

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY 18 OCTOBER 2024, 10:00AM**

**The Old Stables, The Whitaker Museum, Whitaker Park, Rawtenstall BB4 6RE**

**AGENDA**

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
10:00	1.	<b>Welcome</b> Welcome, Chairman's Introduction, and Apologies for Absence	<b>For information</b>
10:05	2.	<b>Minutes of RFCC meeting 19 July 2024 and matters arising</b> <i>(Paper)</i> To approve the minutes of the last RFCC meeting and to receive an update on any actions and matters arising	<b>For approval</b>
10:10	3.	<b>Recent flooding incidents</b> <i>(Information Item A)</i> To share reports on, and to discuss flood incidents across the North West in the last quarter.	<b>For information</b>
10:20	4.	<b>Report from the RFCC Finance &amp; Business Assurance Sub-group</b> <i>(Paper + Information Items B1, B2 and B3)</i> To receive an update on the delivery of the 2024/25 programme, the Local Levy programme and the RFCC Business Plan, and to discuss and consider the recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group <i>Introduced by Neville Elstone, Chair of the RFCC Finance &amp; Business Assurance Sub-Group, Andy Tester, EA Area FCRM Programming Manager, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) and Sally Whiting, EA FCRM RFCC Senior Advisor, GMMC</i>	<b>For information and discussion and approval</b>
11:00	5.	<b>Local Levy for 2025/26</b> <i>(Paper)</i> To discuss and agree the Local Levy to be raised in 2025/26	<b>For decision</b>
11:15		<b>BREAK</b>	
11:30	6.	<b>Asset and Data Mapping Project</b> To receive an overview of this project. <i>Presented by Jill Holden, GMCA Partnership Co-ordinator; Sarah Wardle, Merseyside SFR Partnership Co-ordinator and Tom Doyle, Senior Engineer, Arup</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
11:50	7.	<b>Highways SuDS Design Guide</b> To receive an overview of the Highways SuDS Design Guide <i>Presented by Jill Holden, GMCA Partnership Co-ordinator</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:05	8.	<b>Unpave the Way Project</b> To receive an overview of the Unpave the Way Project <i>Presented by Crystal Orton, EA FCRM Unpave the Way Project Manager and Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire SFR Partnership Co-ordinator</i>	<b>For information</b>
12:25	9.	<b>RFCC Sharepoint Site</b> To receive an introduction to the new NW RFCC Sharepoint Site <i>Presented by Sally Whiting, EA FCRM RFCC Senior Advisor, GMMC</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:35	10.	<b>Winter Readiness</b> To receive an overview of North West winter readiness work. <i>Presented by Anthony Swarbrick, EA FCRM Operations Manager, C&amp;L; Fiona Stewart, EA FCRM Operations Team Leader, C&amp;L; and John Greenway, EA FCRM Operations Senior Advisor, GMMC</i>	<b>For information and discussion</b>
12:55	11.	<b>Any Other Business</b>	

13:00		CLOSE	
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## 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 – RFCC Business Plan Update Report B3 - RFCC Business Plan Refresh	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	RFCC Meeting Dates for 2025/6	NW RFCC specific
Info item F	NW RFCC Response to the NPPF Consultation	NW RFCC specific
Info item G	National FCRM Update Paper	National EA

### Future RFCC meetings

24 January 2025 (Virtual Meeting) TBC

### Future RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group meetings

10 January 2024 (Virtual Meeting)

### Visit to the 'Unpave the Way' RHS Show Garden

Following lunch there will be a visit to the 'Unpave the Way' garden, newly situated in Whitaker Park, Rawtenstall, following its success at the RHS Tatton Flower Show in July.

We aim to finish lunch at 1:45pm, where we will then walk over to the garden, which is a 5 minute walk from the meeting room. Members will then be given an overview of the garden and at 2:30pm we will depart for our onward journey home.

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

## **NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 2**

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

#### **Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 18 July 2024**

Held at the Office of the Cumbria National Park Authority, Kendal, Cumbria

#### **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 Tony Brennan (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership)  
David Shaw (EA Appointed Member – Planning and Design)  
Carolyn Otle (EA Appointed Member – Communities)  
Susannah Bleakley (EA Appointed Member – Coastal)  
Neville Elstone (EA Appointed Member – General Business and Assurance)  
Paul Barnes (EA Appointed Member – Agriculture)  
Stewart Davies (EA Board Member)  
Carl Green (Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group)

##### **Environment Agency Officers Present**

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)  
Adam Walsh, FCRM Programming Manager (C&L)  
Sally Whiting, Senior FCRM Advisor (GMMC)  
Rachel Harmer, RFCC Secretariat (GMMC)  
Andy Tester, FCRM Programming Manager (GMMC)  
Robert Brooks Taylor – RFCC Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor (C&L)

##### **Local Authority Officers:**

Jason Harte, Westmorland and Furness Council  
Pieter Barnard, Cumberland Council  
Clare Nolan-Barnes, Blackpool Council  
Michael Todhunter, Knowsley Council  
Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership  
David Boyer, Warrington Borough Council  
Francis Comyn, Rochdale Borough Council  
Guy Metcalf, Cheshire East Highways  
Amy Collier, Wyre Borough Council  
Bea Beggs, Our Future Coast Programme Manager, Wyre Borough Council  
Katie Eckford, Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator / Coastal Group Secretariat

**Observers:**

Blessing Akinbola, EA FCRM Intern (GMMC)

John Davies, Lancashire County Council

Brenda Kell and Ian Kell, Benson and Sanders Flood Action Group

Mandy Knott, Natural England

Christina Worsley, Newground

**24 (23) 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); Councillors Daniel Meredith and Laura Boyle (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillors Karen Shore and Nick Mannion (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Jane Hugo (Lancashire Strategic Flood Partnership); Kate Morley (Environment Agency (EA) Appointed Member – Conservation); Chris Findley (EA Appointed Member – Development and Sustainable Investment); Ian Crewe (EA Area Director, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC)); Ollie Hope (EA Area Flood Risk Manager (GMMC)); Alison Harker (Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Rachel Crompton (Lancashire County Council) and Matt Winnard (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership).

Members received and approved two correctly nominated substitutions for Members:

- Michael Todhunter in place of Councillor Daniel Barrington (Merseyside Partnership)
- Dave Boyer in place of Councillor Karen Shore (Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership)

A warm welcome was given to observers Ian Kell and Brenda Kell from the Benson and Sanders Flood Action Group, and Blessing Akinbola.

Adrian welcomed Jonathan Hunter, EA National Surface Water and Water Industry Manager; Ben Lukey, EA NAFRA2 Project Executive; and Emily Athwal, EA Area Flood Risk Manager for London, all joining virtually to present the Addressing Surface Water Flood Risk item.

Adrian referred Members to his quarterly Chair's Update paper, shared on 5 July and highlighted items referenced in the update are also here on today's agenda including items on surface water, a reflection on programme assurance and looking at the final two years of the investment programme.

Adrian highlighted the Quarterly Update from United Utilities (UU) contained in the information papers. Members heard UU have now adopted a county structure, which maps on to the five Strategic Flood Risk Partnerships across the North West and the paper provides information on what's happening across each of the five areas.

No Declarations of Interest have been received.

#### **24 (24) Minutes of the RFCC Meeting held on 26 April and actions and matters arising**

Paul Barnes asked for an amendment to minute 24 (16) of the 26 April minutes. He advised a comment was made by Dave Kennedy regarding Natural England facilitating good conversations with farmers. He wanted this to specifically refer to the Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers whose involvement is critical as a trusted intermediary engaging with farmers.

Taking this amendment Adrian asked if there were any further comments, which there were none.

Councillor Stephen Clarke proposed and David Shaw seconded the minutes, which will be amended to reflect the comment made by Paul Barnes.

The minutes of the 26 April 2024 RFCC meeting were approved by the Committee.

There were no matters arising and no further comments or questions.

#### **24 (25) Recent Flooding Incidents**

Adrian referred Members to the report and reflected there has been a level of flooding across the North West during the last quarter. He advised Cumbria has seen internal flooding to concentrations of small numbers of houses in several locations, notably in Stockdalewath, a community which experiences repeat flooding.

He advised there has been lots of surface water flooding. Environment Agency (EA) Operational Teams and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) have been very busy with lots of activity given the number of named storms through the winter.

Carol Holt advised and asked Members to note the first ever emergency alert for flooding, nationally, was issued during the last quarter in Cumbria. This is a new capability and came from the North West.

Adrian highlighted the consultation on the proposed use of technology to support the flood warning and forecasting service detailed in the information papers (Consultation on the Automation of Flood Warnings) and advised the Committee has a tight turn

around to provide a consultation response and a conversation about how we can construct a response will be worthwhile.

Nick Pearson advised the telemetry currently used by the flood warning and flood forecasting service is operated by Flood Warning Officers, but this new software enables some automation of the service. Members heard the software was tested during the period of industrial action, where lessons have since been learned. He advised this will be the future, in terms of flood warning systems, but it will retain a manual element.

Carolyn Otley advised as someone often involved in incident response, staff have become overwhelmed with the amount of warnings that need to be given out so having this as an option is really worthwhile.

Adrian Lythgo noted Nick's reflection on its use in previous industrial action, and advised it is worth noting there have been some teething problems, which have been learnt from and are the sorts of things the Committee would reflect on.

Members confirmed they were happy for Adrian to respond to the consultation on that basis, that they broadly support the use of a more targeted and automated approach and recognise that this does not just happen in an EA vacuum.

Paul Barnes highlighted the importance of the thresholds that have been set and the need to continually keep these under review. Following further discussion Adrian confirmed the technology will be used to support and take the pressure off staff so they can be doing other things.

Carol Holt highlighted technology is required for the Flood Warning Service now and that we need to drive this forward as it has the scope and possibility to do more.

Carolyn Otley advised that the Committee could recommend some further work is carried out to help people to understand the difference between Flood Alert and Flood Warning. She also advised that for the EA to have the ability and capacity to also contact Flood Action Groups (FLAGs) whilst using the more automated flood warning service is a good compromise.

Councillor Denise Rollo spoke of the recent flooding in Cumbria, where there had been a couple of issues with the timings of warnings.

Adrian advised this has demonstrated the importance of coming together for a discussion and the consultation response will be circulated to the Committee before it is submitted so that Members have the opportunity to comment.

There were no further comments or questions.

## **Addressing Surface Water Flood Risk**

### **24 (26) National Overview – What’s already underway**

Adrian introduced this item which contains a series of contributions around surface water flooding. He advised that colleagues are very aware of the extent of the risks across the North West following consideration of the picture set out in his quarterly update, but that given the scale of risk that closer consideration by the Committee was necessary.

Jonathan Hunter provided Members with an overview of surface water work taking place nationally, recognising it as a growing threat to life, property and infrastructure. He advised there are many challenges and opportunities, requiring a huge partnership approach across a wide range of solutions.

Members were shown the National Strategy and Roadmap, developed by partners nationally and Jonathan shared some of the current commitments in there that address surface water.

Members were reminded of the two 2023 national review reports from the NIC (National Infrastructure Commission) and CIWEM (Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management) and the key messages coming from them:

- The EA should take a strategic leadership position for surface water (David Jenkins, Independent Surface Water Review)
- ‘At a national level, there is a need for the EA to expand its strategic oversight role in relation to surface water flooding (NIC Surface Water Flooding Review, 2022)
- ‘Local Authority capability and capacity is challenged and the EA should more fully embrace the strategic overview role (CIWEM survey 2023)

Members were advised these recommendations coupled with the new EA Chief Executive being appointed last year, who saw the impacts of summer flooding and the tragic deaths in Liverpool, the EA is adapting its position. The national team met with the RFCC Chairs’ in December 2023.

Jonathan advised that national resources are now being reprioritised to see where more work can be done. He showed where EA are contributing across the whole risk management cycle strategically, including: identification of risk; preventing flooding through spatial planning; strategic flood risk planning and strategies; capital programme and scheme delivery; and incident management – forecasting warning and response.

Members noted a Flood Incident Round Table was established to look at incident response and preparedness and there is a plan to maintain the momentum with this group to work with key emergency partners, which will clarify roles and responsibilities as it moves forward. Jonathan also advised his team have been supporting Defra on

their work on Section 19 Flood Investigations, where a consultation is currently taking place on the national guidance, aiming to have a more standardised framework.

An RMA Survey 'Surface Water Deliverability Assessment' was carried out at the end of 2023 and Members noted the top five issues coming from this were: capacity, funding pressures, other duties taking priority, evidencing outcomes, and skills and training. Since then there has been engagement between ADEPT and RMAs and work has been identified under the following four themes:

- Training and sharing of best practice
- Improving SW scheme delivery
- Looking forward to future programmes
- Strategic partnerships and RFCCs

Jonathan closed his presentation asking the RFCC to note the progress made by the EA to increase national focus and leadership on surface water flood risk.

Adrian Lythgo stated that the agenda item was included to promote discussion on some of the complexities in managing surface water and to help identify a way forward. The opening presentation has been on the EA's strategic role in oversight. He noted the primary responsibility for surface water flooding sits with Local Authorities and drainage authorities and recognised this is a time when their capacity is significantly constrained alongside significant financial and resource pressures. In having this discussion, we need to think about how we collectively can work together to add capacity to the system.

Paul Barnes commented that approximately six years ago in Preston he highlighted that Therese Coffey changed the definition of surface water flooding. He advised incidences and sources of surface water flooding are much more complex and there is need to identify flood at source and conversations to mitigate surface water flooding need to take place at a higher level.

Councillor Stephen Clarke raised his concern over the storm overflow tanks, where during large storms the water is mixing with sewage, which is being pumped out into the sea close to an area where the public use the sea for leisure facilities.

It was noted this is a priority for the Government and the water companies, who are earmarking significant investment for this within their business plans to address the issue. Members noted the EA has stepped up its Water Transformation Programme and is currently recruiting 200 new staff to be able to carry out more compliance checks and regulation of the water industry. The EA will shortly be publishing its annual Environmental Performance Assessment of Water Companies, which will highlight how the performance of water companies is going in that regard.

Adrian Lythgo mentioned the current consultation on Section 19 reporting in the context of needing to be clear on the source or combinations of sources of flooding in each event as basis for planning interventions.



Carol Holt advised that OfWAT published their Draft Determination this week and she encouraged Members to look closely at what this means for the North West and for LLFA areas in particular. She encouraged Members to respond to the consultation, which closes at 12 noon on 28 August 2024.

Neville Elstone stated he is not seeing the level of connection that he would like to between the 'flood' and 'land' worlds in terms of both designing the interventions, debating those, looking at the detail and then reporting back to RFCCs and other RMAs by the Rural Payments Agency and how that will impact on flooding. He advised the measures announced in January 2023 on land payments were really welcome, but there is a need for more debate and dialogue.

Carl Green advised he welcomes the EA overview and we should be looking at the source-to-sea approach. Surface water is all interlinked to the rivers and the sea and hopefully the overview will allow this work to take place.

Adrian thanked Jonathan for his presentation and asked Carl Green to consider the work we might be seeking to collaborate on.

There were no further questions or comments.

## **24 (27) NaFRA2 Update**

Ben Lukey provided this presentation covering two major projects coming to fruition in 2024 as part of the National FCRM Strategy:

- New National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA2)
- Updated National Coastal Erosion Flood Risk Map (NFCERM)

Updating the current and future understanding of flood and erosion risk are requirements of the EA's 'Strategic Overview' duties and key commitments in the FCRM Strategy. The EA are moving towards publishing two significant improvements in mapping and communicating flood and coastal erosion risk information.

Members noted the differences between the current NaFRA and the new NaFRA2, noting the limitations of the data:

For the current NaFRA:

- No future flood risk
- Limited local modelling
- Separate maps for surface water flood risk
- Limited precision and detail
- Difficult to update – backlog of local updates

For the new NaFRA2:

- Better and clearer information to help people understand flood risk and take action to build resilience

- Greater consistency - Combines a national model with local models to provide the best available information everywhere
- Greater accuracy and precision – Provides more accurate flood risk information using the best national model (“NNM”) we’ve ever built, with integrated local models, on a smaller grid scale.
- Greater range of information – depths and velocities, impacts, and makes available climate change scenario information to show future flood risk for the first time.
- Greater flexibility and efficiency enabling regular updates - makes it easier to update our flood risk information regularly, using ever-improving local models.
- An indication of current and future flood risk to guide investment and development planning

With regard to the updated National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Map 2024 (NFCERM), Members noted this will be hosted on the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) Explorer and presented in a more visual way to make the data more accessible.

The current NFCERM was published in 2012 and only updated by exception in 2015 and 2017 using LA data. A broad-brush technique was used for the assessment of property types.

The new NFCERM will:

- Provide the most up-to-date national picture of coastal erosion risk for England.
- Include climate change impacts for coastal erosion.
- Provide a new visual data set to be used by coastal practitioners, planners and decision shapers and makers.
- Be open to the public to help them understand coastal erosion risk.
- Be hosted on SMP Explorer for everyone to view.

Towards the end of 2024 a national report will be produced, which is an opportunity to tell the story of how flood risk in England is changing. This will be an opportunity to talk about the condition of flood risk assets alongside the interconnections with surface water drainage and the sewerage system. It will also be an opportunity to talk about the impacts of the changing climate on the changing patterns of flood risk, which will be supported with the improved data and evidence that is now able to be provided.

The following timeline summary was shared with Members:

- December 2024 - Publish the ‘National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England 2024’ report.
- Early 2025 - Publish new NaFRA ‘Risk of Flooding from Rivers, Sea and Surface Water’ data on ‘Check your long-term flood risk’ and available through gov.uk.
- Spring 2025 - Publish NAFRA2 ‘Flood Zone’ data on ‘Flood Map for Planning’ and available on gov.uk.
- From Spring 2025 - NaFRA2 system supports quarterly updates to published products and allows user to interact with data and a wider range of bespoke outputs.

Members heard this will be a step change in our flood risk and coastal erosion information and an opportunity to establish more routine regular updates, making use of the ever-improving stock of local flood models and also reflecting the changes in asset condition.

Ben made two final observations for Members to consider:

- Data sharing - Where your authorities think there may be opportunities to share surface water modelling information that's been developed locally, this can be built into our shared national picture of surface water flood risk.
- Access our digital services - making use of that improved and visible risk mapping information for investment cases in work that can reduce flood risk.

Adrian Lythgo highlighted the second point raised by Ben Lukey, where better modelling information, including modelling on surface water, once it exists, can be used to target investment, which has big implications for RFCCs in terms of their role in improving the national investment programme.

Members then reflected on the local modelling, including around surface water, and noted the absence of local models in some places where there may still be a flood risk. Adrian advised this Committee needs to take this into account when discharging its statutory functions and having clarity around where flood risk is.

Fiona Duke advised NaFRA2 is a big change and a big opportunity for us to build on the surface water programme that we've already got across the North West. She advised when it is launched she expects the EA will be coming out to LLFAs to see what this means collectively and to see what new elements of work we can build on to our programmes going forward.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Ben for his presentation and there were no further comments or questions.

## **24 (28) What's happening in other parts of the country?**

Emily Athwal provided the Committee with an overview of a strategic approach currently being taken to address surface water flooding in London. She remarked that she has been having some interesting conversations with Manchester in particular and is grateful for the shared learning.

Members heard the London Surface Water Strategy was brought about by a significant surface water event in July 2021, where on 12<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> there was over 100mm of rainfall in 2 hours, more than twice the monthly average. 2000 properties flooded with sewage and surface water and some of the internal flood depths were 3 metres. Infrastructure was affected including transport and roads and over 30 tube stations flooded and were closed or partially closed. Schools and some hospitals were evacuated and some people were not back in their properties 18 months after the flood event. London Resilience Forum has classified flooding as high risk.

