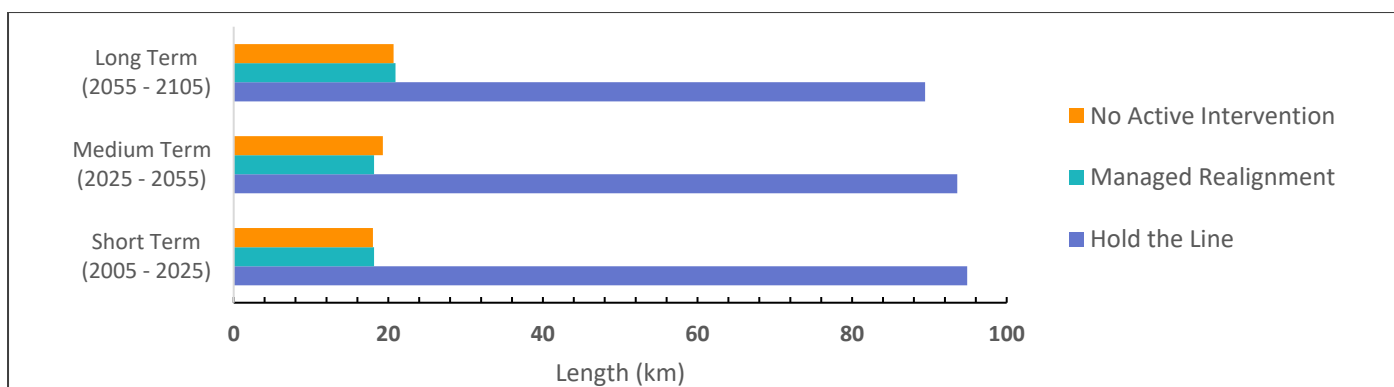


Figure 3.2: Length SMP Policies for Merseyside across the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 – 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105) time horizons.

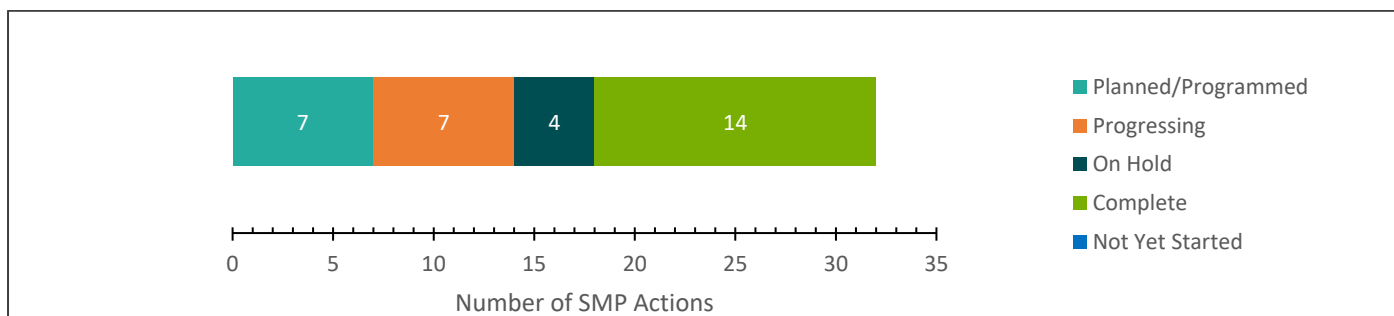


Figure 3.3: Number of SMP Actions and their progress status.

Cheshire Mid Mersey

The North West and North Wales coastline is over 920km in length. Cheshire and Mersey Estuary makes up approximately 57 km of the North West coast (6%). In the short term, 46km of Cheshire and the Mersey Estuary has adopted Hold the Line coastal management policies, 0km to Managed Realignment and 24km to No Active Intervention.

The length of adopted SMP management approaches changes as we move into the next time horizon, the medium term (2025-2055). We see that the length of estuary assigned to Hold the line and drops to 28km, while Managed Realignment increases to 18km. The length of coast assigned to No Active Intervention stays the same at 24 km.

The long-term approach for Cheshire and the Mersey Estuary is to have 28km managed by Hold the Line interventions, 18km by managed realignment and 24km managed through No Active Intervention. To understand what this means specifically for these areas, please look at the management intent on the SMP Explorer [website](#).

Figure 2.1 and 2.2 below shows the location and length SMP policies that were adopted in 2011. However potential future policy changes, as identified through new studies and monitoring, are not considered here.