London has around 15,000 basement properties with circa 6,000 of them at flood risk. To start to look to improve the situation LAs came together to review what happened, learn lessons and consider what long term actions should be taken. Members heard the Mayor of London was quite pivotal in this work where a number of Roundtables took place. Studies were done particularly by the Greater London Authority and Thames Water and, in 2022, the London Surface Water Group met for the first time, made up of key stakeholders including Transport for London, London Councils representing the 33 boroughs, the Fire Brigade, Thames Water, EA, Greater London Authority, and the Thames RFCC. Elizabeth Rapoport was appointed as the independent Chair.

Emily provided an overview of the aims of their strategy, complex in terms of 33 London boroughs all having a different approach. Both politically minded and technically minded partners were involved all requiring different needs to be addressed under the Surface Water Strategy. Key messages:

- The strategy is the first of its kind in London and is unique in its cross-organisational approach. This collaborative approach is crucial as different organisations have responsibilities for different aspects of flooding
- The strategy aims to unlock regional and catchment-based flood management, whilst resolving longstanding barriers to action in the sector.
- It will produce new mapping showing how water flows across borough boundaries, identify priority wet spots across London, and produce recommendations at a London level.
- This is intended to support rather than replace local strategies, enabling boroughs to consider cross-boundary implications and alleviate structural issues that hamper planning.

Members were advised of two key areas of required improvement:

- Collaboration between the emergency services
- Long-term planning for flood alleviation from rainfall events in London

Members heard the strategy is due to be launched in late 2024.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Emily for her presentation. He said in his opinion it would be inappropriate to take a single approach across the North West because the extent and nature of surface water risk in each of the 5 sub regions is different, but there is an opportunity to adapt existing collaborations that make sense in each of the five areas.

Stewart Davies advised he was interested to find out whether there was a background of insurance or financial claims against the Councils going back to those July events, and he enquired as the Strategy is due to be published in December and then three months later there will be the national modelling update, to what extent there is any risk in being wrong footed by any new scenarios out of the modelling.

Emily advised she was not aware of any claims made against the London boroughs. At the Thames RFCC there was a lot of discussion with Thames Water about them taking more action around some of the issues.

Members heard with regard to modelling and evidence it would have been helpful to have the broad scale National Surface Water element earlier for the development of the strategy, but all models are appropriate for different things and are only part of the answer, with more local specific models being required for individual business cases as work moves forwards.

Paul Barnes advised during floods in Germany half of the people who lost their lives were in basement properties and he noted the 15,000 basement properties in and around Kensington and Chelsea. He asked if there is a case in the draft vision under development for ignoring the people who had a basement development. Emily noted the challenges and that land in London is at a premium and there is a lot of commercial interest. She advised that people in residential basements are not necessarily aware of the risks of flooding to their homes and at the end of the Summer annually there is a comms and engagement project to push the messages about the risks of flooding, particularly to those living in residential basements.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Jonathan, Ben and Emily for their presentations.

There were no further comments or questions.

#### **24 (29) What's happening already in addressing surface water flood risk in the North West and next steps**

Adrian Lythgo provided Members with an overview of the work this Committee has been progressing on surface water across the north west.

Adrian presented some data on properties at flood risk from different sources and Members noted the number at risk from surface water compared to fluvial and tidal flooding. Adrian highlighted the difference in figures across each of the five sub-regional partnerships which reinforces the need for sub-regional approaches.

Carol Holt commented that flood depth data is also important and that there is a requirement to also overlay population vulnerability to this information, and care needs to be taken on how we use this information to target flood risk schemes.

Adrian highlighted that the information is to provide a picture of surface water flood risk across the north west and to provide a basis for a longer conversation across each of the Strategic Partnerships. He referred to the 18 July Flood Poverty Workshop in Rochdale which included discussion on surface water, and the vulnerabilities of communities was very much the focus for the workshop.

Members reflected where the current investment is, noting there are things going on to address surface water and water generally in each of the sub regions, including the Integrated Water Management Plan in Manchester, Liverpool City Region is looking at a tripartite arrangement between Mersey Rivers Trust, United Utilities and the City Region and there is other work across catchments involving nature based solutions.

Adrian highlighted a number of projects across the RFCC Business Plan which address surface water flooding including: the Unpave the Way Project, currently exhibiting at the RHS Tatton Show; the Highways SuDS Design Guide; content on the Flood Hub; and the SuDS Pro-forma. Adrian also highlighted there were a number of Local Authority led SuDS schemes and other interventions that address surface water risk, but posed the question about whether there should be an intermediate level between a whole north west approach and the very local solutions that individual RMAs are working on in discharging their responsibilities. He advised this is worth exploring, not for answering at the Committee meeting today, but the Chairs of the Sub Regional Partnerships will be giving some further thought to this in due course.

Councillor Tony Brennan advised from a Merseyside perspective everyone is keen to address this issue, but there are challenges with resource and capacity which still need to be looked at. He advised Sefton has the highest number of properties at risk of surface water flooding in Merseyside and in the north west and there is a need to drill down to see what is happening locally and enquired if there is any collaboration, funding or grant available for them to be able to do this. He highlighted this is a good conversation and there is a need to get the message out.

Dave Boyer commented for the Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership that resource is a key issue and advised that they have been successful in securing some drainage resource recently. He highlighted the investment that UU has in the area to address some of the combined surface water overflows, which is good news, but he highlighted the pressures which will be encountered by LAs as some of the water drainage assets ownerships are transferred and historically may not have been maintained to a level that the LAs would have worked to maintain. He highlighted the importance of working in partnership with UU and the EA and is interested to see what will be coming out of the new Government.

Paul Barnes commented on the recent OfWAT announcement of £88 Billion spend coming from the water companies and that we need to understand the pressure on the water companies and to have greater partnership working with them.

David Shaw asked with regard to resources and capacity, how much funding is going into revenue resources rather than capital, as this will still leave the human resource problem with LAs and there is a need to know where the major resource gap is.

For Cumbria, Councillor Denise Rollo agreed with the comments being made and that there is a resource revenue issue. Members heard there were 44 surface water flood incidents in Cumbria in the last quarter, which will be a challenge to manage and there is a need to come together to lobby and make the case.

For Lancashire, Councillor James Shorrock advised that up until the recent General Election Lancashire County Council, Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen were working closely together on devolution, which had been put on hold until the General Election was concluded. He advised in recent years the struggle for resources in Lancashire has been affected to some extent by the powers given to Merseyside and to

Manchester Authorities. He also commented there is a public perception that there is a far too close relationship between OfWAT and the Water Companies and between the EA and UU.

He advised that with the new Government he hoped for changes in long term investment and results, noting that resources will always be an issue certainly in the short term due to what the prior Government has already committed to and noted that devolution will give regions extra powers, which is only effective when there is funding behind it.

Adrian thanked Members for their contributions and advised the Committee are at the point that he wanted to reach today.

There were no further comments or questions.

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

Due to the limited time available Adrian asked Members to come back to the Programming Team following the meeting or offline should there be anything that needs to be clarified.

### Capital Programme 2023/24 Out-turn

Adam Walsh reported the number of properties better protected in 2023/24 was 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 on 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 highlighted the top three schemes reducing the risk to the most properties.

In terms of spend, collectively we 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.

Members received further 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.

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

Adam provided an overview of the first three years of the current six-year programme, which commenced in April 2021 referring back to the forecast estimates for properties to be better protected at the start of the programme. At that point the North West 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. Members 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.

As the Committee meeting was in Kendal, Adam cited the example of the Kendal FRM Scheme which was initially programmed to better protect circa 1,000 properties last year, but this has now changed and the forecast is to better protect circa 3,000 properties in the next six year programme.

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 the North West have achieved £11.5 Million against a target of £28.2 Million. Members noted the challenges arising from COVID and a change to the reporting process and Adam advised that by the end of the six-year programme the North West should have claimed around £61 Million in efficiencies.

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

### 2024/25 Programme Overview

For the current year, Adam reported a reduced target for properties to be better protected of 2,929, an update from the 3,516 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 the North West are expecting to draw down £113.09 Million, which is £4.3 Million more than allocated and noted 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.

Members were provided with an overview of the top 13 schemes for 2024/25 in terms of spend, which represents around 70% of the programme and also noted a number of other risks to the delivery of the programme including:



- Potential increase in costs of materials (inflation) impacting scheme costs and therefore viability
- Material purchase and lead times could delay delivery
- Ongoing resource challenges (all RMAs)
- 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
- Two projects delivering 56% of the proposed properties target this year – Preston South Ribble (500) and Radcliffe and Redvales (1,460), which if not delivered will significantly impact achievement of our properties target this year.

### Capital Programme for 2025/26 and 2026/27

The refresh draft bid information which will inform the allocation of national funding for the next two years was shared with Members. Adam advised this two-year planning approach is slightly different to previous years as there is now a need to create some stability to the back end of the programme. Members noted the current spend forecast is showing £150 Million/ £160 Million, but teams are still in the process of having the final conversations about what the final bid will look like, which will be advised on 2<sup>nd</sup> August and brought to the October RFCC meeting.

Members were shown the top ten projects in bid value for the GMMC and C&L Areas. For GMMC it was noted:

- The top 10 projects form 79% of the bid value
- The remaining 21% is split across 52 projects (EA 21 and LA 31), all under £1 Million.

For C&L it was noted:

- The top 10 projects form 75.5% of the bid value
- The remaining 24.5% are being delivered by a further 101 projects, of which another 11 projects are spending over £1 Million.

The Committee received an overview of the top four schemes for the North West, which collectively are delivering 90% of the properties better protected target from now until the end of March 2027. They are: the Wyre Dune and Beach Management Scheme; Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection; Seabees Reprofiling; and the Liverpool Culvert Review and Refurbishment Package.

The final allocation for the Resource Maintenance Programme for 2024/25 has not yet been confirmed. Members received the detail of 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 reported at the October RFCC meeting.

Neville Elstone spoke about the challenges and resources to deliver the work and asked Members how we can work together to deliver and what could make a difference.

On behalf of Blackpool Borough Council Clare Nolan-Barnes provided Members with an

overview of the Little Bispham and Bispham Coastal Projection Scheme and the Seabees Re-profiling Scheme, better protecting 3,631 and 3,000 properties from flooding respectively, by March 2027.

For each scheme Clare provided Members with an overview of:

- Risk and sufficiency of resources
- Risk mitigation
- Programme delivery
- Properties protected
- Confidence in delivery
- Good practice being used

Members noted the challenges with stakeholder engagement and a decision to co-locate staff working on the projects into one central Blackpool office to help with communication and governance. Council staff and contractors such as Jacobs and Balfour Beatty are located here, along with Atkins who are carrying out the design works.

Clare also raised some of the challenges being encountered with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and their 13-week consenting period and asked the Committee to:

- Support with MMO consenting as and when required
- Support with any changes in budget if required
- Support with stakeholder challenges

Adrian thanked Clare for her report and there were no further comments or questions.

#### Update on the Liverpool Culvert Refurbishment work

Andrew Bithell from Liverpool City Council provided Members with an overview of the progress of the Liverpool Culvert Refurbishment work.

From 2009 to 2012 Liverpool City Council (CC) carried out investigation works on their culverted watercourse asset network to gather detailed information regarding their condition. This work included manhole and CCTV surveys which have informed a hydraulic model, carried out in 2013, which integrated Liverpool's ordinary watercourse network with UU's sewer network.

The current project has made use of this information to enable a study of the hydraulic infrastructure model for Liverpool, which was used to identify some additional work to this network and in 2018 the project was successful in receiving EA funding to treat two of the culverted watercourses.

Liverpool CC are currently working with EA colleagues to repeat this exercise in relation to the condition surveys of the culverted watercourses, 30% of which have previously been indicated to be in very poor condition due to reasons including access, land ownership and funding. To date no further work has been carried out on the 19 culverts

that form part of this project.

Andrew advised Liverpool CC are working closely with the EA to look to develop a programme of works using the EA's framework to employ Volker Stevin as the main contractor and WSP as the consultant to undertake a review of these 19 watercourses based on a risk-based approach. Members noted at least six of the watercourses are at a higher risk, seven are medium and overall should reduce flood risk to approximately 1,762 properties. The Committee heard confirmation of funding was received this week and talks and progress with regard to the contract itself are well advanced with both Volker Stevin and WSP. The scope is being finalised and the programme of works will commence in the near future.

Adrian thanked Andrew for his report and advised the crucial thing is the project's ability to do work as it goes, just because of the approach being taken. Andrew advised they are approaching this work by firstly identifying some of the quick wins and for these to be submitted for any additional funding for further design work that may be required at the latter stages of the project.

There were no further comments or questions.

### **Local Levy Programme Update**

Adam Walsh provided Members with an overview of the Local Levy programme balances, income, 2023/24 actual spend and 2024/25 forecast spend, 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 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 the balance is not now forecast to drop below zero in the upcoming years as it was previously. Adam confirmed that this scenario 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 Request for Funding: Preston and South Ribble Flood Risk Management Scheme**

Neville Elstone briefly introduced this project and its £2 Million additional Local Levy request, reminding Members that this was discussed in April, but the Lancashire Partnership had requested a deferral of the decision to allow additional time for them to visit the scheme and better understand it.

Councillor James Shorrocks advised that they had visited the site with the project team and was very impressed with the work, which is progressing well and advised that the Lancashire Partnership are now happy to support this Local Levy request to allow completion of the project, which will benefit over 3,000 local residents.

Adrian Lythgo advised the recommendation from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is that this request should be approved.

Paul Barnes asked for clarification on the reasons for the additional £2 million being required. Fiona Duke advised the funding is for some additional complexities that have been encountered in terms of services and ground conditions since the works have commenced. There have been a number of instances where ground conditions have not matched up with what has been designed, so work has had to be paused slightly so a redesign can be done, which adds to the programme. The Committee noted the additional funding is not to do with inflation and that some time ago circa £10 Million was given to the project to directly deal with the inflationary issues.

Richard Knight advised that the additional funding also allows for some additional risk to materialise which if not required any unused Local Levy funding will be returned.

The Committee unanimously supported the additional £2 Million of Local Levy funding for the Preston and South Ribble FRM Scheme.

### **RFCC Business Plan Update**

Sally Whiting provided Members with a brief overview of progress on the programme of 21 projects which are either live or complete and a brief explanation of the reasons behind the four projects rated Amber, and the one rated Red.

Members noted the final spend for 2023/24 of £908K against an allocation of £1.4 Million, which was slightly lower than the forecast reported in April, mainly due to some internal account miscoding which meant the funding was taken from GiA rather than Local Levy. They noted the updated allocation for 2024/25 of £1,337K which now includes the proposals approved by the RFCC in April - 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). They noted the current forecast is for £1,441k to be claimed, accounting for unclaimed allocations that will carry over from 2023/24. Sally advised the indicative investment need for 2025/26 is just over £1 Million.

Sally provided 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. Members noted the project is currently exhibiting a SuDS garden at the RFH Tatton Flower Show and will be featured on BBC Gardener's World this evening. In October the garden will 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 took place on 18 July, which attracted a wider group of stakeholders representing other sectors who have important roles to play e.g. housing, insurance.

Neville Elstone highlighted the Wyre Catchment NFM Project presentation given at the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting, which shared details on innovative financing and he encouraged Members to learn more about this.

**Resolved:**

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

- Noted the outturn of the 2023/24 capital programme
- Noted the summary of delivery for the first three years of the capital programme
- Noted the progress on delivering the 2024/25 capital and resource maintenance programmes
- Noted the latest draft bid of the capital programme refresh for 2025/26 and 2026/27
- Noted the out-turn details for 2023/24, current position and latest spend forecast for the Local Levy Programme
- Approved 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.
- Noted the 2023/24 outturn for the RFCC Business Plan projects
- Noted the updated 2024/25 funding allocation which includes the RFCC approvals given at the April meeting.

There were no further comments or questions.

**24 (31) Coastal Update**

Susannah Bleakley provided an overview of current and planned future coastal work and asked Members to recognise the significance and importance of the Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) as a policy framework for sustainable coastal management.

The Coastal Update contained within the information papers was highlighted to Members and Susannah discussed the last major coastal flood, which took place in January 1953 and killed over 2,000 people in England, Holland and Belgium and

damaged over 50,000 properties. She highlighted the acceleration in sea level rise year on year and provided a map to show what a coastal surge across England could look like with both one and four metre sea level rises.

Carl Green highlighted completed coastal schemes such as Rossall, Wyre; Morecambe Wave Reflection Wall; Anchorsholme, Blackpool; Fairhaven to Church Scar, Fylde; and West Kirby, Wirral. 26,620 properties have been better protected at a cost of £143.2 Million. Schemes currently underway include Wyre Beach Management Scheme; South Shore SeaBees; St Annes Seawall Scheme; Starr Hills Sand Dunes; Bispham Scheme and Blackpool Beach Nourishment Scheme, at a current cost of £231.1 Million to better protect 21,970 properties. Challenges and possible solutions to for effectively sustaining the future pipeline of works from 2025 and beyond were also discussed.

Katie Eckford provided an overview of the SMP work and the SMP Explorer summary statistics, following its launch in January 2024 and advised the North West have had good engagement with the website with greatest interest in Merseyside and Wirral.

The Committee were reminded of the SMP policy units in Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside and Cheshire and received details on areas where policies were transitioning from one to another and noted that the measures of success in each of these areas will evolve.

Key messages:

- The coast is dynamic, but the climate emergency demands more resources to manage it.
- The SMP Explorer is a great start for the understanding of coastal policy.
- To manage adaptation we need to start work now and that an emergency situation is bad for everyone.
- Working with nature and long-term engagement is part of the solution.
- We need to raise understanding and awareness and work in partnership with RMAs and strategic partners.

Susannah highlighted the need to be alert to coastal change and to plan for it. She noted more resources are needed to do this and that funding structures are not always helpful to us. The Committee noted that in order to manage adaptation this could mean the need to move communities and infrastructure away from the coast, which would involve vast planning, funding and long-term engagement and Susannah suggested that we need to raise awareness, work in partnership and scope some proposals for improving the pipeline and mechanisms for works around the coast.

An informative video outlining coastal challenges was played in the meeting, available via this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoMQqUKHOsg>

Carol Holt advised on watching the recent Covid19 Enquiry outcomes and recommendations, you could easily substitute catastrophic flooding into the recommendations and collectively we need to take heed of what this says. She also

highlighted on 5 December 2013 there was a significant coastal surge, but the Thames Barrier and the Hull Barrier were operated and were effective.

Susannah Bleakley highlighted that nationally the second greatest risk to the public is coastal flooding after a pandemic.

Adrian Lythgo advised as a long-term programme to manage the coast we want to develop a pipeline of schemes for the RFCC to actively consider, which will be brought back to the Committee for a future discussion.

Richard Knight enquired about the level of engagement with the North West SMP and Carl Green advised engagement is being driven by the 'Our Future Coast' work and there is lots of on-going communication with coastal communities.

There were no further comments or questions.

## **24 (32) Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme Presentation**

Members received a video presentation of the Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme, introduced by Richard Knight, which is delivering a diverse range of flood risk and environmental benefits.

Key messages:

- Whilst the scheme is reducing flooding to homes and businesses most at risk, a commitment has also been made to enhance the river corridor to both people and wildlife, which will improve both amenity and habitat value.
- When completed in 2026 the scheme will better protect people from flooding in Kendal, Burneside, Staveley and Ings and in total will better protect over 1,900 homes and 2,200 businesses from flooding, directly and indirectly.
- Work is taking place in many different reaches, in collaboration with utility companies and asset owners, with challenges and constraints continuing to be addressed and feedback from local communities being incorporated.
- Local artists have been working alongside the EA to engage with the local community and schools to commission pieces of public art to install within the scheme made from local repurposed materials by local artisans.
- Measures being taken to create new habitat, slow the flow of water in the river and remove a culvert, and avoiding disruption to habitats and species.
- On completion, future flood damages avoided will total £1.2 Billion, reducing flood risk to 2,257 businesses in around Kendal, which employ over 6,000 people.

Richard Knight advised Phase 2 of the scheme is the upstream storage phase, where ground investigations are currently taking place alongside works with environmental legal experts, as some of the sites that have been identified for possible flood storage

are within national parks or heavily protected areas. There is currently a shortlist of five sites being considered and assessed and it may be that more than one site is required.

There were no further comments or questions.

Adrian thanked Richard for his presentation and confirmed that he and Members look forward to the site visit following the meeting.

## **24 (33) Any Other Business**

Adrian Lythgo advised of Perry Hobb's resignation from the Committee, where a recruitment campaign to fill this vacancy will start in August.

Adrian advised this is the last meeting for David Shaw, who is leaving the RFCC to take up an appointment at the University of Nanjing in Japan. David advised he will retire from Liverpool University at the end of August after 30 years' service and will take up his new role in September. He thanked Adrian and Members for his time on Committee and for support along the way, advising he has learnt a lot during his time and noted the strong sense of working together to try to do what we can with the resources that we have. On behalf of the Committee, Adrian wished David all the very best for the future and thanked him for his contributions to the work of the Committee from David, and from his students, who have carried out project work at no cost to the public purse.

Adrian advised he will write to Perry and David formally.

**ACTION: Adrian Lythgo/ Rachel Harmer**

Adrian thanked Members for their attendance to the meeting.

The next RFCC meeting will be held in Rawtenstall, Lancashire on 18 October 2024.



# NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

## NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

### Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2024

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

#### Attendees:

Neville Elstone	RFCC Member – General Business and Assurance and Chair of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group
Adrian Lythgo	RFCC Chair
Cllr Denise Rollo	RFCC Member – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Stephen Clarke	RFCC Member – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr James Shorrocks	RFCC Member - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Gerald Cooney	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Alan Quinn	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Philip Cusack	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Tony Brennan	RFCC Member - Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities
Chris Findley	RFCC Member – Development and Sustainable Investment
Susannah Bleakley	RFCC Member – Coastal Issues
Amy Cooper	RFCC Member – Water and Sewerage Industry
Fiona Duke	Officer – EA Area FR Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)
Nick Pearson	Officer - EA Area FR Manager, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire Area (GMMC)
Ollie Hope	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, 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
Rachael Broadhurst	Officer, EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Pieter Barnard	Officer – Cumberland Council
Andrew Harrison	Officer - Cumberland Council
Alison Harker	Officer - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Jane Hugo	Observer from the Lancashire SFRP
John Davies	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Tricia Ayrton	Observer from Greater Manchester Strategic Partnership
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer – Blackpool Council
Fran Comyn	Officer- Rochdale Council
Jill Holden	Officer - Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Matthew Winnard	Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Guy Metcalf	Officer – Cheshire East Council
Louise Fortune	Officer – Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Katie Eckford	Officer – North West SMP Co-ordinator

#### Additional Presenters:

Nikki Beale,	EA Senior FCRM Advisor
Jason Harte	Officer – Westmorland and Furness Council

## **NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4**

Hugh Ward  
Crystal Orton  
Rachel Crompton

Lynster Farmers Group  
Officer, EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC  
Officer – Lancashire County Council

### **1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence**

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

Rachel Harmer reported that apologies had been received from Ian Crewe (EA Area Director, GMMC); Kate Morley (RFCC Member – Conservation); Carl Green (Chair of the North Wales and North West Coastal Group); Councillor Laura Crane (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Lorah Cheyne (observer from the Lancashire SFRP); Dave Boyer (observer from the Cheshire Mid Mersey SFRP), and Sarah Wardle (observer from the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership). Additional apologies were provided for Richard Knight (EA Area Flood Risk Manager for Cumbria).

It was clarified for Councillor Tricia Ayrton and Councillor Jane Hugo that their names were not on the formal roll call as they are both attending the meeting as observers rather than RFCC Members.

A warm welcome was given to Councillor Alan Quinn, Nikki Beale (to provide an overview EA asset maintenance programme); and Hugh Ward and Jason Harte (here to provide information on the River Winster Rehabilitation Project).

We were also introduced to Amy Cooper, the North West RFCC newly appointed Member representing the Water and Sewerage Industry. Amy introduced herself to Members, advising she is currently a Wastewater Quantity Strategy and Planning Manager at United Utilities (UU), and provided a short background of her career within UU.

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

Adrian Lythgo reminded Members of the July RFCC meeting discussion where we focussed on the delivery confidence of the largest schemes in the final two years of the current six-year investment programme, with a view to identifying the risks and whether there was any support that could be provided by the RFCC, to increase the confidence of delivery by March 2027. He reminded us that although there is a six-year programme, we annually refresh that programme and there is a reallocation of funding which takes place, a process which is currently underway for this year. We heard the programme for the next 12 to 24 months is being looked at, and that there are lots of moving parts to it. The Autumn Budget announcement will take place on 30 October, until which we will not know for certain what the duration of the next spending review period will be. The Environment Agency (EA) nationally have also been looking at changing some of the metrics for the final two years of this programme and further details will be provided to us.

We noted we may not be in a position to conclude the Local Choices exercise by the 18<sup>th</sup> October North West RFCC meeting and there may be a need to put in place an extraordinary meeting of this sub-group to look at the final allocation position.

There were no further comments or questions.

## NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

### 3. Investment Programme Update 2024/25

Andy Tester provided a provided an update on the current year's (2024/25) programme so far.

#### Capital programme 2024/25

Andy Tester first provided an overview of the national programme. Nationally we are on track to deliver the houses better protected from flooding target. For the North West we are forecasting to better protect 3,234 properties against a target of 2,840. This is made up of 1,892 in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire and 948 in Cumbria and Lancashire. To date, we have better protected 366 properties (221 from the Penketh and Whittle Flood Risk Management Scheme completed in August) and expect to better protect a further 576 properties in the next quarter.

In terms of funding for this year the North West total is £109.991 Million, which includes £99.579 Million GiA, £7.66 Million Local Levy and £2.67 Million of Partnership Funding contributions.

The mid-August forecast indicates we are expecting to draw down £121.743 Million, which is circa £12 Million more than allocated providing a level of over-programming.

The North West actual spend to end of August 2024 was £15.4 Million (up from £8.477 Million at the end of May 2023). This means there is a remaining £94.5 Million forecast remaining to spend/claim.

We noted the total value of accepted efficiency claims in Quarter 1 was £1.3 Million, which is a relatively low number compared to the number of live projects, however several claims have already been submitted for Quarter 2. We noted the details of schemes that have claimed efficiencies to date and the annual target of £9.862 Million.

Andy highlighted some new pressures on the 2024/25 programme with a recent directive from the National Programme Management Office to actively manage the Area capital programmes down to 5% over-programme or below by the end of Quarter 2. This comes on the back of the national programme seeing high levels of over-programming during quarters 1 and 2. Area Programme teams have been considering options to get down to the 5% over-programme over the next couple of months.

For the benefit of new Members, Adrian Lythgo explained over-programming and the reasons for it. The nature of capital investment on flood schemes, which are dependent on good ground conditions and weather and other such factors, means that there is quite often slippage to scheme delivery. To ensure we spend our capital allocation, we over-programme to allow for some slippage in spend.

He also remarked that nationally the EA are quite rightly concerned about the level of over-programming coming to the end of this multi-year programme when we don't yet have certainty on what comes beyond this programme. They are having to balance funding schemes on the ground without overspending the national allocation.

Andy highlighted the 10 named storms between September 2023 and January 2024, which caused slippages to the programme, and advised we have again seen the same sort of weather disruption during the last couple of weeks. He shared a visual on the recent heavy rainfall event impacting

## **NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4**

Merseyside, Greater Manchester and Lancashire. This highlights the challenges we are facing and could affect our delivery over the coming winter months.

Neville Elstone highlighted it is worth noting that we share incident response resources with other parts of the country, so even if the North West are not directly impacted if other parts of the country are then these resources may be required elsewhere.

### **Resource Asset Maintenance Programme 2024/25**

Andy provided an overview of the Resource Programme for 2024/25 which includes EA asset maintenance, staff costs and resource projects. This has a total budget of £21 Million, against which the two Areas are forecasting an overspend of £7 Million.

Nikki Beale (EA FCRM Operations, Cumbria & Lancashire) then provided an overview of the growing challenges and pressures around resource maintenance due to resource budget and headcount reductions. She presented figures of how the asset maintenance allocation had reduced over the last three years from £6.81 Million in 2022/23 to £6.2 Million in 2024/25. She highlighted specific pressures in Cumbria and Lancashire area (C&L) with regard to electricity costs and flood basin compensation payments to landowners, associated with the operation of EA pumping stations and flood storage areas. She reported that we have been given approval to overspend against the budget this year and that the shortfall will be met but this is for this financial year only. If the budget doesn't increase and the shortfall is not covered, budget from the maintenance pot will have to be diverted to cover the costs of electricity and compensation payments. She reported that asset maintenance is continuing to increase in costs and the same scale of maintenance will not be sustainable going forwards.

She explained how the EA is having to refocus maintenance priorities which will prioritise:

- Those assets that are covered by legal compliance measures, so ensuring that flood storage basins and reservoir sites comply with the Reservoirs Act and that we comply with Eel passage and environmental legislation.
- Maintenance obligations, where the EA may be riparian landowners or have legal agreements in place.
- High Risk Assets, which are EA owned, maintained and operated (i.e. flood basins, debris screens, pumping stations, tidal outfalls, embankments and flood walls).
- Watercourse Maintenance in high flood risk areas
- Assets under notice in land drainage areas

Nikki highlighted the risk that the programme must spend to budget with forecasts landing the programme in-line with budget.

She also reported that due to resource maintenance budget pressures, inspections of low-risk watercourse and third party owned culverts have been stopped. Local Authorities and private landowners need to consider options to fund these activities within their own budget.

Councillor Alan Quinn raised his concern that we are maintaining assets for current rainfall measures and there is a need to future proof them for increased future rainfall predictions. He also raised his concern about invasive species within riverbank vegetation in particular the presence of Giant Hogweed which if removed can destabilise the riverbank.

## NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

Nikki advised where the EA has existing assets that don't meet the standard of protection they were originally designed for Capital GiA funding is accessible for repairs and for increasing the standard of protection. She also reported that the EA has an Invasive Species Programme involving EA Field Teams spraying riverbank vegetation where required and noted the challenges in encouraging riparian owners to manage their land.

With regard to climate proofing, Carolyn Otley highlighted the Stockdalewath flooding in May where the water had risen above the top of the gauging station and asked if we know how many gauging stations are close to their limits and might not gather the full data of a flood incident. It will make it harder to plan for future climate change if we don't actually know the full picture of what's happening during incidents. She also asked if the EA are budgeting to upgrade those gauging stations when required.

Nikki advised that there is a current EA project 'The Future of National Telemetry' looking at the telemetry system and the network of gauging stations moving forwards.

Fiona Duke advised the EA gauging and telemetry network is 50% funded by the Flood Risk Management function and 50% by the Water Resources function due to it being used for both purposes. Over the last 12 months and going into next year, the budget for the EA Hydrometry and Telemetry teams has been extremely challenging and they too have seen a reduction in funding. We noted work is underway to look at the telemetry network, after it was significantly improved over the last three years, to see where any new telemetry is required. However the EA currently do not have the resources to create new telemetry and are looking across the whole network to make some tough prioritisation decisions as funding is not currently available to fund new ones and is struggling with the manpower to maintain what's already in place.

Councillor Denise Rollo enquired about the inspections to low-risk water courses, advising as a LA this may have implications for LA risks and budgets. She asked how the EA is communicating with LAs on what are low risk assets, how they are going to be reviewed going forwards and what criteria will be used.

Nikki explained that all EA assets are categorised either high, medium or low in systems, which are groups of assets within a catchment area. These are categorised dependant on their value and the cost benefit of the flood risk, which drives the national funding. We noted it is approximately 15 years since these categories were set and there are some challenges where there have been changes over time and this is where local knowledge has been used to make choices with the allocation provided.

The visual inspection programme will continue, however some of the walkthroughs in lower risk areas may not take place due to limited resource. These will all be on designated main river and not ordinary watercourse. In the past the EA has undertaken quite an extensive programme of CCTV inspections on third party culverts, costing approximately £500k per year, and when these have not been funded these have dropped in frequency. CCTV inspections are still within the programme of work, but instead of being inspected every year, they might be inspected every other year instead, or a three-year inspection would go to every five years. In relation to communication, Nikki advised that the maintenance programme is published online and that conversations about asset maintenance should be taking place through the local Making Space for Water Groups.

## NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

Councillor Denise Rollo asked if the EA assets are going to become LA assets to inspect and Nikki advised they should only become the LA's responsibility where LAs are already the riparian landowner. She also advised culverts under roads may fall to the LA or Highways Authority to maintain.

We noted the EA always endeavours to send out letters to homeowners and landowners on the condition of any culverts inspected and will endeavour to advise them if they are unable to conduct future CCTV surveillance of assets and that future CCTV surveys would become their responsibility.

Rachel Crompton remarked that she recognises the funding challenges and advised that the withdrawal of the EA's river channel maintenance programme is already leading to significantly increased flood risk to homes and communities, roads, railways and businesses which rely on agricultural land, because the rivers are becoming increasingly obstructed with debris, silt and vegetation. She asked what the EA is doing to actively hand back maintenance responsibility to riparian landowners on the critical rivers in a way that supports effective river maintenance, and what is the EA's plan to communicate this. She also asked at a national, regional and local level how partner organisations can help with these communications. Nikki advised at the moment communications have been done locally as paring back on maintenance is being done quite piecemeal. Unfortunately the EA are seeing the outcomes of this first-hand with the number of complaints that are being received.

Amy Cooper asked whether the prioritisation of water courses for maintenance takes account of the risk of river locking to outfalls be that water industry or third-party outfalls, and if not what is the plan for communicating that risk with local UU teams. She asked if UU need to put additional resilience measures into their outfalls that can no longer discharge.

Nikki confirmed where the EA have assets that directly affect a UU or a water industry site, for example Haydock Pumping Station, there is a legal agreement in place so these assets will continue to be operated. We noted tidal outfalls and debris screens will also still be operated, but this will need to be looked at on a local level.

Councillor Alan Quinn highlighted that the Anti-Social Behaviour and Policing Act 2014 explicitly refers to Hogweed and other similar non-invasive plants, where this act can be used on riparian owners.

Adrian Lythgo thanked us for the discussion and noted that revenue pressure is impacting all RMAs and has been for some time. He reflected that resource pressures have always been there for the EA but it has probably been in a better position than other risk management authorities, with the possible exception of the water companies.

What we are now seeing is a real imbalance between the amount being spent on capital, the amount being spent on new defences, and the amount that is available as resource. He advised the same message has been coming from other RFCCs into government, which is part of the current dialogue with the new government.

He encouraged the practical implications of the final funding allocation for next year to be discussed at Making Space for Water meetings. He suggested that partnership tactical groups might wish to get an update on the overall asset maintenance picture, helping us keep an eye on

## **NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4**

the situation through these local level discussions. He did not know if this is practically possible, but advised this can be picked up offline after the final allocation has been received.

Neville thanked Nikki for her presentation and for answering the questions posed by the group.

There were no further comments or questions.

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

- Notes the progress on delivering the 2024/25 Capital and Resource Programmes
- Notes the risks to the North West programme in 2024/25

### **4. Investment Programme Forward Look - 2025/26 and beyond (Annual Refresh process)**

Members were presented with the likely re-allocation for the forward programme, prior to applying local choices, which was considered and the following discussion took place.

Ollie Hope introduced himself to Members and gave an introduction to the item touching on the pressure on allocations for the remaining two years of the programme.

We noted the imbalance of the potential allocation for GMMC Area against that for Cumbria & Lancashire (C&L) and noted C&L are currently in a healthier position due to the number of schemes earmarked for starting in advance of April 2025, which is the key criteria the National Programme Management Office are looking for when allocating funding.

We heard that, through the support of the Capital Programme Co-ordinator and Local Authority Capital Project Advisors to LAs, significant progress has been made in generating the pipeline for North West Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), with the use of funding this Committee has allocated to them.

We discussed reductions in allocations to GMMC schemes, which is most acute in the Merseyside and Cheshire Mid Mersey areas, where the delivery of schemes is largely Local Authority led. It was highlighted that some schemes which do look to be receiving an allocation are now forecasting further cost increases in 2025/26, which provides us with less room for the redistribution of funding to those projects without an allocation.

We acknowledged the amount of allocation also impacts on the number of properties better protected target until the end of March 2027. There may be some difficult choices to be made by this Committee along with a conversation about the role of Local Levy funding in helping to support the future investment programme.

Ollie also advised that we are still awaiting confirmation of allocations for the Affordability Allowance and the Frequently Flooded Allowance funding streams and we noted this was unlikely to be advised to us until after the 30<sup>th</sup> October Budget statement.

It was confirmed for Councillor Alan Quinn that the Frequently Flooded Allowance is part of the original pot of funding. He highlighted his concern about recruitment and experienced staff leaving the EA and that it is far easier for staff to move and work in the private sector and noted that the EA are experiencing resource pressures and are not able to recruit to the extent that they have been able to previously.

## NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

Adrian Lythgo advised it will be unlikely that further information will be available in advance of the 18<sup>th</sup> October RFCC meeting and we approved the suggestion to hold an extraordinary meeting of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group following the October RFCC meeting and the Budget announcement, so that different scenarios can be reviewed and discussed in more detail and done in a way that each Strategic Partnership is represented.

**Votes in favour of an extraordinary meeting to be held following the October RFCC Meeting and 30<sup>th</sup> October Budget announcement:** Councillor Brennan, Councillor Clarke, Councillor Rollo, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Alan Quinn, Councillor Cooney, Councillor Shorrock, Carolyn Otley, Amy Cooper, Chris Findley and Susannah Bleakley.

Adrian Lythgo advised for the benefit of new Members the Committee does have some limited ability to make local choices about what is included in the programme and what isn't, within some given rules. This will be part of that discussion as well as understanding what has come out of the reallocation process.

Andy Tester provided us with details of the bid made by the North West RFCC and the current reallocation and highlighted the need to keep an eye on the remainder of the programme to ensure it can meet the national target of 200k properties better protected from flooding.

We were provided with the current picture and noted the North West has been given the biggest allocation nationally and we received an overview of the top ten North West projects in terms of core GiA spend and what their current reallocation is.

In terms of Local Choices we need to be mindful going forwards whether we can support these schemes along with funding some of the other schemes that are delivering properties into future years. We received an overview of the top ten projects delivering properties to be better protected from flooding for the remainder of the programme.

An overview of the Enabling and Support Programme and Asset Reconditioning programme was received. We noted the reduction in funding particularly to the C&L allocation and were advised there are ongoing conversations around this.

With regard to the Reconditioning Programme we noted the North West's current reallocation is the highest in the country, due to the large amount of strategically important assets and reservoirs in the areas, but we are concerned that even though we currently have the largest indicative allocation there will still be a challenge in being able to afford all that we need to.