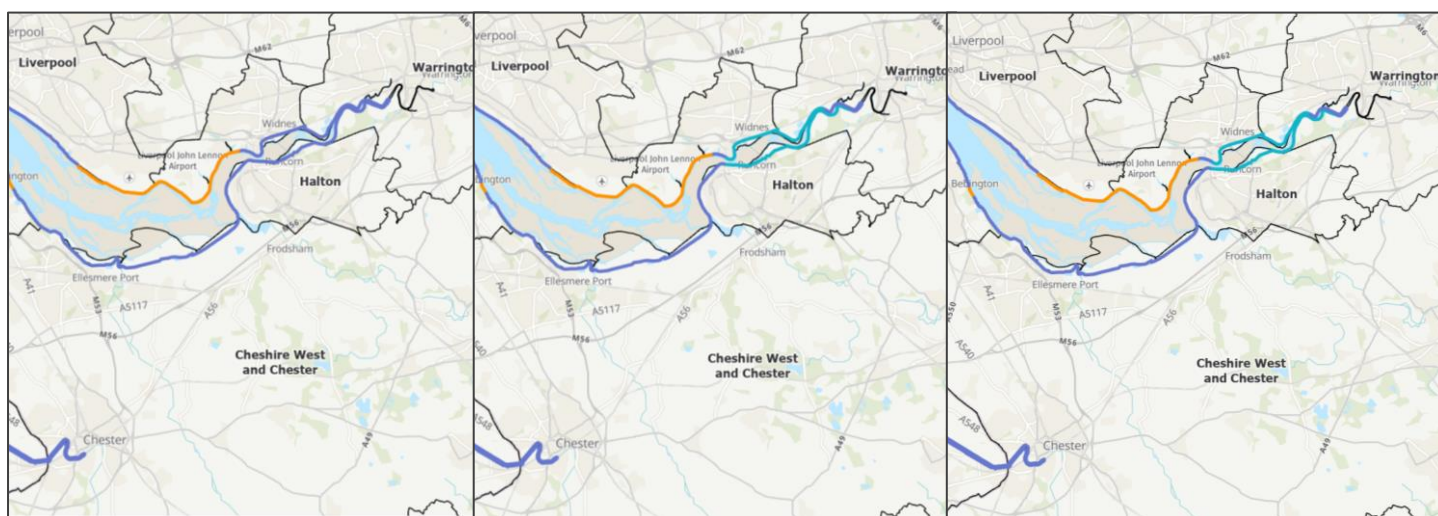


Figure 4.1: Map of Cheshire and the Mersey Estuary showing the SMP Policies for the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 – 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105).

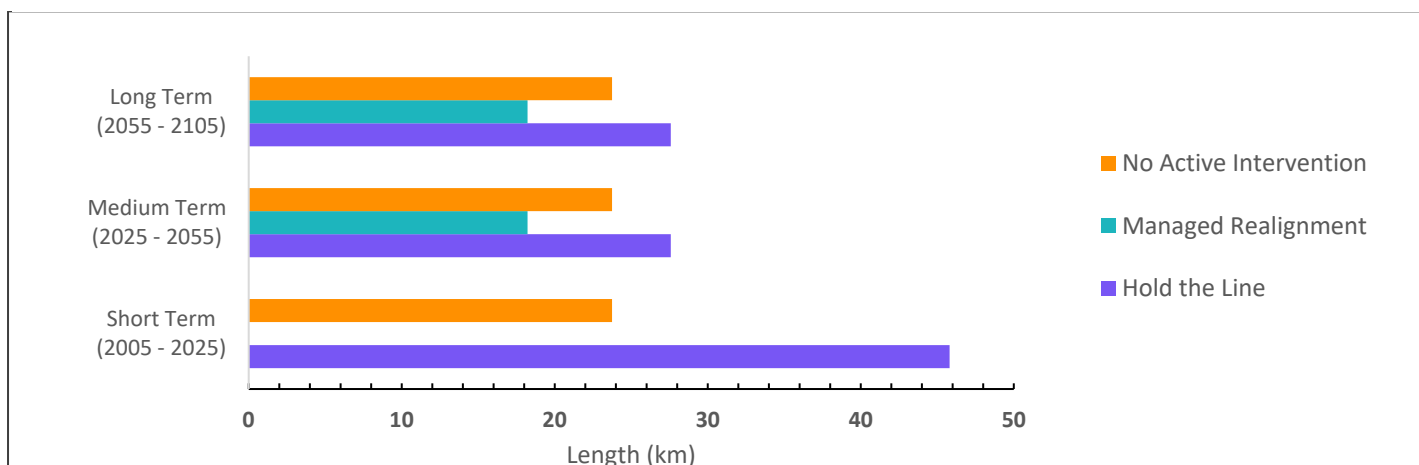


Figure 4.2: Length SMP Policies for Merseyside across the Short (2005 – 2025), Medium (2025 – 2055) and Long Term (2055 – 2105) time horizons.

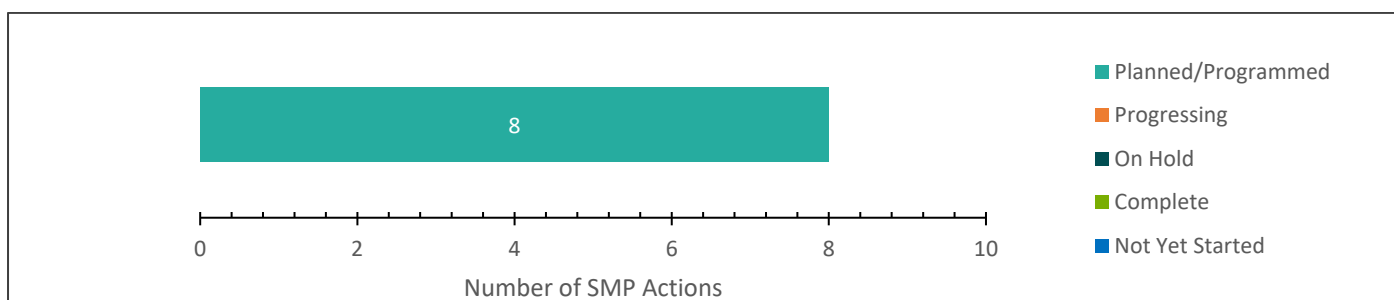


Figure 4.3: Number of SMP Actions and their progress status.

4. Our Future Coast

Bea Beggs, the new programme manager, along with work package leads Susannah Bleakley (Comms & engagement) and Graham Lymbery (monitoring) have been undertaking a mid-point evaluation of the various aspects of the project with a focus on determining key project outputs above and beyond test and trial case studies but which use the evidence collected through these site-specific studies to provide accumulative learning outputs.

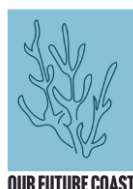
Test & Trial Progress

Things are moving and sites that have been slow to get going are showing encouraging signs as project elements are finally dropping into place and being clarified. Capital delivery will begin this summer but for many sites is scheduled for 25/26.

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.

OUR FUTURE COAST ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES



1. TAKE A SITE SPECIFIC APPROACH 
2. SEEK EARLY ENGAGEMENT 
3. BUILD TRUST 
4. PRIORITISE THOSE WITH THE GREATEST STAKE 
5. CONSIDER WHO ELSE TO ENGAGE 
6. FAIRNESS AND EQUITY ALWAYS 
7. COMMUNICATE REGULARLY 
8. BE CLEAR, SPEAK OFTEN 
9. LISTEN TO CONCERNS 
10. SUPPORT AND GUIDE 
11. WORK TOGETHER 
12. BE RESPONSIVE AND ADAPT 
13. SHARE LIMITATIONS HONESTLY 
14. CO-DESIGN, TEST, SHARE RESULTS 

Monitoring and Research

New monitoring work package lead Graham Lymbery has been conducting a review of our monitoring and data in readiness to produce the coastal process reports and saltmarsh mapping that will inform the delivery expected for each site over the next two years.

Sharing Good Practice

Relationships with The Fylde Dunes Project, Co-Opt and Nature North are providing opportunities for shared learning which can be fed both into this programme of projects and the wider NBS and coastal practitioner community.

Working in Partnership

The May 24 workshop was well received and the presentation from Jack Flusk Catchment Sensitive Farming Advisor on ELMs for coastal landowners was enlightening. We expect to hold our next Partners workshop in early November later this year.

Training in 2024

Natural England follow up on Habitat Regulation Assessments and consenting process training completed in June. Project manager training opportunity to be shared shortly in line with project objectives to address the NW Coastal skill deficit, providing support for the development of the Centre of Coastal Excellence.

Our Future Coast team

- Carl Green, OFC Project Sponsor (carl.green@wyre.gov.uk)
- Bea Beggs, OFC Programme Manager (bea.beggs@Wyre.gov.uk)
- Susannah Bleakley, Comms and Engagement Lead (susannah@sbleakley.com)
- Graham Lymbery, Monitoring Lead (lymbery.graham@gmail.com)
- Joseph Earl, Engagement Officer North, Morecambe Bay Partnership (Joseph@morecambebay.org.uk)
- Nicola Parkinson, Engagement Officer South, Lancashire Wildlife Trust (nparkinson@lancswt.org.uk)

5. Coastal Centre of Excellence in the North West

The Coastal Centre of Excellence in the North West (CCENW) will work with our strategic partners the Environment Agency (EA), DEFRA and Local Government Association (LGA) to help to develop the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and Environment Bill. 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.

The OFC project is seen as the catalyst for the development of the NWCCE which shares legacy outcomes of:

- Improved skills and capacity to deliver nature-based solutions on the coast
- New strategic thinking within Local Authorities / Risk Management Authorities
- Learning by doing – identifying the blockages and raising the issues in coastal communities in all levels in policy making.
- Enabling future issues to be escalated through a network of contacts at all levels.
- Community Involved and improved understanding of coastal issues and their part in the solution.