There were no further comments or questions.

### **5. Local Levy Programme Update**

Andy Tester provided an overview of the North West Local Levy programme and reported a total resource at the start of 2024/25 of £16.646 Million, made up of £4.544 Million income, a balance of £10.581 Million carried forward from 2023/24, and £0.521 Million of interest earned on balances. The latest spend forecast for 2024/25 is £8.535 Million which would result in a remaining balance of £7.11 Million at the end of the financial year.



## NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

Andy presented the graph which indicates how the balance is expected to change over the coming years and advised we are in a strong position and there may be some flexibility for additional use of our Local Levy moving forwards.

Adrian Lythgo added to this highlighting that some schemes that were previously in the Local Levy programme have come out of the programme due to being unaffordable or technically unfeasible, releasing the previously allocated Local Levy funding. But he wished to highlight that this does not mean that the flood risk in the places where those schemes were being proposed has gone away, so the intended spend may have gone away for now but not for the long term.

There were no further questions and Neville thanked Andy for his report.

### River Winster Rehabilitation Project

Neville Elstone advised of a change from the papers that the Sub Group will be receiving an information briefing on the River Winster Rehabilitation Project, but with no Local Levy funding ask at this meeting.

Jason Harte from Westmorland and Furness Council introduced the project and Hugh Ward from the Lynster Farmers Group provided a more technical overview of the project. We noted the detail and process of the required work and the challenges involved in making this happen.

Adrian Lythgo asked Jason Harte to confirm the flood risk which this project will address. Jason advised that there are 11 properties which have their access cut off due to the flooding of Meathop Road. Jason advised the Highways Authority have been using a pump to remove water, which continues to flood Meathop Road, which is usually blocked from September through to March each year causing widespread flooding to businesses, the local golf club and a local farm.

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

- Notes the current position and latest spend forecast of 2024/25
- Notes the detail of the River Winster Rehabilitation Project.

There were no further questions or comments.

## **6. RFCC Business Plan**

Sally Whiting provided a brief overview of progress on the 2022 – 2025 programme of 21 live projects. She provided an overview of Local Levy investment in Business Plan projects highlighting the allocation for 2024/25 of £1.337 Million. We noted the current forecast is for £1.441 Million to be claimed, which includes some unclaimed allocations that carried over from 2023/24.

Sally highlighted that the indicative investment need for 2025/26 is just over £1 Million.

Sally presented the graph which shows the even share of benefits from Business Plan investment across the Strategic Partnerships.

She then reported and asked the Sub Group to recommend that the RFCC formally recognise the completion of two of the Business Plan projects.

## **NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4**

- Project ID8 – Flood Poverty Project
- Project ID21 - Highways SuDS Design Guide

Sally provided very brief overviews of these two projects, more details of which are in the paper, have been shared previously, or will be provided at the upcoming October meeting.

Sally then introduced one new project proposal for the Business Plan – an extension to the Unpave the Way project, addressing the paving over of front gardens with impermeable surfaces contributing to surface water flooding.

Crystal Orton, the Project Manager, provided an overview of the Unpave the Way project successes to date. Key highlights from the project include working with RHS multi award winning Landscape Designer Leon Davis to deliver:

- Rainwater Capture Cube exhibit at the first RHS Urban Show in Manchester (April 2024) attended by students, engineers, home renters, new homeowners and garden designers.
- Unpave the Way Garden at the RHS Tatton show in July 2024. This also included an education tent and received national publicity having features on BBC Gardeners World and BBC North West Tonight, where it was stated that the buzz word of this year's RHS show was "SuDS".

Rachel Crompton, partner on the project, highlighted the success of the Tatton show. Crystal then touched on the primary research data collected from the surveys at RHS Tatton which will be presented to the Committee at the October RFCC Meeting. Key learning points from the show include:

- Many people do not know about the 2008 planning permission requirement for anyone planning to pave over an area of 5 square metres or more.
- The need to promote the use of permeable paving, which means that no planning permission is required.
- There was real appetite from people who attended the garden and people were really motivated to take away the learning from the garden and consider the SuDS elements on show.

We noted that while the project has been a big success to date, the issue of front gardens being paved is a complex picture which requires an all-encompassing approach to make sure that we are influencing all of the sectors who play a role (e.g. community groups, policy makers, housing developers, housing associations, property surveyors, retailers, suppliers and contractors and the education sector). We received an overview of the planned project plan for the next three years, which included the programme of sector engagement and example deliverables.

Rachel Crompton advised that the garden has now been relocated to Whitaker Park in Rawtenstall, Lancashire, which from now on will be looked after by the Friends of Whitaker Park. The garden opening ceremony takes place on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

We were asked to consider a Local Levy request of £200k to enable the extension of this project for a further three years.

In the meeting chat:

- Adrian Lythgo advised that he likes the potential focus on community groups and asked if there is any way of targeting groups where the local LA or Risk Management Authority (RMA) knows there is an existing surface water flooding issue.

## NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

- Councillor Alan Quinn suggested that the impacts of plastic grass should be included within any campaign.
- Carolyn Otley asked if there will be any resources going forward that can target the smaller actions that people renting homes can do.

Councillor Jane Hugo thanked Crystal and Rachel for their presentation and advised she is looking forward to seeing the garden on 18<sup>th</sup> October. She noted that Lancashire County Council are involved in the project and asked how the project will be engaging with unitary authorities. She also asked for a breakdown of the Local Levy requirement of £200k.

Rachel Crompton advised the concept of how this information can be rolled out is still being explored and will be in the next stages of the project.

Crystal Orton clarified that the breakdown of the future project costs were provided in the supporting paper and included some miscellaneous costs and the project manager resource for the next three years.

We noted discussions with UU are ongoing to secure additional funding from them.

Councillor Alan Quinn gave his support to the project initiative and Amy Cooper provided UU's support for the project. She advised that some of the stats speak for themselves and she supported the ambition of extending this work to other stakeholders and thanked Crystal and Rachel for their presentation.

Neville Elstone asked Amy if she can be an advocate for the project within UU, which would also benefit UU and add value to the project.

We voted on the three-year extension to the Unpave the Way project with a £200k Local Levy contribution.

**Votes in favour:** Councillor Rollo, Councillor Brennan, Councillor Quinn, Amy Cooper, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Cusack, Councillor Shorrock.

We noted that Councillor Clarke had left the meeting before this vote took place.

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

- recognises the completion of:
  - ID8 Flood Poverty Project
  - ID21 Highways SuDS Design Guide
- supports and approves the continuation of the Unpave the Way (ID12) project for a further three years with an additional Local Levy funding contribution of £200k.

There were no further questions or comments.

Sally Whiting then presented on the proposed approach to refreshing the RFCC Business Plan going forwards.

She advised the current NW RFCC Business Plan runs to March 2025. She advised the Business Plan is well embedded and well established and does not need a substantial refresh. We noted the Business Plan is the North West translation of the National FCRM Strategy, and maps directly to the

## NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4

ambitions within the Strategy, covering the full scope of our flood risk management work. There are two or three strategic aims under each of the ambitions which could benefit from a light-touch consideration by the lead partnerships but overall the structure of the plan is still appropriate and fit for purpose.

Sally presented two options for extending the timeframe of the Business Plan, a one-year and a two-year extension, setting out the pros and cons for each. We noted how option B (two-year extension) has more advantages including fitting better with the end of the current RFCC Chair's term of office. It also fits with the end of the current six year investment programme.

Amy Cooper advised in terms of the overall ambitions the only comment from a water industry perspective is that UU are coming to the end of their Asset Management Planning Cycle and that it would be good to overlay with UU's AMP8 Business Plan to see if there are any priorities and capital investment that aligns with the RFCC Business Plan. She stated that she broadly supported the two year extension.

### **We considered and recommended the RFCC:**

- supports option B – to extend the timeframe of the plan by two years to March 2027, with light-touch consideration of aims and actions by lead partnerships.

**Votes in favour:** Councillor Brennan, Councillor Quinn, Councillor Rollo, Amy Cooper, Carolyn Otley, Susannah Bleakley, Councillor Shorrock and Councillor Cusack.  
(Councillor Clarke had left the meeting before this vote took place.)

## **7. Capital Programme Co-ordinator Update**

Sarah Fontana provided an update presentation on the work of the five North West Local Authority Capital Project Co-ordinators' (LACPAs) during the last quarter, including the following highlights:

- Working on early project development and helping Local Authorities to identify and apply for funding from different funding pots.
- Bringing new projects into the capital programme with in-year bids.
- Working cross-boundary outside of the North West area to develop schemes.
- Providing general project support and sharing expertise across the North West.
- Recently completed projects including some with Local Levy funding support, where the LACPA worked with the LA to develop the business case, support them through the assurance process and assisted with the claiming of funding.
- A recent Quick Win project featuring a community woodland that has issues with flooding, causing local property and garden flooding.

Sarah also highlighted the following ongoing challenges:

- Resources to develop and deliver schemes
- Funding and the current funding rules
- Winter with increased likelihood of incidents
- Other competing priorities
- Skills, knowledge, training needs
- New tools and systems
- Increasingly complex schemes
- EA and Defra internal processes
- Changes to the Grant Memorandum and other potential policy changes

## **NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 18 OCTOBER 2024 – AGENDA ITEM 4**

Neville thanked Sarah for her overview and highlighted this illustrates the physical value of this work and asked Sarah to keep on sharing the work of this group with the Committee.

Ollie Hope spoke of the need for all RMAs to continue to focus on business case development as much as possible. He advised of the benefits of having business cases ready to go as soon as funding becomes available so that the North West can be ready to receive any available funding. He asked for this message to be cascaded across the North West so we are able to proceed with projects as soon as possible to do so.

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

### **8. Minutes and matters arising from the last meeting of the FBA Sub-Group on 8 July 2024**

The draft minutes of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meeting held on 8 July 2024 were proposed by Carolyn Otley and seconded by Councillor Denise Rollo and taken as a true record of the meeting.

There were no further comments or matters arising.

### **9. Any Other Business**

There were no further items of business.

### **10. Date of the next meeting**

The date of the next RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group meeting is 10 January 2025.

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

**18 October 2024**

## **Local Levy Vote 2025/26**

This document provides information for North West lead local flood authorities and strategic flood risk partnerships to consider in deciding how to vote in the setting of the Local Levy rate for 2025/26, to take place at the October 2024 North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) meeting.

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

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

Finally, it sets out the current Local Levy rate, how the RFCC has voted in recent years, possible options for increases in the rate for 2025/26 and how much individual local authorities will pay under the different increase scenarios.

## What is Local Levy funding?

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

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

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

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

## How does the RFCC use it?

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

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

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

In the last 6-year programme from 2015 - 2021, for every £1 of Local Levy invested in schemes, on average we drew in £2 of other funding. This return makes it a sound investment option for local authorities to attract significant national and private sector funding for flood risk reduction to their communities.



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

## **Local Levy reserve**

We can carry over unspent Levy into the following year creating a reserve which enables us to spend more than the income raised. This reserve built up to a peak of around £12 million at the end of 2022/23. Due to large programmes in 2023/24 and 2024/25 which exceed the annual income, the reserve reduced to around £10.5 million at the end of 2023/24 and is forecast to reduce further to just over £7 million at the end of 2024/25. The RFCC are keen to see the reserve come down, making use of the available funding. The reserve does however attract interest payments which in 2023/24 amounted to £521,000.

The programme is always subject to change and the need for future project allocations is subject to annual and ongoing review. Once the reserve reduces further, this will mean the RFCC won't be able to consistently provide the same level of investment as it currently does. The income of around £4.5 million each year still allows for a significant level of ongoing investment across the North West but the scale of the programmes in 2023/24 and 2024/25, which exceed the annual income by £1.6 million and £4.0 million respectively, demonstrates the continued demand for Local Levy investment into the future.

## **Local Levy Strategy**

In April 2024 the Committee approved a refreshed Local Levy Strategy which sets out key principles and commitments the RFCC apply to make the most of the funding and to further its Business Plan goals. This covers aspects including what activities the RFCC considers to be priorities for investment, maintaining a balance between support for capital schemes and funding for additional capacity and innovation, guidelines on the scale of Levy funding for individual capital schemes, and how the funding will be managed once a smaller reserve is achieved.

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

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

The current programme of capital investment is planned to run until March 2027, with an annual refresh in each of the next two years. An update to the National Assessment of Flood Risk (NAFRA2) is also imminent together with an updated approach to how the current capital programme pipeline will be compiled. Together with any changes introduced by the new government this will provide the context for investment in FCERM for the short to medium term.

Across the North West, there are schemes at various stages of development. Some are at an early stage, possibly arising in response to recent flooding incidents, and Local Levy is likely to continue to play an important role in supporting this project development and/or forming part of the funding package for the works required. The last few years have seen global price rises and inflationary pressures impacting the capital investment programme increasing the costs of flood risk management schemes. While the RFCC is clear that Local Levy cannot and should not fill the funding gaps arising, it has played a more limited role in supporting risk management authorities to weather this disruption and continues to help provide a vital funding contribution to allow schemes to be built.

The RFCC wants to explore new and non-traditional approaches to flood resilience which are rarely eligible for government funding. With the Local Levy, the RFCC has greater flexibility to fund the type of activity that is required to innovate and develop non-mainstream approaches. The RFCC has a Business Plan, currently covering 2022-2025, which translates the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy to the North West and sets out a suite of actions across five ambitions: Accessing



investment and funding; Building community resilience; Managing water at catchment scale with nature; Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure; and Increasing risk management authority capacity and collaboration. Many of these actions require investment and the RFCC is providing Local Levy funding for this, approving an allocation of £1.3m for 2024/25, with investment of over £1 million required next year and beyond.

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

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

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

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

In 2024/25 the Local Levy was set at £4.544m. You can see below how the RFCC has voted and how this has changed the Levy raised over recent years.

Year	Levy raised	% increase on previous year
2020/21	£4.097m	2%
2021/22	£4.179m	2%
2022/23	£4.283m	2.5%
2023/24	£4.412m	3%
2024/25	£4.544m	3%

### What should partnerships be considering now?

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

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

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

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

	Rate increase options	Resulting Levy rate
2025/26	1%	£4.590m
	2%	£4.635m
	3%	£4.681m
	4%	£4.726m

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

## How much will individual local authorities pay?

The amount of Local Levy raised from each Local Authority is based on the Council Tax Base for Band D equivalent properties to provide a fair and equitable basis for the calculation. The table below shows the current amount payable by each upper tier Local Authority and the additional amount that would be payable for a 1%, 2%, 3% or 4% increase for 2025/26.

Local Authority	2024/25 Council Tax base (Band D Equivalent)	2024/25 Levy	2025/26 Additional levy for a 1% increase	2025/26 Additional levy for a 2% increase	2025/26 Additional levy for a 3% increase	2025/26 Additional levy for a 4% increase
<b>Unitary authorities</b>						
Halton Borough Council	36,409	£72,616	£726	£1,452	£2,178	£2,905
Warrington Borough Council	71,738	£143,078	£1,431	£2,862	£4,292	£5,723
Blackpool Borough Council	38,756	£77,297	£773	£1,546	£2,319	£3,092
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	37,070	£73,934	£739	£1,479	£2,218	£2,957
Cheshire East Council	160,152	£319,415	£3,194	£6,388	£9,582	£12,777
Cheshire West And Chester Council	129,059	£257,403	£2,574	£5,148	£7,722	£10,296
Cumberland Council	89,967	£179,435	£1,794	£3,589	£5,383	£7,177
Westmorland and Furness Council	88,801	£177,109	£1,771	£3,542	£5,313	£7,084
<b>County councils</b>						
Derbyshire County Council	21,525	£42,931	£429	£859	£1,288	£1,717
Lancashire County Council	382,710	£763,298	£7,633	£15,266	£22,899	£30,532
Northumberland County Council	134	£267	£3	£5	£8	£11
North Yorkshire County Council	5,937	£11,842	£118	£237	£355	£474
Shropshire County Council	2,671	£5,327	£53	£107	£160	£213
Staffordshire County Council	16,357	£32,624	£326	£652	£979	£1,305
<b>Metropolitan Borough Councils</b>						
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	80,001	£159,558	£1,596	£3,191	£4,787	£6,382
Bury Council	57,409	£114,499	£1,145	£2,290	£3,435	£4,580
Manchester City Council	134,938	£269,128	£2,691	£5,383	£8,074	£10,765
Oldham Council	59,380	£118,431	£1,184	£2,369	£3,553	£4,737
Rochdale Borough Council	58,500	£116,676	£1,167	£2,334	£3,500	£4,667
Salford City Council	76,722	£153,019	£1,530	£3,060	£4,591	£6,121
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	98,397	£196,248	£1,962	£3,925	£5,887	£7,850
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	64,723	£129,086	£1,291	£2,582	£3,873	£5,163
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	79,362	£158,284	£1,583	£3,166	£4,749	£6,331
Wigan Council	97,900	£195,257	£1,953	£3,905	£5,858	£7,810
Knowsley Council	38,957	£77,698	£777	£1,554	£2,331	£3,108
Liverpool City Council	114,955	£229,273	£2,293	£4,585	£6,878	£9,171
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	53,461	£106,626	£1,066	£2,133	£3,199	£4,265
Sefton Council	86,459	£172,438	£1,724	£3,449	£5,173	£6,898
Wirral Council	95,994	£191,456	£1,915	£3,829	£5,744	£7,658
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,278,442</b>	<b>£4,544,250</b>	<b>£45,442</b>	<b>£90,885</b>	<b>£136,327</b>	<b>£181,770</b>

### Calculation

The value of the Levy is calculated by taking the sum of all the Tax Base figures for levied authorities, dividing it by the grand total of all Tax Bases and multiplying it by the total annual levy charge (e.g. Lancashire County Council: 382,710 divided by 2,278,442 multiplied by £4,544,250). This gives the individual charges to be made for the year.

### Note

The numbers of Band D properties can change from year to year so the levy increases for 2025/26 are indicative, based on the Band D data for 2024/25.

Band D data confirmed as current by Defra Finance, August 2024.

## Recent and current examples of Local Levy investment

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

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

The Preston South Ribble scheme and Rochdale and Littleborough schemes, both currently in construction, are some of the largest flood risk management schemes ever delivered in the North West which will reduce flood risk for thousands of properties. Both have been made possible from significant investment of Local Levy funding by the RFCC.



Broadgate Rock Bag Installation

## Partnership Quick Win funding

Flood doors on frequently flooded businesses in Sefton



SuDS on public buildings in Blackpool



Flood mitigation works to reduce surface water flooding to properties at Lavington Ave, Stockport



## Unpave the Way – for greener front gardens

A Business Plan project informing and inspiring homeowners to incorporate permeable paving, SuDS and climate resilient planting into their front gardens to reduce surface water flooding.



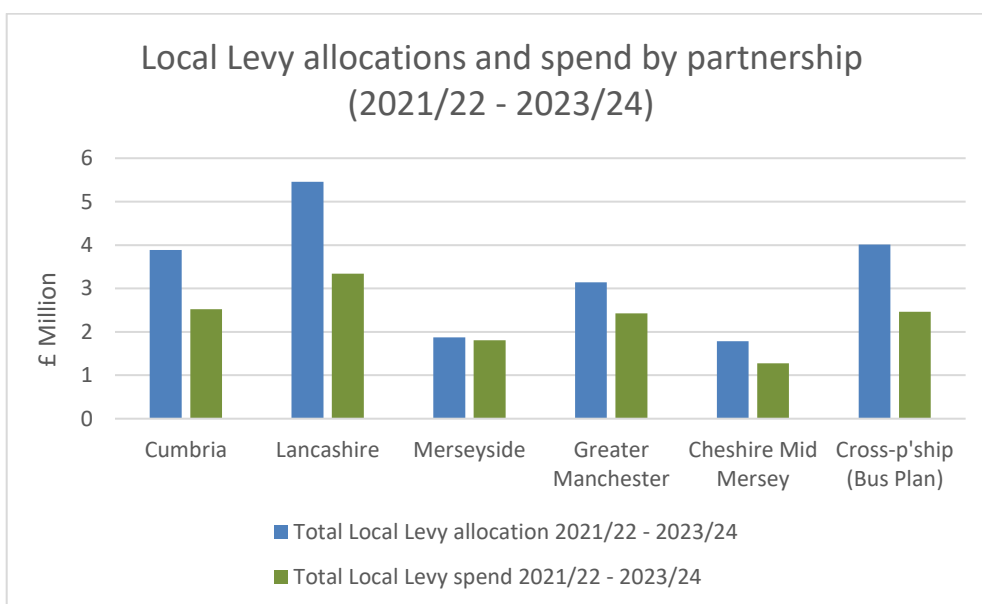
The North West [Flood Hub website](https://www.thefloodhub.co.uk) is actively managed and supported - the key to its success. New content is being developed and added all the time. It continues to receive increasing numbers of page hits and views and local authorities find it an extremely valuable resource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

## How much Local Levy investment have the partnerships benefitted from in recent years?

In order to understand how the partnerships have benefitted from Local Levy investment, it is important to look at this over a number of years in order to even out the inevitable variation in allocations from year to year which relates to projects and schemes being delivered and their scale.

The graph below shows how much Local Levy was allocated, and how much was claimed/spent, in each of the sub-regional partnership areas over the first three years of the current investment programme (2021/22 – 2023/24). It also shows the investment in the RFCC Business Plan which benefits all partnership areas.

Where Local Levy allocations have not been used in the year of allocation, this is either because alternative sources of funding were secured (e.g. GiA, Frequently Flooded Allowance) or because the project and spend has been rescheduled and reprofiled to a future year. It should therefore not be taken as a simple reflection of delivery performance.





## Current Local Levy allocations by project (approved for 2024/25 and indicative for 2025/26)

Partnership	Project/Scheme	2024/25 approved Local Levy allocation (£K)	2024/25 approved Local Levy forecast (£K)	2025/26 indicative Local Levy allocation / forecast (£K)
Cumbria	Appleby Flood Risk Management Scheme (EA)	1,500	1,500	0
	Low Crosby Pumping Station (EA)			450
	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations (EA)	40	40	30
	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation (EA)	10	10	10
	Cumbria Quick Win Projects (LA)	100	100	100
	<b>CUMBRIA PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>590</b>
Lancashire	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations (EA)	20	20	50
	Fleetwood & Copse Brook Scheme (EA)	0	0	1,770 <sup>1</sup>
	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton (EA)	300	1,000	1,000
	Preston & South Ribble (EA)	2,000	2,000	0
	River Calder, Padiham (EA)	300	300	0
	Lancashire Quick Win Projects (LA)	100	100	100
	<b>LANCASHIRE PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</b>	<b>2,720</b>	<b>3,420</b>	<b>2,920</b>
Merseyside	Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral	0	0	447
	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	100	100	100
	<b>MERSEYSIDE PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>547</b>
Greater Manchester	Alder Forest, Eccles	0	0	400
	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme (EA)	1,500	1,200	500
	River Irwell, Kearsley (EA)	396	396	600
	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme (LA)	50	0	50
	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects (LA)	100	100	100
	<b>GM PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</b>	<b>2,046</b>	<b>1,696</b>	<b>1,650</b>
Cheshire Mid Mersey	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme (LA)	30	0	30
	Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (LA)	120	120	0
	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme (EA)	247	7	161
	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects (LA)	100	100	100
	<b>CHESHIRE MID MERSEY PARTNERSHIP TOTAL</b>	<b>497</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>291</b>
RFCC Business Plan projects (Cross Partnership)	ID1 – Potential investment and mapping	25	45	0
	ID2 - Wyre Catchment NFM Project (Lancs)	45	35	45
	ID5 – The Flood Hub website	115	115	115
	ID6 - Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	10	10	10
	ID7 – Action Campaign – Flood resilience	125	125	125
	ID9A – NFM Technical Appraisal resource	30	30	30
	ID20 – Land management engagement event	12	0	0
	ID22 – NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	90	90	60
	ID12 – Unpave the Way	86	96	54
	ID4/13 – Asset data sharing and mapping	145	156	0
	ID15 – RMA Capacity Building programme	25	0	25
	ID16 – Additional capacity to support RMAs (EA and LA hosted posts)	629	678	629
	<b>RFCC BUSINESS PLAN TOTAL</b>	<b>1,337</b>	<b>1,380</b>	<b>1,093</b>
	<b>LOCAL LEVY PROGRAMME TOTALS</b>	<b>8,350</b>	<b>8,473</b>	<b>7,091</b>

<sup>1</sup> Now re-profiled to the next programme (2028/29)

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**  
**18 OCTOBER 2024**  
**QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENTS REPORT**

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

This report summarises the numbers of properties reported as flooded during the last quarter. It distinguishes properties reported as flooded internally (Int) from those reported as flooded externally (Ext).

The data provided by the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authorities covers the period of 1 July to 30 September 2024.

The data provided by United Utilities covers the period 25 June 2024 to 22 September 2024.

### **Cumbria Strategic Partnership**

A wetter than average August coupled with high spring tides led to the Environment Agency issuing a number of flood alerts and warnings across Cumbria between 21-24 August 2024.

In some areas, where rainfall totals exceeded those that were forecast or the levels of high tides were exacerbated by high winds, minor flooding impacts were observed to vulnerable infrastructure and low-lying land.

The Cumberland Council area had reports of flooding to 28 properties (19 internal, 5 external and 4 unknown) on which the LLFA is still gathering information. Westmorland and Furness Council have been less affected during this period with flooding to 2 properties reported (1 internal and 1 external).

United Utilities have reported (as yet unverified) incidents of one property being impacted by internal hydraulic flooding and 20 properties impacted by external hydraulic flooding (one as a result of a Severe Weather incident).

## INFORMATION ITEM A

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 Hydraulic* (UU data)	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Cumberland Council	Egremont		1 Int					Some flooding on minor roads adjacent to water courses, but no major issues reported.
Cumberland Council	Rossthwaite		1 Int					Flooding up to 1 metre in depth reported to access roads and farmland in the Borrowdale Valley causing intermittent travel disruption for up to a week and impacts to some businesses. A landslide cut off the road between Braithwaite and Buttermere, and Keswick Campsite was also flooded.
Cumberland Council	St Bees		1 Ext					Combination of high tides and high fluvial flows led to external flooding of one property.
Cumberland Council	Aikshaw (15/08/2024)				2 Int (from highway)			
Cumberland Council	Morton, Carlisle (16/07/2024)				1 Int			
Cumberland Council	Greysouthen (23/08/2024)						1 External	
Cumberland Council	Distington, Workington (23/08/2024)				2 Int			
Cumberland Council	Low Lorton (29/08/2024)				1 (unknown if internal or external)			
Cumberland Council	Crosby, Maryport (23/08/2024)				1 Int (from highway)			

## INFORMATION ITEM A

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 Hydraulic* (UU data)	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Cumberland Council	Dovenby (23/08/2024)			1 Ext				
Cumberland Council	Branthwaite (26/08/2024)		1 Ext					
Cumberland Council	Hillcrest, Whitehaven (21/08/2024 and 27/08/2024)				1 Int (from highway 21/08/2024) 1 Ext (27/08/2024)			
Cumberland Council	Whinlatter Road, Whitehaven (23/08/2024)				2 Int			
Cumberland Council	Link Road, Whitehaven						1 Internal	
Cumberland Council	Glenridding Walk, Whitehaven				2 Int			
Cumberland Council	Meadow Road, Whitehaven				1 Int			
Cumberland Council	Egremont (23/08/2024 and 26/08/2024)		3 Int (23/08/2024)	1 Int (26/08/2024)	3 Unknown if internal or external (23/08/2024)			



## INFORMATION ITEM A

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 Hydraulic* (UU data)	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Westmorland and Furness Council	Bowness-on-Windermere			1 Ext				
Westmorland and Furness Council	Tebay				1 Int			Flooding from commons impacted A685 to approx. depth of 50-100mm
<b>TOTALS</b>			5 Int 2 Ext	1 Int 2 Ext	13 Int 1 Ext 4 Unknown	1 Int 20 Ext	1 Int 1 Ext	

\* United Utilities data (as yet unverified) covering period 25/6/24 to 22/09/24

### **Lancashire Strategic Partnership**

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

Blackburn with Darwen Council have reported only highways flooding.

United Utilities have reported (as yet unverified) incidents of four properties being impacted by internal hydraulic flooding (two as a result of Severe Weather incidents), and 14 properties impacted by external hydraulic flooding (one as a result of a Severe Weather incident).

**Merseyside Strategic Partnership**

The data set out below covers the period to mid September. Further flooding occurred in some areas of Merseyside on 30 September, for which the data is still being collated.

Local Authority area	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment) (KRN = Key Route Network)
		Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer Hydraulic (UU data)*	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Knowsley					6 Ext			1 KRN 8 Non KRN.
Liverpool					1 Ext		13 Int *	42 KRN
Sefton					1 Ext		1 Int (groundwater under property)	3 Non KRN
Wirral					1 Int 9 Ext			5 Non KRN
<b>TOTALS</b>					1 Int (U) 17 Ext	31 Int 19 Ext	14 Int (U)	43 KRN 16 Non KRM

(U) Unconfirmed / Still under review

\* United Utilities data (as yet unverified) covering period 25/6/24 to 22/09/24

**Liverpool City** - Yellow weather warning and city-wide flooding on Tuesday 9th July 2024. As a result, Queens Drive was closed from the evening of 9<sup>th</sup> July to Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August. Other road closures included but not limited to Deysbrook Lane, Lower Lane and Herrondale Road. Internal property flooding was also an issue, and exact numbers are still to be confirmed.

**Sefton** - Coastal flooding and erosion from Storm Lilian (22<sup>nd</sup> Aug) - Expected damage to the defences/handrailing at Crosby and erosion of the dunes.

**Wirral** – Localised flooding at various locations as a result of heavy rainfall. West Kirby Flood Alleviation – Demountable barriers were deployed during unusually high tides for August and WBC worked closely with EA to monitor conditions. No flooding occurred at West Kirby.

United Utilities have reported (as yet unverified) incidents of 31 properties being impacted by internal hydraulic flooding and 19 properties impacted by external hydraulic flooding (two as a result of Severe Weather incidents).

## Greater Manchester Strategic Partnership

This flooding reported below resulted from the heavy rainfall event of 30 September.

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 Hydraulic* (UU data)	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Bolton	Westhoughton				1 Ext			Surface water run-off from field and potential private drainage blockage
Bolton	Stoneclough				2 Ext			Incidents believed to be caused by blocked highway gullies. No major issues.
Bolton	Horwich				2 Ext			Incidents believed to be caused by blocked highway gullies. No major issues.
Wigan	Abram				2 Int			
Wigan	Tyldesley		4 Int					
Wigan	Ashton-in-Makerfield		5 Int					
Wigan	Standish				1 (Int/Ext unknown)			
Salford	Boothstown					3 Int**		
Salford	Worsley		1 Int					Highways and garden flooding from Worsley Brook.
<b>TOTALS</b>			10 Int		2 Int 5 Ext 1 Unknown	4 Int 1 Ext		

\* United Utilities data (as yet unverified) covering period 25/6/24 to 22/09/24

\*\* EA/LLFA-provided data from 30 September event

## **Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Partnership**

There have been no reported incidents of flooding for this period.

There have been a few incidents of flooding since 1 October, which are under investigation and will be reported to at the January RFCC meeting.

United Utilities have reported (as yet unverified) incidents of three properties being impacted by external hydraulic flooding.

## **United Utilities summary**

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 25 June 2024 and 22 September 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 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.

<b>Strategic Partnership</b>	<b>Internal Hydraulic (not Severe Weather)</b>	<b>External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)</b>	<b>Internal Hydraulic Severe Weather</b>	<b>External Hydraulic Severe Weather</b>
Cheshire	0	3	0	0
Merseyside	31	17	0	2
Greater Manchester	1	1	0	0
Lancashire	2	13	2	1
Cumbria	1	19	0	1

North West Investment Programme

Report to the North West RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub Group (FBASG) - 4 October 2024

AGENDA ITEMS  
3, 4 and 5



1. Purpose

1.1 This report to the Finance and Business Assurance Group provides progress on delivering the in-year (2024-25) Capital and Resource Investment Programme.

The FBASG are asked to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note the progress on delivering the 2024-25 Capital and Resource Programmes.</li> <li>To note the current position and latest spend forecast of 2024/25.</li> </ul>



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

2.1. Overview

			£ £ £
	Properties to be better protected	Partnership funding	Efficiency savings
<b>National Overview</b>	We are investing £5.2 billion over six years to better protect of two hundred thousand properties from flooding.	We have secured approximately £1.5 billion of partnership funding contributions	There has been £33.7 million Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid efficiency savings accepted in Q1
<b>North West Overview</b>	The North West is forecasting to better protect 3,234 properties in 2024-25	Approximately 10% of the North West Programme is made up of partnership funding	£1.3 million Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid efficiency savings accepted in Q1 of 2024 (further details in 2.2.7)

2.2 2024-25 Programme

What outcomes are we delivering?

		*North West Target	North West Forecast	Actual to date
		2,840	3,234	366

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

2.2.1 The properties better protected by flooding target is set by the Environment Agency and allocated to Area teams (GMMC and CLA), rather than RFCC. The unofficial target for the North West RFCC properties better protected for 2024-25 is 2,840. This comprises of 1,892 in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire, and 948 in Cumbria and Lancashire. Forecast figures at mid-August 2024 indicate the North West will better protect 3,234 properties from flooding this year. To date, we have delivered 366 properties better protected from flooding and expect in next quarter to deliver a further 576 properties better protected.

Please refer Appendix A for more information.

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

<b>£</b>	<b>Capital funding available</b>	<b>Capital forecast</b>
	<b>£109.911 million</b>	<b>£121.743 million</b>

2.2.4 The total capital funding available to the North West RFCC 2024-25 programme is £109.991 million. This includes £99.579 million of central Government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid), £7.660 million of Local Levy and £2.67 million of Partnership Funding Contributions. Sources of partnership contributions include Local Authorities, European Regional Development Funding, and other government departments such as the Department for Education and the Department for Transport.

2.2.5 Forecasts at mid-August 2024 show that we are expecting to draw down £121.743 million this year. This is ~£12 million more than allocated.

2.2.6 North West actual spend to end of August 2024 was £15.4 million (up from £8.477 million at the end of May 2023) against a budget of £109.91 million, and a forecast of £121.743 million. This means there is a remaining £94.5 million forecast remaining to spend/claim.

**2.2.6 Risks: 2024-25 (this financial year)**

- The National capital programme has seen high levels of over-programme (OP) throughout Q1 and into Q2. The steer until 27<sup>th</sup> August was to be within 10% over-programme as an Area (CLA and GMMC were both within these parameters). Unlike previous years, it is highly unlikely that surplus Grant in Aid (GiA) will be available elsewhere in the DEFRA group. Therefore, Areas have been instructed to actively manage down to below 5% OP by the end of Q2.
- For the North-West to be within 5% OP project teams need to consider which schemes can be stopped or delivery slowed.
- The EA Resource Maintenance programme must spend to budget with forecasts landing the programme in-line with budget. This means inspections to low-risk watercourse and third party owned culverts have been stopped. Local Authorities and private landowners need to consider options to fund these activities within their own budget.

- In 2023/24 we experienced ten named storms between September-January, if we have another wet winter, this will disrupt delivery potentially pushing projects into next year.

### What level of efficiency are we demonstrating?

2.2.7 Total value of accepted efficiency claims in Q1 was £1.3 million. This is still a relatively low number of submissions overall compared to live projects; however, several claims have been submitted during Q2.

Efficiencies			
<b>£ £ £</b>			
	Target -2024 (10% of actual GiA expenditure)	Actual	Left to claim
CLA	6,556,600	603,060	-5,953,540
GMMC	3,286,149	696,883	-2,589,266
<b>North West</b>	<b>9,842,749</b>	<b>1,299,943</b>	<b>-8,542,806</b>

The table below shows which schemes have delivered efficiencies in the first quarter of 2024/25.

Scheme	Area	RMA	Efficiency Value (FDGiA)
Kendal FRMS	CLA	Environment Agency	£464,279
Lower Risk Debris Screens GMMC Assessments	GMMC	Environment Agency	£360,701
River Mersey (South Manchester Catchments) Strategy Project	GMMC		£285,611
Skirting & Whangs Beck FRMS	CLA	Environment Agency	£94,807
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	GMMC	Environment Agency	£50,570
Recovery and Reconditioning	CLA	Environment Agency	£26,000
Preston & South Ribble FRMS	CLA	Environment Agency	£17,973
<b>Total</b>			<b>£1,299,941</b>

### 2.3 Indicative funding allocation for 2025-26 & 2026-27 Programme

We are currently awaiting the outcome of the National Allocations process.

## **Refresh Allocations for Local Choices**

The work on Local Choices has been paused.

### **3.0 NW RFCC Local Levy programme for 2024-25 and beyond**

#### **3.1 Current position 2024-25**

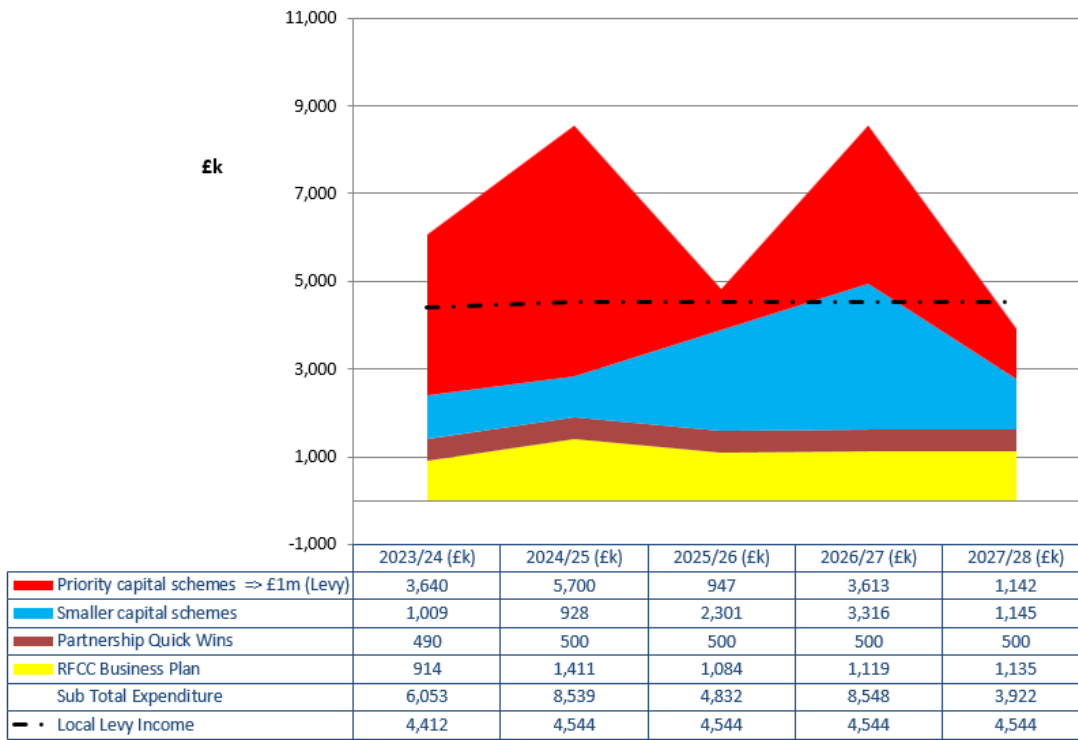
3.1.1 The North West Local Levy balances at the start of 2024-25 are £16.646 million (£4.544 million income plus £10.575 million carried forward from 2023-24 and interest earned on balances of 0.521 million). Latest forecast for 2024-25 is £8.539 million with expected remaining balance of £7.101 million at the end of the financial year.