Our Future Coast will be providing access to project management training and is facilitating several roles through the project including a coastal project manager, an assistant project manager and a saltmarsh officer.

6. Summary

The future for the coast will be driven by the capacity and acceptance to deliver adaptation to the challenges of climate change. This will rely on improved understanding of the risks and options by communities together with partners “swimming together” to achieve delivery at pace.

The excellent work achieved in delivering the SMP refresh and explorer platforms and those in the pipeline to provide information on coastal erosion (NCERMs) and flood risk (NaFRA) will provide the evidence for action. There are positive signs in the quality and wide diversity of coastal practitioners and willingness of partners to share and work together.

What is now needed is the public focus to be raised on these critical issues and a call for urgent action.

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

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee



July 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

United Utilities Water (Uuw) 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.

If you have any queries, please contact the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) team at DWMP@uuplc.co.uk.

2. Flooding Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 22 March 2024 and 25 June 2024. This is unverified data at this time, and so the numbers are likely to fluctuate until the regulatory data is signed-off for our full year FY24 regulatory reporting for Ofwat. 'Severe 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	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	6	0	6
GMCA	25	19	77	5
Lancashire	18	15	2	10
Cumbria	9	25	2	3

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.

The next stage of the process is draft determination whereby Ofwat scrutinises these plans to ensure they meet the targets for environmental improvements and deliver value for money for customers. Draft determination was expected on 12 June 2024, but has been delayed until 11 July 2024 following Cabinet Office guidance in light of the general election taking place on 4 July 2024.

You can find out more about our business plan on the corporate website

(<https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/about-us/our-future-plans/our-business-plan-submissions/our-business-plan-submissions-for-2025-2030/>).

4. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

Defra and HR Wallingford are underway producing the guidance for the next iteration of the DWMP (cycle 2) a draft of which is currently expected by the end of July. It is currently unknown whether this will be delayed following the general election. Final DWMP guidance is currently anticipated at the end of October 2024.

The DWMP team continue to support others across UUW shaping our approach to long-term risk, investment planning and the Five County model approach.

5. Place-based Planning across all 5 counties

In the last quarterly update, we set out that the Place Based Planning approach will expand to cover all five counties in the North West of England to drive long term planning with partners to the benefit of the environment and society. The Place Based Planning Managers are also engaged within the newly established internal County Hubs within UUW. The aim of these hubs is to bring operational and strategic teams together regularly to drive delivery and performance, share best practice across counties and foster a sense of cohesion and joined up thinking at a place level.

The Place Based Planning [web page](#) on the corporate website has also been updated and we will continue to update with case studies.

Cumbria

Activity in Cumbria is focused on expanding our place based planning approach, moving from its pilot focus on the Eden Catchment, to covering the wider county. With a key area of focus on exploring future potential collaborative opportunities across the wider county, through engagement, mapping and planning activities.

We are building up a Cumbria partnership opportunity pipeline, exploring opportunities with a range of organisations with shared aims. Examples of recent engagement include with the West Cumbria Catchment Partnership and the Lynster Farmers Group.

Lancashire

Place based planning has kickstarted in Lancashire, taking inspiration from the good work of the Fylde Hub as part of the Natural Course project (<https://naturalcourse.co.uk/active-projects/enabling-citizen-science/>) to include consideration for collaborative working and integrated water management across the whole county. Activities have been focussed on understanding where existing partnerships and collaborative working exist, with continued support being given to the Fylde Hub and the Turning Tides partnership, as well as understanding where there are future ambitions and opportunities for integrated water management within the county. Some initial productive conversations have been had with Blackpool council on the ambition to work together and what the journey towards integrated water management may look like within the Blackpool local authority area and along the Fylde coastline. These conversations will continue and will include more key stakeholders as they progress.

Merseyside

Regular dialogue between UUW, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and Mersey Rivers Trust continues with the ambition of adopting an Integrated Water Management Planning approach across the county. A partnership workshop took place in October 2023 to introduce the concept of IWMP and highlight the water challenges facing the region. Next steps include attempts to produce a Memorandum of Understanding and a Vision document setting out the partnership commitments and high-level challenges, the working title of which is shown in Figure 1.