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

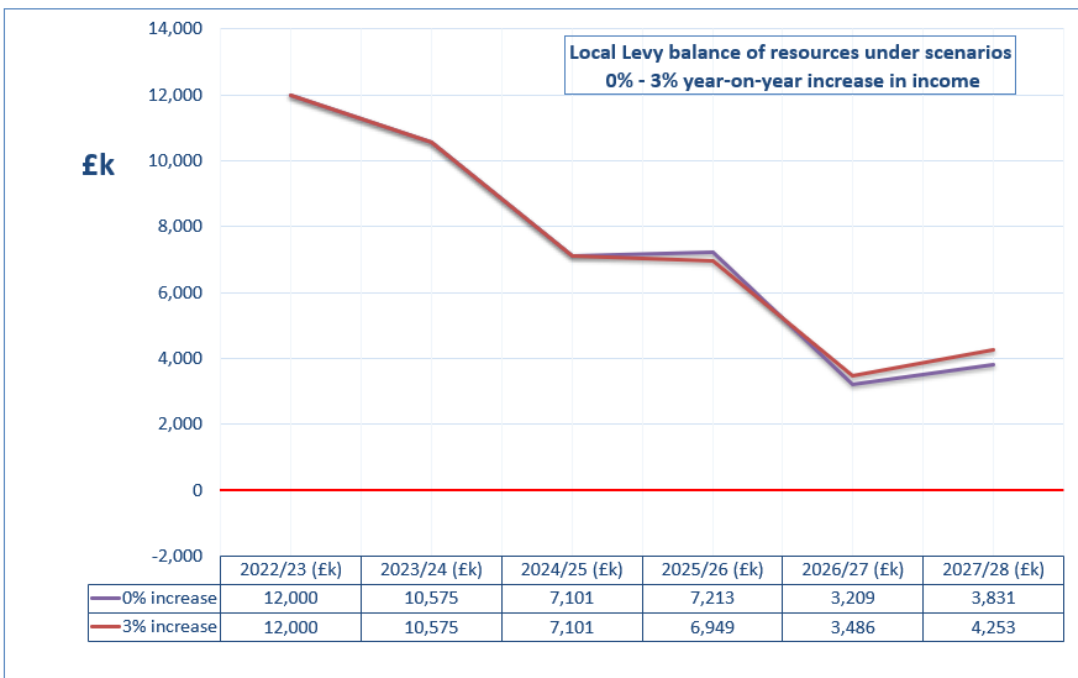
<b>2024-25</b>	
<b>Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)</b>	
Cash balance at start of year	10.575
Expected interest from 2023/24	0.521
Local Levy income (4.412 + 3%)	4.544
Total available balance	15.640
Latest forecast	8.539
Expected remaining cash balance at year end	7.101



### Local Levy Income & Expenditure Scenario



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



The graph above shows the expected Local Levy balance at the end of each year, this is based on the latest forecasts.

#### Asks of the FBAG:

- To note the current position and latest spend forecast of 2024/25.

### 3.2 RFCC Business Plan (Local Levy funded)

A separate report covering the RFCC Business Plans has been provided.

#### 4. 2024-25 EA Resource Maintenance Programme

##### EA Resource Programme financial summary 2024-25

- 4.1 Environment Agency Resource funding for the North West currently totals £21.065 million. This includes staff costs, maintenance, and resource projects.
- 4.2 Both Areas are currently showing a forecast overspend as detailed in the table below. The major overspend is coming from GiA revenue projects by (£6.3m) and resource maintenance programs by (£0.8m).

<b>Resource Programme, inc. Maintenance, Staff Costs and Resource Projects</b>	<b>Budget £k</b>	<b>Forecast £k</b>	<b>Forecast Variance to Budget £k</b>
Cumbria & Lancashire	11,138	16,110	-4,972
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	9,927	12,387	-2,460
<b>EA Total FCRM GiA Resource</b>	<b>21,065</b>	<b>28.497</b>	<b>-7,432</b>

- 4.3 Please refer to Appendix F, a supplementary report which gives more detail on the Resource Maintenance programme, conducted by the Environment Agency during Quarter 2 of 2024/25. This report covers activities completed, highlights key risks and challenges and provides an overview of 2025/26.

#### APPENDICES

<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>Properties better protected – 2024-25 forecasts (and targets for info only)</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Local Levy Programme 2024/25 (Update)</b>
<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>REMOVED</b>
<b>Appendix D</b>	<b>Local Levy programme refresh</b>
<b>Appendix E</b>	<b>Local Levy Programme Review – summary of Local Levy Programme 2025-26 to 2026-27</b>
<b>Appendix F</b>	<b>Resource Maintenance programme 2024/25 &amp; 2025/26</b>

**Appendix A**

**Properties better protected – 2024-25 Forecast, Target and Actuals data**

<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>Partnership</b>	<b>2024/25 Forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 Target (for info only)</b>	<b>Actuals</b>
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	Cheshire	12	12	0
Adder Hill Great Boughton	Cheshire	3	3	0
Badgers Rake Lane, Little Sutton	Cheshire	5	5	5
Beetham Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	0	13	0
Biggins Road, Kirkby Lonsdale	Cumbria	0	0	0
Blencarn Park, Rockcliffe Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria	0	0	0
<b>Carlisle Appraisal Package Carlisle</b>	Cumbria	<b>140</b>	0	140
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	Greater Manchester	66	66	0
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Lancashire	0	0	0
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	Merseyside	12	12	0
Cote Beck, Halton Flow Control	Lancashire	0	0	0
Etterby Terrace, Carlisle	Cumbria	0	0	0
Ewan Close, Barrow in Furness	Cumbria	0	68	0
Golburn Clough, Greenfield Oldham	Greater Manchester	6	6	0

Greenbank, Ambleside	Cumbria	7	7	0
Greystoke Surface Water Flood Alleviation	Cumbria	20	20	0
Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	Cumbria	0	15	0
Highgate Kendal Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria	0	0	0
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	Cheshire	26	26	0
Kents Bank Road	Cumbria	18	18	0
Kirkby Stephen Combined Flood Risk	Cumbria	0	0	0
Kirkland Road, Ennerdale Bridge	Cumbria	0	0	0
Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Lancashire	5	0	0
Lindale Road Grange over Sands	Cumbria	23	23	0
Low Crosby	Cumbria	20	0	0
Lumb Brook, West View, Rossendale (GMMC)	Lancashire	50	50	0
Manchester Restoration of Open Channels of Ordinary Watercourses	Greater Manchester	13	13	0
Norbeck Park, Cleator Moor	Cumbria	0	0	0
Old Mill Place, Tattenhall	Cheshire	10	10	0
Penketh and Whittle FRM Scheme	Cheshire	221	221	221
Preston and South Ribble	Lancashire	869	500	0
Radcliffe & Redvales Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester	1,460	1460	0
Rinkfield, Kendal Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria	16	16	0
Roachburn flood alleviation	Cumbria	6	6	0
Ryles Pool Culverted Ordinary Watercourse	Cheshire	10	10	0
School Lane, Staveley	Cumbria	12	12	0
Sefton Strategic Surface Water Management Plan Delivery Programme	Merseyside	10	10	0
Shap Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme	Cumbria	0	28	0
Silloth Groyne Replacement	Cumbria	0	0	0
Smithy Brow, Croft, Warrington	Cheshire	3	3	0
Spittal Farm, Wigton	Cumbria	9	9	0
St Annes Seawall	Lancashire	0	0	0
Tebay Surface Water Alleviation	Cumbria	0	16	0
Walkden Climate Resilient Neighbourhood	Greater Manchester	11	11	0
Warwick Bridge PFR Scheme	Cumbria	16	16	0
Weaste Lane, Thelwall FRM Scheme (Phase A)	Greater Manchester	11	11	0
Whalley Surface Water Improvement Scheme	Lancashire	0	0	0
Whitehaven Harbour Flood Defence Capital Replacement	Cumbria	131	131	0
Woolston Park FRM Scheme	Cheshire	13	13	

<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3234</b>	<b>2840</b>	<b>366</b>
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Partnership	Number of schemes forecasting properties better protected in 2024-25	Total 2024-25 Forecast	Total 2024/25 Target (for info only)	Actuals
Greater Manchester	6	1,567	1567	0
Merseyside	2	22	22	0
Cheshire	9	303	303	226
Cumbria	25	418	398	140
Lancashire	7	924	550	0
Cross-Partnership	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3,234</b>	<b>2,840</b>	366

<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>North West Local Levy 2024-25 – Updated Programme</b>
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Partnership	Scheme Name	RMA Type	2024/25 RFCC scenario (£k)	2024/25 Project Forecast (£k)	Comments (deferred / cancelled?)
Cumbria	Low Crosby Pumping Station	EA		0	LL is no longer required (450k added to balance)
Cumbria	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	LA	100	100	
Cumbria	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	EA	40	40	
Cumbria	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	EA	10	10	
Cumbria	Appleby Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	1,500	1,500	
<b>Cumbria Total</b>			<b>1,650</b>	<b>1,650</b>	
Lancashire	River Calder, Padiham	EA	300	300	
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	300	1,000	700k reprofiled from 2023/24
Lancashire	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	LA	100	100	
Lancashire	Wyre Investment Readiness Project (ID2)	EA	45	35	
Lancashire	Preston and South Ribble	EA	2,000	2,000	
Lancashire	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	EA	20	20	

<b>Lancashire Total</b>			<b>2,765</b>	<b>3,455</b>	
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	EA	247	7	
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	LA	100	100	
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Ryles Pool Ordinary Watercourse Improvement Works (Ryle Street Culvert upgrading and clearance works)	LA	120	120	
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	30	0	Reprofiled for 2025/26
<b>Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total</b>			<b>497</b>	<b>227</b>	
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	EA	1,500	1,200	
Greater Manchester	River Irwell, Kearsley	EA	396	396	
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	LA	100	100	
Greater Manchester	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	50	0	project is not going ahead this year so £50k would be spent in 25/26
<b>Greater Manchester Total</b>			<b>2,046</b>	<b>1,696</b>	
Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	LA	100	100	
<b>Merseyside Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Cross Partnership	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - GMMC (ID16)	EA	197	197	
Cross Partnership	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - C&L (ID16)	EA	143	143	
Cross Partnership	Building Community Resilience - C&L (ID5-7)	EA	125	125	
Cross Partnership	Building Community Resilience - GMMC (ID5-7)	EA	125	125	
Cross Partnership	RFCC Business Plan - Balancing line – C&L	EA	13	0	Funding allocated for RMA Capacity Building Programme (ID15)
Cross Partnership	Asset data sharing and mapping project (ID4/13)	LA	145	156	
Cross Partnership	Support for Partnership Officers - GMMC (ID16)	EA	126	126	Increased RFCC contribution

					approved at April 2024 meeting
Cross Partnership	Potential investment and mapping project (ID1)	LA	25	45	Full £45K project allocation now being claimed in 2024/25 (None claimed 2023/24)
Cross Partnership	RFCC Business Plan - Balancing line -GMMC	EA	13	0	Funding allocated for RMA Capacity Building Programme (ID15)
Cross Partnership	Support for Partnership Officers - C&L (ID16)	EA	84	84	Increased RFCC contribution approved at April 2024 meeting
Cross Partnership	Unpave the Way (ID12)	EA	86	87	
Cross Partnership	Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme (SMP Co-ordinator) (ID16)	LA	50	100	2023/24 and 2024/25 allocations both to be claimed in 2024/25
Cross Partnership	Managing Water at Catchment Scale with Nature - C&L (ID9/19)	EA	0	0	
Cross Partnership	Support for North West RFCC (Business Plan Implementation) (ID16)	EA	30	30	
Cross Partnership	Mersey Forest NFM Tech App Collab (GMMC-led) (ID9A)	EA	30	62	2023/24 and 2024/25 allocations both to be claimed in 2024/25
Cross Partnership	North West RFCC Floods Conference	EA	12	0	
Cross Partnership	Managing Water at Catchment Scale (GMMC)	EA	0	0	
Cross Partnership	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	EA	90	90	
Cross Partnership	Flood Poverty Project (ID8)	LA		16	Costs associated with knowledge sharing - part of original approved allocation
Cross Partnership	Support for Coastal Adaptation (Coastal Centre of Excellence ID17)	LA		25	
<b>Cross Partnership Total</b>			<b>1,292</b>	<b>1,411</b>	
<b>Total Local Levy - North West</b>			<b>8,350</b>	<b>8,539</b>	

<b>Appendix C</b>	<b>REMOVED</b>
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<b>Appendix D</b>	<b>Local Levy programme refresh</b>
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**Local Levy Programme Refresh - Summary of Local Levy Programme 2025-26 to 2026-27**

The total Local Levy current allocation for the period 2025-26 to 2026-27 is £13.3million. The detail of this is outlined below. It is proposed that as part of the process to refresh the Local Levy Strategy, the detail of these individual allocations will be refreshed with stakeholders to ensure they are still required, and an updated report will be brought back to the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup.

**Breakdown of Local Levy (£k) by Partnership**

Allocation (£k)	2025-26		2026-27		Total
	EA	LLFA	EA	LLFA	
Greater Manchester	1500	150	3250	175	5075
Merseyside	0	547	0	1213	1760
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	161	130	141	100	532
Cumbria	40	100	320	100	560
Lancashire	1095	100	2075	100	3370
Cross-Partnership	983.5	50	1018.5	50	2102
<b>Total</b>	<b>3779.5</b>	<b>1077</b>	<b>6804.5</b>	<b>1738</b>	<b>13399</b>



### Number of associated projects by Partnership

No. of schemes	2025-26 to 2026-27		Total
	EA	LLFA	
Greater Manchester	5	3	8
Merseyside	0	3	3
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	1	2	3
Cumbria	3	1	4
Lancashire	4	1	5
Cross-Partnership	14	1	15
Total	27	11	38

### APPENDIX E – DETAIL OF PROJECTS BY PARTNERSHIP

Partnership	RMA	Name	2025-26 (£k)	2026-27 (£k)	Total (£k)
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	EA	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	161	141	302
	<b>EA Total</b>				<b>302</b>
	LLFA	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme	30	0	30
	LLFA	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	100	100	200
	<b>LLFA total</b>				<b>230</b>
Cross Partnership	EA	Building Community Resilience - C&L (ID5-7)	125	125	250
	EA	Managing Water at Catchment Scale with Nature - C&L (ID9/19)	15	15	30
	EA	Innovation and Change Fund (Balancing line for remainder of BP investment) - C&L	5	50	55
	EA	Support for Partnership Officers - C&L (ID16)	84	84	168
	EA	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - C&L (ID16)	143	143	286
	EA	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	60	0	60
	EA	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - GMMC (ID16)	196.5	196.5	393
	EA	Building Community Resilience - GMMC (ID5-7)	125	125	250
	EA	Unpave the Way (Front gardens) (ID12) - GMMC	54	54	108
	EA	Support for North West RFCC (Business Plan Implementation) (ID16) - GMMC	30	30	60
	EA	Mersey Forest NFM Tech App Collab (GMMC-led) (ID9A)	15	15	30
	EA	Support for Partnership Officers - GMMC (ID16)	126	126	252
	EA	Innovation and Change Fund (Balancing line for remainder of BP investment)	5	50	55
	EA	North West RFCC Floods Conference - GMMC	0	5	5
		<b>EA Total</b>			
	LLFA	Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme (SMP Co-ordinator) (ID16)	50	50	100
	<b>LLFA Total</b>				<b>100</b>
Cumbria	EA	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	30	10	40
		Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	10	10	20
		South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	0	300	300
		<b>EA Total</b>			<b>360</b>
	LLFA	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	100	100	200
	<b>LLFA Total</b>				<b>200</b>
Lancashire	EA	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	50	30	80
		Wyre Investment Readiness Project (ID2)	45	45	90
		Preston and South Ribble	0	2000	2000
		Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	1000	0	1000
		<b>EA Total</b>			<b>3170</b>
	LLFA	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	100	100	200
	<b>LLFA Total</b>				<b>200</b>
Greater Manchester	EA	Alder Forest, Eccles	400	0	400
		River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	500	500	1000
		River Irwell, Kearsley	600	1800	2400
		Greater Manchester Culvert Refurbishment Package	0	500	500
		Hindley Group	0	450	450
		<b>EA Total</b>			<b>4750</b>
		LLFA	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	50	0
		Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	100	100	200
		Heywood Surface Water Management Programme	0	75	75
	<b>LLFA Total</b>				<b>325</b>
Merseyside	LLFA	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	100	100	200
	LLFA	Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral	447	113	560
	LLFA	Crosby Marine Lake to Formby Point Coastal Scheme	0	1000	1000
		<b>LLFA Total</b>			<b>1760</b>
	<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>4856.5</b>	<b>8542.5</b>	<b>13399</b>





## 24/25 Maintenance Delivery Quarter 2 update



### Resource Maintenance Update Position

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

#### 1.0 What have we delivered this quarter?

##### Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire

Didsbury Flood Storage Reservoir inlet maintenance



Clearing vegetation using chainsaws, Pennington Brook



Invasive weed spraying, Jubilee Park, Atherton



Clearing blockages on the River Irk, Manchester





**Cumbria and Lancashire**

Incident Response training – testing our mobile pumps and pipework.



Extensive in channel fly tipping causing blockage risk, Middleton.



Tree removal work on the Lune to include hedge laying to increase the biodiversity of the Area.

We have completed our annual S12 Inspections at all our Reservoir Sites, including Water Heys below. This is to keep us compliant with the Reservoir Act.



Routine Maintenance work on Thacka Beck in Penrith, Cumbria.

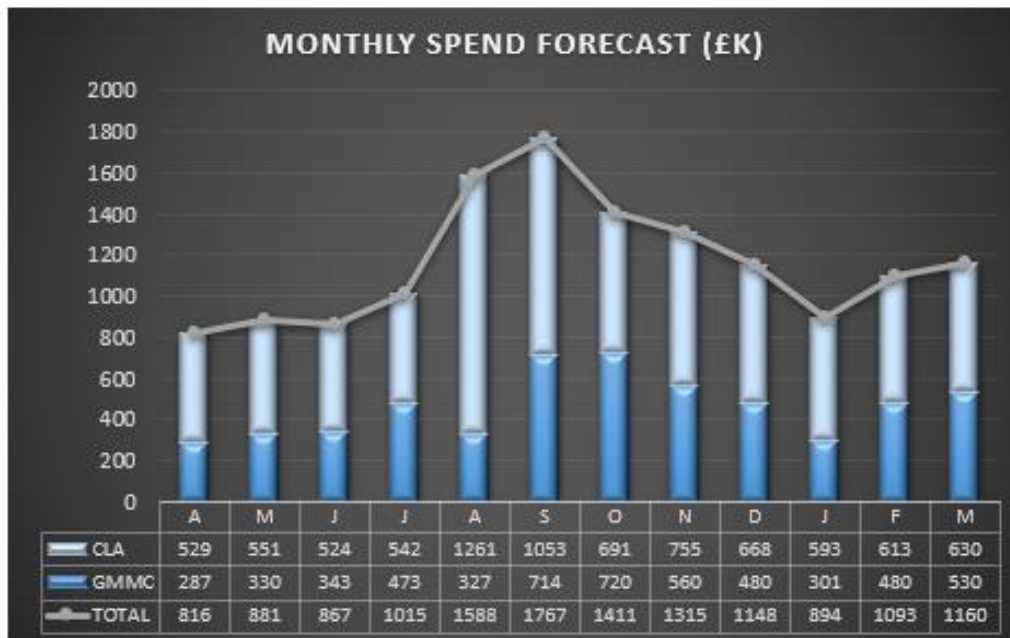


2.0 Maintenance budget

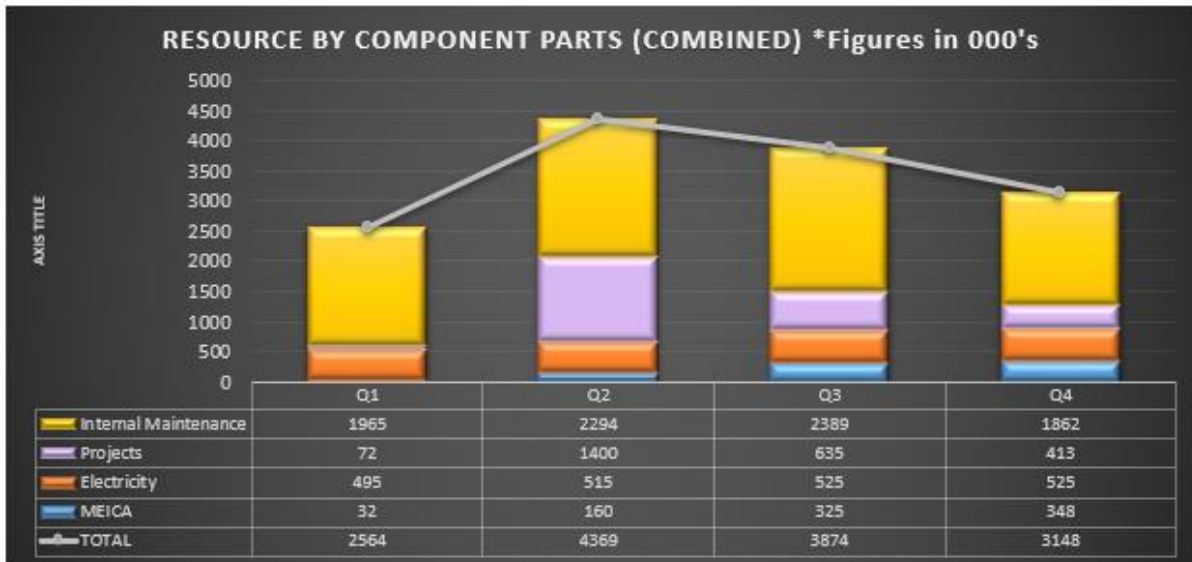
The graph below shows the allocated budget for the year, due to pressure on Maintenance budgets across the whole organisation in 2024-2025 our forecasted end of year position is to be within budget. The exception to this is the Flood Storage Basin compensation payments which are a legal obligation in CLA and CLA electricity payments for operation of our assets. This years these two items were not correctly funded in the allocation model from national and this has been corrected for 2025-2026. GMMC are forecasting slightly under budget to balance over forecasting in other Areas of FCRM Operations.

	GMMC	CLA	TOTAL
<b>APT Budget (£000)</b>	5697	6250	11947
<b>Yr End Forecast</b>	5545	8410	13955
<b>Variance %</b>	97%	135%	

Below is the current monthly spend forecast profile for 2025-2026.







GMMC					
Quarter	MEICA	Electricity	Projects	Internal Maintenance	TOTAL
Q1	2	30	41	887	960
Q2	50	50	265	1149	1514
Q3	100	60	300	1300	1760
Q4	98	60	350	803	1311
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>956</b>	<b>4139</b>	<b>5545</b>

CLA					
Quarter	MEICA	Electricity	Projects	Internal Maintenance	TOTAL
Q1	30	465	31	1078	1604
Q2	110	465	1135	1145	2855
Q3	225	465	335	1089	2114
Q4	250	465	63	1059	1837
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>1860</b>	<b>1564</b>	<b>4372</b>	<b>8410</b>

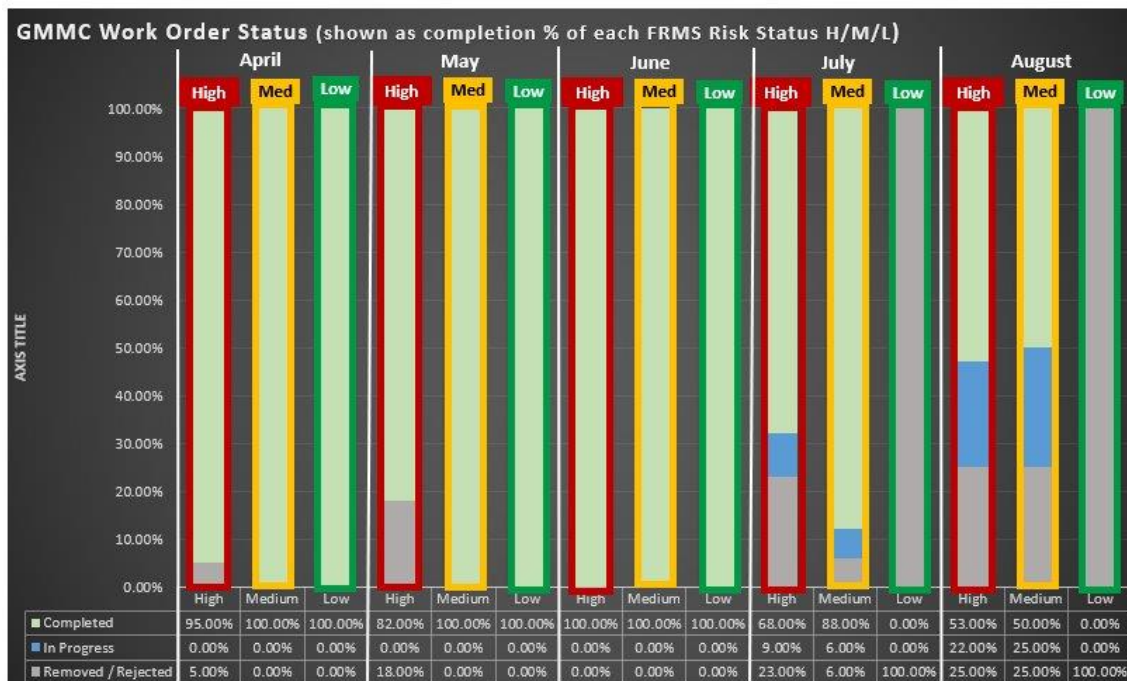
TOTAL					
Quarter	MEICA	Electricity	Projects	Internal Maintenance	TOTAL
Q1	32	495	72	1965	2564
Q2	160	515	1400	2294	4369
Q3	325	525	635	2389	3874
Q4	348	525	413	1862	3148
<b>Total</b>	<b>865</b>	<b>2060</b>	<b>2520</b>	<b>8511</b>	<b>13955</b>

The chart above shows the breakdown of budgetary spend per quarter across the main spend routes of internal maintenance, projects, electricity and MEICA. Due to pressure on budgets, there is a smaller proportion of maintenance and projects being delivered this year, over the past two years we have experienced a 35% real term reduction in our maintenance budget due to budget reductions and increased inflation costs. This means we are unable to deliver as much maintenance as we have done before.

## 2.1 Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Maintenance Progress

Below shows the breakdown of frequent maintenance in Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire delivered over the year. The graph demonstrates progress

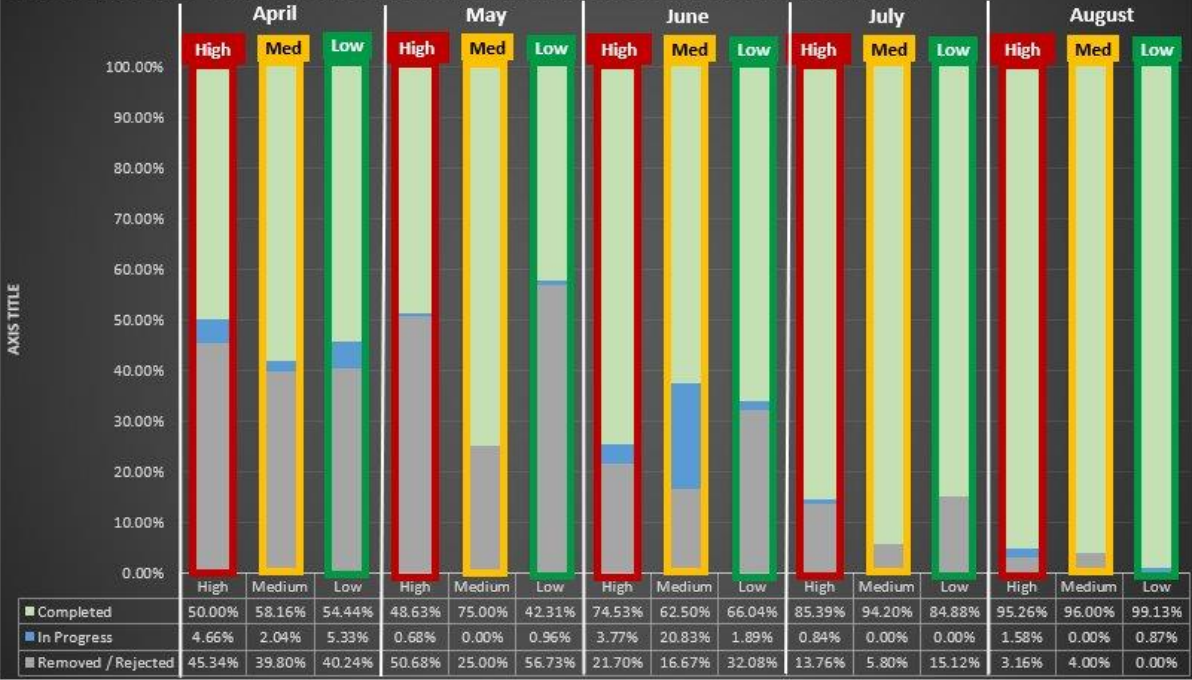
to date on completed work orders for the maintenance programme. The graph shows the maintenance distribution across High, Medium and Low risk systems, with a focus on completing maintenance in High and Medium risk systems. Approximately 40% of the externally delivered maintenance program has been brought back in house for Field Team Delivery to keep within budget. This switch of high-risk system work completion is reflected in July and August's figures as work is reprogrammed. Lower risk work, third party inspections on assets such as culverts have been dropped from the Field Team programme to accommodate this switch.



## 2.2 Cumbria and Lancashire Maintenance Progress

Below is the breakdown of frequent maintenance in Cumbria and Lancashire delivered throughout the year and shows completed progress against total planned programme. This year we are focusing our efforts on our Strategically Important Assets, our Environment Agency maintained assets in high and medium risk systems and those assets we have legal obligation for. They may be some elements of our maintenance programme that we are unable to delivered due to resource and budgets.

**CLA Work Order Status (shown as completion % of each FRMS Risk Status (H/M/L))**





### 3.0 Key messages and Challenges

#### Budgets for 2024-2025

Areas have been asked to spend to budget and forecasts should be in-line with budgets. In CLA we have a £2.1million pound overspend for Flood Basin Compensation payments and electricity costs

#### Framework Renewals

The Environment Agency's new Asset OMR Framework has been launched in April 2024 and we are building relationships with our new suppliers. New processes and Contracts have resulted in some Contract6s taking time to be put in place

There is Uncertainty around future funding. We are likely to be in a similar position next year.

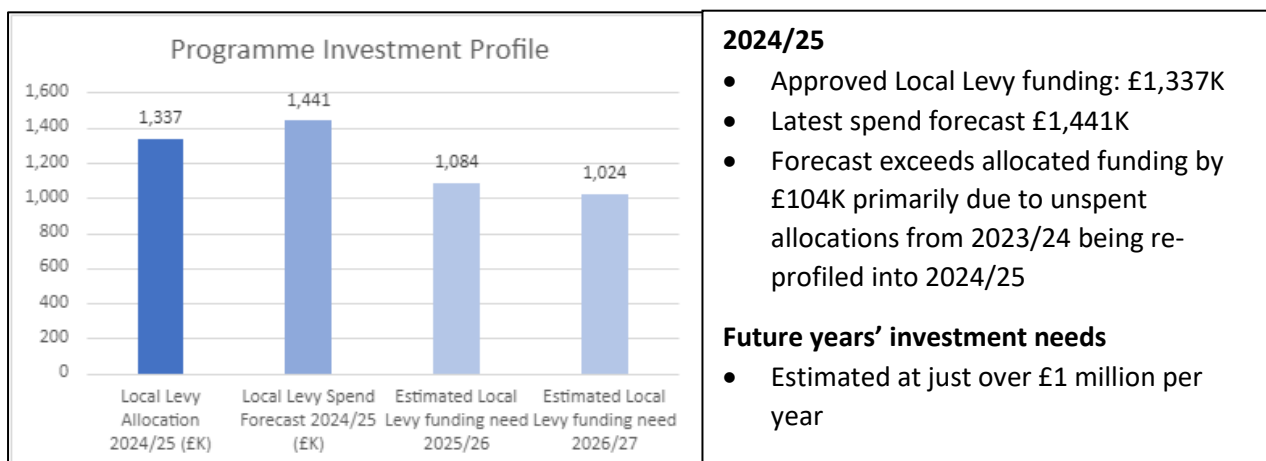
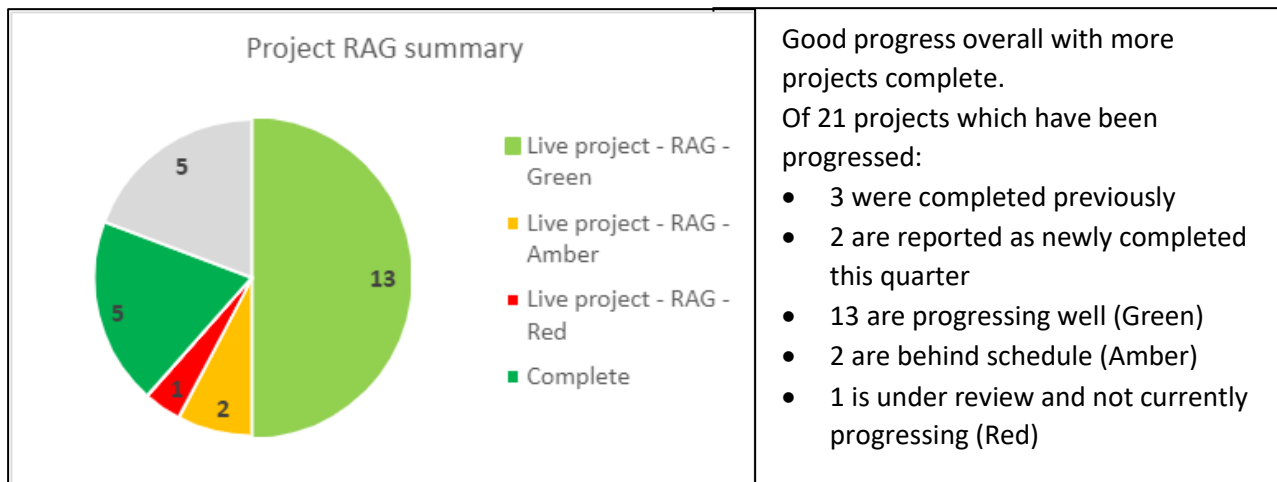
Budgetary pressures mean Staff Resources are stretched.

Not undertaking maintenance or inspection of lower risk or third-party assets that have traditionally been undertaken. Communicating this to riparian owners who may undertake this work themselves will take already thin staff resource.

**NORTH WEST RFCC FINANCE & BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING  
4 OCTOBER 2024**

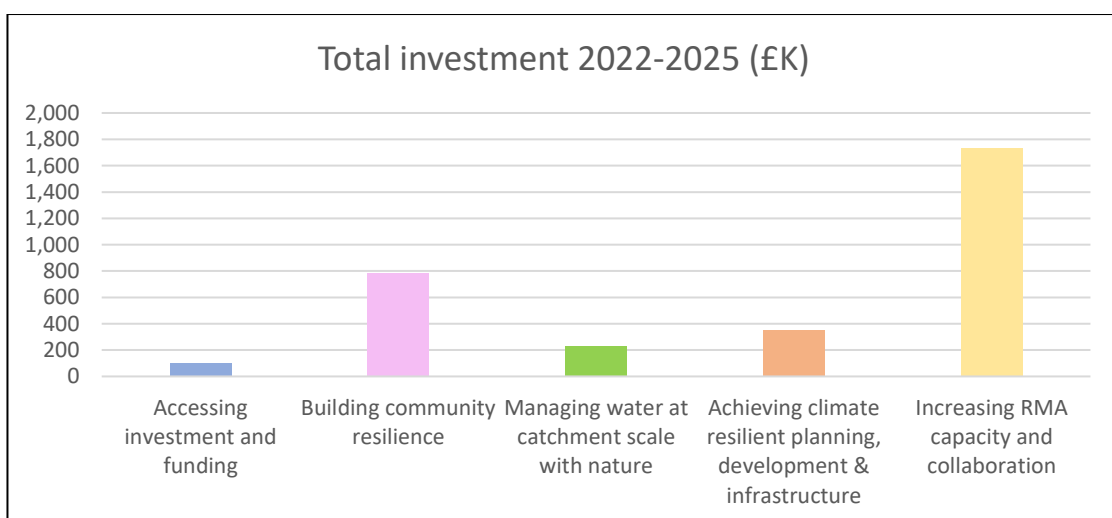
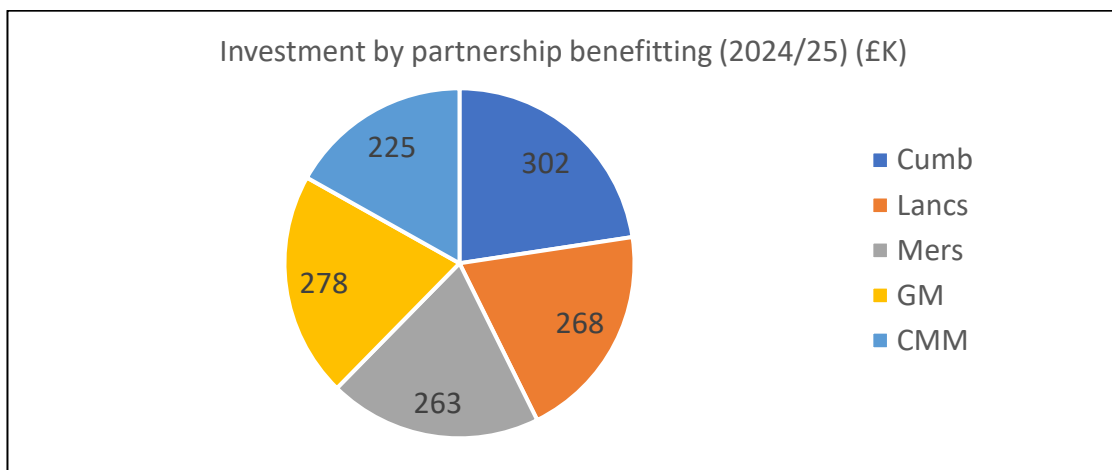
**North West RFCC Business Plan  
Quarterly Progress report – October 2024**

**1. Progress Dashboard**



<b>2024/25 Investment profile by Ambition</b>			
<b>Ambition</b>	<b>Local Levy allocation (£K)</b>	<b>Spend/claim forecast (£K)</b>	<b>Variance (£K)</b>
Accessing investment and funding	70	80	10
Building community resilience	250	265	15
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	132	152	20
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	231	240	9
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	654	704	50
	<b>1,337</b>	<b>1,441</b>	<b>104</b>

Project Status by Ambition						
Ambition	No. of projects approved	Closed down (or merged)	Complete	Live project - RAG - Green	Live project - RAG - Amber	Live project - RAG - Red
Accessing investment and funding	5	3	0	2	0	0
Building community resilience	5	0	1	4	0	0
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	5	0	2	2	0	1
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	6	2	1	3	0	0
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	0	1	2	2	0
	<b>26</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>



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

## 2. Actions completed

### 2.1. ID8 Flood Poverty Project

The Flood Poverty Project has been led by Rochdale Borough Council and the National Flood Forum. The project has provided better understanding of the factors affecting 'flood poverty' and their impact. It carried out a neighbourhood scale review in two locations within Rochdale Borough and a programme of demonstration and dissemination to test, share and recommend practical approaches to addressing 'flood poverty' issues and achieving more sustainable property level resilience outside of post flood event recovery schemes. It has provided a body of evidence and practice that supports and complements national work streams. The executive summary of the final project report is available on the National Flood Forum's website [here](#).