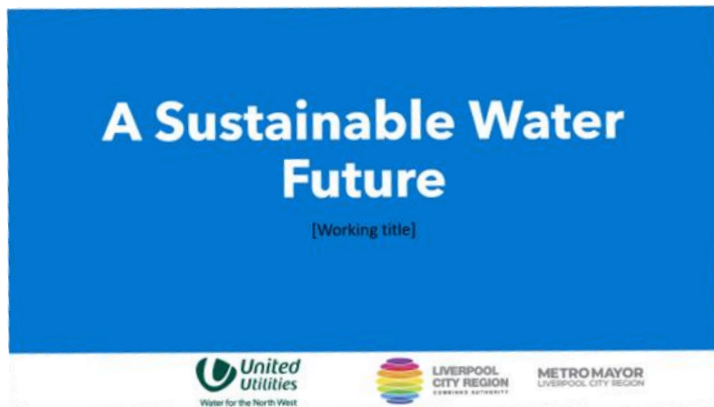


Figure 1 Liverpool City Region IWMP Vision (working title)

To grow the relationship, UUW hosted LCRCA at Liverpool WwTW with a tour of the facility to provide an overview and scale of the process, a photo from the day is shown in Figure 2.

In parallel UUW have been meeting with LCRCA's transport team to identify joint infrastructure opportunities in relation to LCR Sustainable Transport schemes and UUW storm overflow investment. This has led to UUW meeting with local authorities including Wirral Council to collaborate on planning and design considerations for some of the significant developments proposed for Birkenhead.

Rainwater management considerations are also front and centre across the county at present with recent dialogue with stakeholders including Liverpool City Council and Liverpool ONE shopping looking at SuDS opportunities to reduce surface water flood risks.



Figure 2 Liverpool City Region Combined Authority tour of Liverpool WwTW

Greater Manchester

The Integrated Water Management Plan is the key place based planning activity in Greater Manchester and two of the Place Based Planning sub-groups (Micker Brook and Poise Brook) are now reported within the IWMP governance.

The IWMP has continued to progress the integration of projects within the focus clusters (Wigan, Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside) where 'added value' can be generated. The most progressed opportunity is a regeneration scheme within Stockport where the IWMP team have stretched the developer to design a best practice drainage strategy and identified co-funding to support the delivery. The implementation of the best practice design will generate added value of:

- Increased biodiversity;
- Reduction of rainwater runoff entering the combined sewer network;
- Enhancement of place for the people who live and work there; and
- Improve the sustainability of neighbouring regeneration through surface water network expansion.

The IWMP have developed with support from Jacobs an 'Added Value Framework' which will quantify the above benefits for this cluster and others as they mature.

The IWMP team is in the process of on-boarding a Programme Manager, based within Greater Manchester Combined Authority, who previously worked on the Natural Course Project. This will help to build continuity and draw on the experience of collaborative working on the integrated water management agenda. The Programme Manager is responsible for ensuring that the IWMP drive the activities set out in the Annual Business Plan and report on the progress and lessons learned through partnership working.

The IWMP team have hosted a graduate from UUW who has been undertaking the role of IWMP Analyst and now look forward to onboarding a 12-month intern later in the summer to take up the position of IWMP Analyst.

Finally the IWMP team have been engaging with academics on the requirement for an 'Integrated Catchment Model' for the Greater Manchester city region. This currently does not exist, but would be extremely beneficial to ensure at a high level that the interventions being promoted by IWM are deployed in the right place and at the right time to deliver the outcomes. Next steps are currently being considered and an update can be provided in the next quarterly report.

Cheshire

Building on the Place based planning pilot in the Cheshire East area of the Upper Mersey catchment other areas of the county are now being explored.

In Warrington partners are working to better understand flood risk and the wider opportunities of surface water separation in the Sankey Brook catchment. A workshop took place (photo in Figure 3) between UUW and the Environment Agency in May, and there will be a working group to progress ideas including consideration of modelling.

Engagement with Cheshire East Council is increasing with a focus on SuDS opportunities, particularly in Crewe, with several projects identified. It is agreed that partners in Crewe will look to adopt a 'sponge type' approach which is encouraging from a blue green perspective. There has been some early engagement in Cheshire West & Chester with opportunities in the Rivacre Valley area with a UUW storm

overflow scheme and the wider environment. UUW River Ranger activity has also been requested around a number of local engagement and conservation activities.



Figure 3 Sankey Brook Catchment workshop May 2024

6. Better Rivers Project

In April 2024 we published our storm overflows map which shows the location and operational status of each of our 2,264 storm overflows across the North West. This publication is ahead of the Government's March 2025 target; part of our commitment to transparency to the local communities we serve and to help them make informed decisions about any activities they carry out in their local rivers, lakes and seas.

The map will allow the public to see which storm overflows may be releasing storm water in near real-time and where they are not in operation. As well as showing the current operational status of each storm overflow, the map provides information about the actions we are already taking to reduce storm overflow operation. This includes our proposed £3 billion investment from 2025 onwards and which sites will benefit from that, as well as examples of where action is happening right now as we accelerate investment in key areas of the region.

We are also highlighting locations of rapid and more agile measures which are helping us improve performance quickly. For example, a further 29 rapid measures will be deployed between now and the end of July across Cumbria and Lancashire.

You can view the map on our corporate website (<https://www.unitedutilities.com/better-rivers/storm-overflow-map/>).

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 scheme deadline will remain open until all funding has been allocated. We are still receiving some potential external and internal schemes to review under the green recovery benefits criteria, however unless schemes are already approved through planning and delivery routes identified it is unlikely they could 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, including two in the Eden catchment. Both the Eden schemes are public realm regeneration schemes, incorporating raingardens and tree pits, and are in line with the Government levelling-up grant funding criteria. The schemes underway to date have an average UUV contribution of 24% and provide a partnership contribution rate of £24 million offering an average 26% water volume reduction in the areas the SuDS have been installed. In addition, the schemes are expected to be a circa £54 million natural capital benefit for the North West.

The public realm schemes being delivered in the majority of the areas that have achieved the funding criteria include raingardens, tree pits, permeable pocket parks and recreational parks with cycle ways to connect access around the town centre. Work is being undertaken through the council framework providers, with hard landscaping already in place and planting season pending. Highways gullies are being disconnected in combination with road re-profiling to ensure maximum flow is received by the rain gardens where possible.

Schemes underway in the Fylde catchment include a NFM scheme for the Brock and tributaries watercourses, aimed at helping reduce river-locking risks in St Michaels-on-Wyre. These schemes are working with the farming community to slow the flow across the land ahead of entering the watercourse. Some of the interventions will also aid with water quality, although that is not the main aim of this scheme. In addition, a substantial tree pit scheme has been agreed across Blackpool town centre, which is currently the town with the lowest green space in the UK.

Working in collaboration with external third parties continues; new schemes are applying for funding and we continue to look at these whilst funding is available.

We have had less success in identifying schemes that are constructable and can meet the funding criteria whilst maximising the reduction of storm water we receive into the combined sewer network. Given our time constraints, we are now focussing on understanding how best to identify SuDS opportunities using our corporate data and internal learnings. We aim to move quickly into a position where we can successfully identify where benefits to our network can be achieved.

In addition, two schemes have been terminated due to constructability issues. One external scheme could not be designed to enable all funding streams to meet the funding criteria and was subsequently withdrawn. An internal UUV scheme was not constructable due to the topography of the land and the utility services in the vicinity eroding the benefits the scheme the scheme would generate. The funding allocated to be used against these schemes has been returned to the overall funding pot for re-allocation to new schemes that can meet the funding criteria.

Three schemes have achieved project in use status to date, all in the Greater Manchester area. These include a SuDS for Schools application and two public realm regeneration schemes in Bolton (permeable pocket park) and Altrincham (Raingardens and tree pits). The Altrincham scheme has significantly

improved the surface water flooding in Goose Green Square that had been an issue for local businesses. The raingarden design in this area maximised the surface area of water captured down Regent Road. The scheme benefitted from the re-profiling on the road surface towards the raingardens and is shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4 Raingarden in Altrincham

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

19 JULY 2024

KENDAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEME

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

The Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme consists of multiple elements to increase the flood resilience to over 1920 properties and protect 2,250 businesses from the direct and indirect impacts of flooding.

The initial phase of the project is currently under construction and runs through the mainly urban area of Kendal and is a mixture of embankments and flood walls. With over 50% of the reaches already finished, operational completion is expected in late 2025.

Future phases for the upstream measures are under design, including flood storage to further increase the standard of protection to properties, and a catchment drain to divert fluvial and surface water away from vulnerable communities.

There are substantial environmental improvements underway with over 15,000 trees being planted, 55 hectares of improved habitat and investment in two riverside amenity areas that improve public access and provide better connectivity to nature and the river.

Taking a catchment-based approach and looking ahead as our climate is changing, we are working with partners and stakeholders to support landscape recovery projects and environmental initiatives to create a resilient and sustainable future.





NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2024

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLANS UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION: The RFCC are asked to note the content of this report for the Northwest, Solway Tweed and River Dee FRMPs. Members are asked to continue to champion implementation of FRMPs in their own organisation.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

- Hosted drop-in sessions to provide tips and guidance on reporting to Measure Leads and for the EA points of contact for specific Flood Risk Areas.
- Rolled out information to lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) explaining the legal changes to FRMPs (see next section for details).
- Developed a new process for collating LLFA data for status changes to their measures (for national, River Basin District and specific Flood Risk Area measures) for changes in status from July 2024.
- Hosted a drop-in session to offer support to LLFAs reporting status changes to us and given further support where requested.
- Processed data to send to the national team through Flood Plan Explorer, which is available to view by the public on the Environment Agency's [Flood Plan Explorer](#) (FPE) mapping tool.
- LLFA's were encouraged to make some updates in September 2023 working with their EA point of contact, with further updates in July 2024.
- The FRMPs team have continued to liaise with LLFAs to offer support regarding FRMPs.
- Provided a copy of the relevant FRMPs to United Utilities and been available to discuss status changes with them.
- Some staff changes have occurred in the virtual team.

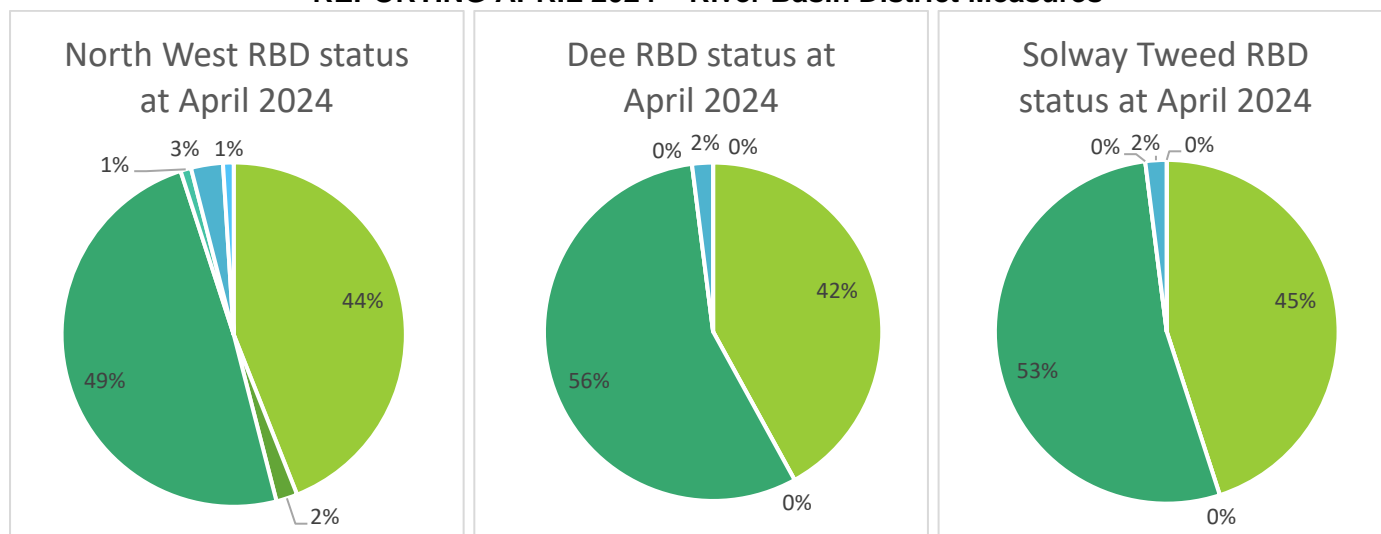
2.0 RETAINED EU LAW (REVOCATION AND REFORM) ACT 2023

- On 31 December 2023, the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood Risk Regulations (cross border areas) 2010 were revoked under the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023.
- From 1 January 2024 onwards, lead local flood authorities (LLFAs) and the Environment Agency are no longer legally required to comply with future review, assessment and planning cycles as set out in the Flood Risk Regulations.
- However, Government expects to see the continued implementation of second cycle FRMPs by the Environment Agency, LLFAs, other Risk Management Authorities and local partners.
- The Environment Agency is also expected to produce a report under Section 18 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) about flood and coastal risk management, and part of this is an update on the status of FRMP measures.
- It is important we complete this report because the FRMP measures were consulted on with the public and partners and they improve the resilience of communities to flooding.
- This year the national team has used the statistical figures from 22/23 to go into the Section 18 reporting, with the LLFAs updating measures by early July 2024.

3.0 REPORTING ON FRMPs

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

REPORTING APRIL 2024 – River Basin District Measures



Key – Status of Measures	
Not started - Proposed	On Going - Construction
Not Started - Agreed	Completed
On Going	Cancelled now Superseded

Comments on progress 2023-2024

Each River Basin District have many more measures set as On Going since we reported last year, with a small number in each district now reported as complete. It is worth noting that in total the North West RBD has 192 FRMP measures, whereas the Dee has 48 and Solway Tweed has 47. Therefore, in the Northwest pie chart 3% completed equates to 6 measures but 2% in the others equals 1 measure in each district.

Some FRMP measures are not able to be completed until the end of the FRMPs cycle, but over the next year we expect even more to move from Not Started to On Going.

REPORTING JULY 2024 – LLFAs including Flood Risk Area's (FRA's) measures

- All the LLFAs including the 15 with specific FRA's have a deadline of early July to update the status of any FRMPs relevant to their area, with support from the Environment Agency.
- Initial submissions show they are aware of and working on the FRMP measures.

4.0 RECOMMENDATION: The RFCC are asked to note the content of this report for the Northwest, Solway Tweed and R Dee FRMPs. Members are asked to continue to champion FRMPs implementation in their own organisation.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

For: Regional Flood and Coastal Committees and Local Resilience Forums

Environment Agency proposal for using technology to ensure the resilience and support the delivery of the Flood Warning and Forecasting Service

Environment Agency's Flood Warning Service:

The Environment Agency's Flood Warning Service is designed to send critical information to users and communities in advance of flooding to save lives and livelihoods.

The Flood Warning Service provides three types of messages that help people prepare for flooding and take action:

- Flood Alerts – flooding is possible; be prepared.
- Flood Warnings – flooding is expected; immediate action required.
- Severe Flood Warnings – severe flooding; danger to life

Service and Legislation

Under a Ministerial direction given to us under the Environment Act 1995 we are required to maintain arrangements to warn the public of danger from flooding and to issue warnings in accordance with those arrangements where it is reasonable and practicable to do so. It also supports our duty as Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). It is implemented via our scaled warning service – Flood Alerts, Flood Warnings and Severe Flood Warnings - which has been constructed to convey the risk, impact, and likelihood of flooding in a clear way before flooding occurs, providing information for those at risk to take action to protect their lives and livelihoods.

Context:

We need to safeguard the resilience of the Flood Warning Service and ensure warning information can be provided to communities and partners in periods of high activity, in a timely fashion.

To do this we are exploring and proposing to use technology to be able automate elements of the flood warning service on a risk basis, to ensure continuity of the flood warning service at critical times.

We are seeking comments and opinions of Regional Flood and Coastal Defence Committees (RFCCs) and Local Resilience Forums (LRF's), so we can consider and take into account their views, before we make a decision on the operational use of automation within the Flood Warning Service.

During previous periods of Industrial Action, the Environment Agency safeguarded the flood warning service through the use of temporary automation. We are building

on the learning and are listening to feedback from this period to inform shaping **a more geographical targeted approach** to automation, for future use, where it is required **to ensure the resilience of the Flood Warning Service**.

As a default, in the short term, our intention is to manually issue Flood Warnings. During periods of high demand, we propose to be able to use technology to automate the issuing Flood Warnings in a **more targeted way** to ensure we **safeguard the provision of the Flood Warning Service**.

As an innovative organisation we are always examining the use of emerging technology. We are continuously reviewing feedback and further exploring through research, investigation, and engagement how automation, AI and machine learning could be used in the future to support our staff and benefit our customers. With this in mind, in the medium to long term, we are considering if technology can enable automation to be used more routinely within the Flood Warning Service.

When could automation be used?

We are investigating how we can develop the capability to switch on automation in a **targeted way** when required, **to ensure resilience of the Flood Warning Service**.

An example of when we may use automation could be, an Environment Agency area responding to flood incidents and multiple emergencies. We may turn on automation, in specific Environment Agency areas, to support duty officers and ensure the resilience of the Flood Warning Service. This would enable duty officers, in that area, to deal with issuing a high volume of messages and focus attention on areas of higher risk, such as providing expert advice to communities and partners on Severe Flood Warnings.

Another possible example of automation use in the future could be that Flood Alerts are issued routinely by automation. This would potentially allow staff more time resource to provide appropriate messages and engagement around Flood Warnings and Severe Flood Warnings.

How could automation be used in the Flood Warning Service?

If automation was in use, it would only apply to issuing Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings for rivers and the sea.

It would not apply to the issuing of Severe Flood Warnings, which will always be considered by our duty officers on an individual basis.

Messages would be issued in the usual way via the Environment Agency Flood Warning Service to customers via their selected method (phone/text). 'Check for Flooding' on gov.uk will also be updated displaying the latest messages issued.

When customers receive an automated message, it will advise it is an automated message.

How would this proposal benefit our users?

- It would allow the Environment Agency to safeguard the Flood Warning Service during critical times to save lives and livelihoods.
- It would allow the Environment Agency and its duty officers to be more resilient and efficient. It would allow our staff to focus on adding more value to messages, warning about the highest flood risk. Also, it would allow for more time and capacity for communicating and providing expert advice to our response partners during incidents.
- We would continue to listen to feedback both internally and externally and further develop the technology and processes to meet the user's needs as we go forward.

Consultation

We want to seek and consider the views of Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) and Local Resilience Forums (LRF), regarding the potential use of automation of the flood warning service, as proposed in this paper. If you would wish to comment or make any other representations in respect of the proposals to use technology to ensure the resilience and support the delivery of the flood warning service, please could you respond to us by one of the following options:

Please can you send one consolidated response per Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and/or Local Resilience Forum.

Microsoft form: <https://forms.office.com/e/RBtN23BQ6c>

Email: Louise.hind@environment-agency.gov.uk

Before: 4pm on Friday 09th August 2024.

When will this be happening?

The Environment Agency is exploring using this capability over the next few months, to be in a position to make a decision in time for the winter period this year.