The project was originally supported by the RFCC in October 2020, prior to the current 2022-25 version of the Business Plan. The original Local Levy allocation was £134K. Work commenced in 2021/22 and as an approved ongoing project it was incorporated as an action in the 2022-25 Business Plan. £52.5K was claimed in 2021/22. A further £60.5K was claimed in 2023/24. Following the preparation of the final report of the project's findings, there has been ongoing work to share the learning through a presentation to the RFCC in January 2024, a stakeholder workshop in July, and a follow-up virtual workshop in September. A forecast of £16K for these activities has been captured. This marks the conclusion of the project but there will be ongoing sharing of the learning and many of the recommendations will be pursued and progressed as part of the Resilient Roch project.

### 2.2. ID21 Highways SuDS Design Guide

This project has been led by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM). It has been funded by GMCA, TfGM, United Utilities, the RFCC (£20K) and the EU Natural Course project.

It is a technical guide to support the delivery of more SuDS in complex urban environments that are buildable, adoptable, maintainable and value for money, both as retrofit (street improvement schemes) and as part of new developments. It will lead to greater resilience of highway networks, provide an agreed approach to designing and delivering SuDS, promotes consistency, quality and supports delivery. It increases officers' knowledge, skills, and confidence to promote and deliver SuDS, and will become a platform for engagement with developers.



The guide has been created in the context of Greater Manchester but the content is applicable and transferable to other urban areas across the North West.

There will be a presentation on the guide at the October RFCC meeting and access to the guide will be made available shortly.

**Asks of the FBASG:**

The Sub Group are asked to formally recognise the completion of:

- ID8 Flood Poverty project
- ID21 Highways SuDS Design Guide

### 3. Project proposal

#### 3.1. Unpave the Way (ID12) – Project extension

The Unpave the Way Project has been a great success over the past 15 months with some key highlights including an innovative Show Feature Garden at RHS Tatton which showcased a sustainable front garden design to visitors and gained national recognition on BBC Gardeners World TV. The earlier showcasing of the ‘Rainwater Capture Cube’ at the RHS Urban Show launched the concept of sustainable drainage (SuDS) to the public. These exhibitions have been complemented by new online resources and a growing social media presence.

The project’s primary target audience thus far has been householders as they have ultimate control over driveway creation at their homes. However, we are clear that there are many other sectors that influence householders’ decision making who we also need to inform and influence.

The Unpave the Way Project Team is therefore proposing a three-year extension so that the project can build on its initial success and broaden its sphere of influence to engage with these sectors. The additional Local Levy investment requested is £200k. Further details on the proposed project objectives and plan are provided in Appendix B.

**Ask of the FBASG:**

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are asked to reflect on the success to date, consider the proposal, and support the continuation of the project for a further three years with an additional Local Levy funding contribution of £200k.

## Appendix A

## RFCC Business Plan – Project Updates

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Forecast 2024/25 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
<b>ACCESSING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING</b>								
ID1	Investment mapping project	Green	<p>This project is looking at the range of potential investment sources available for flood risk measures, primarily for LLFAs, collating them into a data tool, and exploring options for making detailed information on these more accessible and easier to identify.</p> <p>After some earlier slippage from schedule, the project is now on track with the revised programme, with ongoing development of the funding source database, the first workshops complete and the face-to-face workshop being held in October.</p>	25	45	45	0	0
ID2.1	Investment in the dev't of innovative green finance mechs - Wyre Catchment CIC	Green	<p>Installation of NFM measures by the project has been ongoing and is on track for completion by March 2025. Adrian Lythgo currently represents the RFCC on the Project Buyers Group, attending twice-yearly meetings. Reports are also being received by the project on the NFM measures and monitoring being installed.</p> <p>A presentation on the learning from the project was provided to the Sub Group meeting in July 2024.</p>	45	35	55	45	45
<b>BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</b>								
ID5	The Flood Hub	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistently seeing over 20,000 page views per month now, significant growth in the last 2 years.</li> <li>Over 280 websites now link to The Flood Hub.</li> <li>New content this quarter includes new pages on the Unpave the Way project to complement the RHS garden exhibits (along with associated social media support),</li> </ul>	115	115	330	115	115

AGENDA ITEM 6.1

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Forecast 2024/25 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
			<p>promotion of the new EA guidance for riparian owners, and a new landowner toolkit signposting resources on flooding, resilience and riparian ownership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New educational material including 2023/24 Storm Season Top Trumps and a GCSE case study on Storm Babet. Educational resources continue to receive really positive feedback.</li> <li>• Ongoing updates to FCERM scheme sections especially on the Kendal and Carlisle Phase 1B schemes. These pages continue to receive lots of views.</li> <li>• Social media campaigns run this quarter include ‘Types of Flooding’, Flood Safety Focus Week and promotion of new educational material.</li> </ul>					
ID5A	The Flood Hub - National expansion	Green	We are exploring a small-scale trial with one other RFCC to test how the site and the supporting management resource can be adapted and developed to allow more than just North West RFCC to use and benefit from the site. Ultimately the aim is that this could lead to a sharing of the ongoing costs of maintaining and developing the site between RFCCs. No additional cost will be incurred by the North West RFCC. Currently approval is being sought from the other RFCC for the funding that will be needed to continue the trial.	0	0	<b>0</b>	0	0
ID6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	Green	This is a smaller part of the work programme being delivered by Newground. Ongoing liaison and support for the Coastal Group as required. Some of direct community engagement supported by Newground has been with coastal communities.	10	10	<b>30</b>	10	10
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	Green	This quarter, The Flood Hub team have:	124.55	124.55	<b>369</b>	124.55	124.55

AGENDA ITEM 6.1

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Forecast 2024/25 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported numerous members of the public in matters such as how to prevent internal flooding using property flood resilience measures.</li> <li>Attended 9 partnership meetings</li> <li>Supported risk management authorities (EA, LAs and UU) in engagement events with communities in Chester, St Helens, Liverpool (Alt NFM Catchment Project), Prestolee and West Derby.</li> <li>Continue to support Lancashire Local Resilience Forum’s Community Resilience Sub Group.</li> <li>Received and responded to 34 Flood Hub website enquiries, some with further emails and phone calls for advice, support and guidance, as well as some property visits. Enquiries come primarily from within the North West (64%) but others come from the wider UK.</li> </ul>					
ID8	Flood Poverty Project	Complete	See section 2.1 for summary	0	15.5	128.5	0	0
<b>MANAGING WATER AT CATCHMENT SCALE WITH NATURE</b>								
ID9	Whole catchment approach - GM IWMP Learning	Complete	An additional commission was given to the consultants (Jacobs) who are supporting on the development of the GM Integrated Water Management Plan, to carry out an in-depth, lessons learned exercise to extract transferable learning more widely. Work is complete and the outputs and learning have been shared widely. Opportunities to do this on an ongoing basis will be taken.	0	0	16.57	0	0
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	62	90	30	30



AGENDA ITEM 6.1

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Forecast 2024/25 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ID19	NFM project delivery	Complete	Forest Hills (£30K) was completed in 2022/23. Smithy Brook (£9K) project completed in August 23.	0	0	39	0	0
ID20	Land management engagement	Red	Consideration of a possible engagement event to focus on land management and flood risk remains under consideration by the Cumbria partnership.	12	0	17	5	5
ID22	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	Green	This project will develop a pipeline programme of potential Natural Flood Management projects which could be progressed should funding become available in the future. The tools and techniques developed/used will be shared with all the partnerships with a view to extending the approach in the future. The initial phase of the project is on track.	90	90	150	32.5	0
<b>ACHIEVING CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT &amp; INFRASTRUCTURE</b>								
ID10	Evidence gathering – Climate resilience within planning & dev't	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 available via the RFCC Sharepoint site once launched and are available on request. A second round of projects was carried out in 2023/24 focussing on planning conditions and enforcement. The draft reports are currenting being reviewed.	0	0	0	0	0
ID12	Action campaign – Unpave the Way	Green	Project has successfully developed a SuDS exhibition at the RHS Urban Show in April and a show feature garden at the RHS Tatton Show in July. This has been really well received and has received publicity and media coverage with the reach of the project continuing to grow. This report contains a proposal to continue the project beyond the currenting funded period up to March 2025, to build on this success and progress.	86	87	138	60	60
ID4/13	Data sharing and mapping of	Green	Project being led jointly by Greater Manchester and Merseyside partnerships.	145	153	197	0	0

AGENDA ITEM 6.1

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Forecast 2024/25 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
	flood risk and drainage assets		Phase 1 (Audit of LLFA Asset Registers) complete and report produced. Phase 2 (Case studies and mapping of asset data sharing challenges) almost complete with report currently being finalised. Phase 3 now in planning to engage stakeholders in these case study areas to explore more joined-up, collaborative approaches to asset maintenance). Links being actively made throughout with relevant national initiatives led by the EA and wider government. A presentation on the first two phases will be provided at the 18 October RFCC meeting.					
ID21	Highways SuDS Design Guide	Complete	See section 2.2 for summary	0	0	20	0	0
<b>INCREASING RMA CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION</b>								
ID14	LA capital project delivery challenges	Complete	Project complete as a specific Business Plan action. Ongoing activity is now through the LA Capital Project Advisers and ID15 (Capacity Building Programme)	0	0	0	0	0
ID15	Risk management authority capacity building programme	Green	Ongoing activity, led by the Capital Programme Co-ordinator and the team of LA Capital Project Advisers, to identify RMA training and development needs, to respond to this directly or to secure wider national provision of training, feeding into the development of EA national training provision generally, and signposting and helping LAs to effectively use the national Sharepoint site on developing capital projects. There is a small amount of Local Levy funding allocated to support training activity but wherever possible opportunities to tap into national EA training budgets are progressed so that no Local Levy is needed.	25	0	25	0	0
ID16	Additional capacity (to support the	Green	Partnership Co-ordinators – all five roles filled and ongoing with funding approved to March 2027.	629	679	1,708	629	629

AGENDA ITEM 6.1

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Approved Allocation 2024/25 (£K)	Forecast 2024/25 (£K)	Total anticipated investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Estimated investment need 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
	RFCC, partnerships and RMAs)		LA Capital Project Advisers – all five roles filled and ongoing with funding approved to March 2027. Capital Senior Co-ordinator – role filled and ongoing to 2027. Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator – role filled, ongoing and funding approved to March 2026. RFCC Business Plan implementation – role filled and ongoing.					
ID17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - Develop business case	Amber	There has been some exploratory work done including survey and workshop. Work now to be led by a new RFCC member sponsor. The work to date is being formally written up so that next steps can be established. Progress is behind schedule due to resource constraints.	0	25	25	0	0
ID18	RFCC Sharepoint site	Amber	Development of the site is well underway but the amount of content means this has taken time and resource and due to resource shortages and other priorities, it is slightly behind schedule. Launch has slipped further and is now expected to take place during the next quarter.	0	0	0	0	0

**Appendix B****Project Extension Proposal – Unpave the Way****1. Background**

The Unpave the Way project has been ongoing since May 2023. It has been supported by the Lancashire partnership and United Utilities with a committed core project team of colleagues from the EA, UU, Lancashire County Council and the Lancashire partnership.

**2. Objective**

The objective of the project is to inform and inspire householders to make different, more sustainable choices for the design and surfacing of their front gardens, instead of fully impermeable paved driveways. This creates additional surface water run-off which cumulatively is increasing the risk of surface water flooding. It also adds to urban water pollution, reduces biodiversity for wildlife, enhances urban heating, and makes for less green and less healthy urban environments. The project has also taken a critical stance on artificial grass and its negative environmental impacts.

**3. Progress and success to date**

The original approval for the project was for a 2-year period (up to May 2025), the primary cost being the project manager resource to undertake influencing activities. Quite quickly we recognised the opportunity to display a show feature garden at the RHS Tatton flower show (in July 2024) to showcase new and inspiring ideas for greener and more sustainably drained front gardens. The project procured RHS Gold medal and award-winning garden designer Leon Davis to design and construct the garden. In addition, we took the opportunity to showcase some of the SuDS features from the Unpave the Way Garden at the RHS Urban Show in Manchester in April 2024, in order to reach a younger, more urban, and possibly less affluent demographic. The RFCC supported these significant project deliverables with up to £35K of additional funding and United Utilities also provided a funding contribution of £20K. We have worked with a couple of suppliers of sustainable drainage products who provided support and in-kind contributions for the garden. Both show exhibits also used on-loan SuDS House models to illustrate and educate visitors on the effectiveness of SuDS in front gardens.

Creating such a visible and appealing deliverable from the project has been a huge success and has had a much bigger reach and impact. The garden was featured on BBC North West tonight who reported that the 'buzzword of this year's show is 'SuDS'', it had a great, 3-minute piece on BBC Gardener's World, and Leon was interviewed for The Earth Show on Radio Alty (covering Altrincham and the surrounding area). The RHS have been extremely supportive of the project, as the message aligns with their aims, and we were given the opportunity of a 1-hour talk on the main stage at Tatton which featured Leon, the project partners, and we were also supported by Janet Manning, the RHS's Water Reduction Manager. The project has created webpages on the Flood Hub and will be continuing to build and develop this content to provide more practical information and ideas for householders. The project has also established a social media

presence (Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn) and has a growing following on these platforms, boosted significantly by the appearance at the shows.

The Tatton Garden was actually comprised of two, adjacent front gardens, one of which was a lower budget option showing how to retrofit SuDS features and permeable paving options into an existing garden. The other was a higher budget, new design garden featuring new permeable paving options and a more contemporary feel.



RHS Urban Show exhibit, April 2024



RHS Tatton Show feature garden, July 2024



Main stage talk, Tatton show

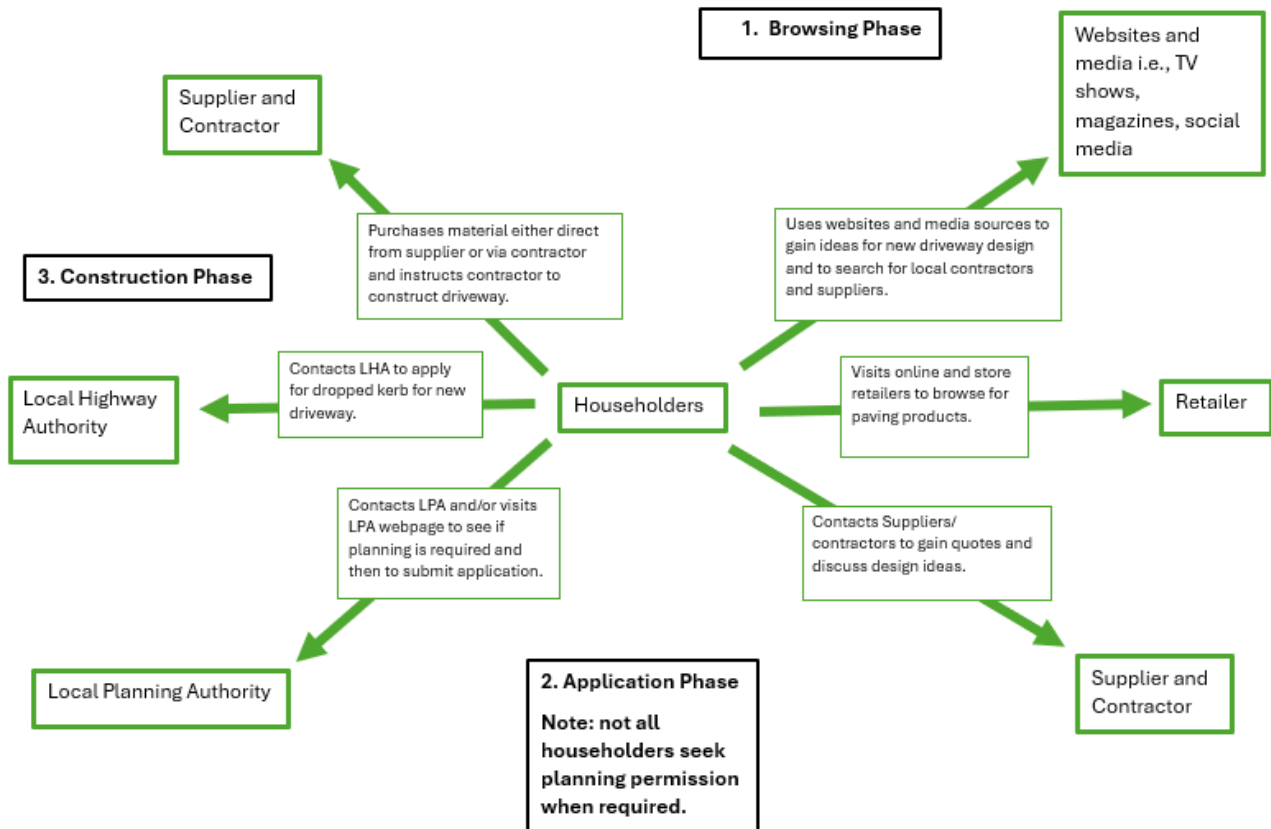


BBC Gardeners World feature

The garden is currently being relocated to its permanent home in Whitaker Park in Rawtenstall where it will continue to showcase the features and design ideas, leaving a lasting legacy from the project. Lancashire County Council have played a key role in identifying this as a location and in engaging with the local district council (Rossendale) and community groups. Once complete, we will be running an ongoing organised programme of hosted events to reach different groups and audiences, but the garden will have a passive influencing effect on anyone using the park. There will be clear signage and information boards to convey understanding without needing active communication from the project. Rossendale Council, the park and museum staff, the civic pride group and other park-based community groups are really happy and excited to be receiving the garden and will provide the long-term maintenance. An opening ceremony attended by the Rawtenstall Mayor will be held on 5 October. The RFCC meeting on 18 October is being held at Whitaker Park Museum to give Members the opportunity to see the re-constructed garden for themselves.

#### 4. Target sectors

The project recognised from the outset that influencing householders directly is a key element but there is a whole network of information and inspiration sources surrounding householders which also need to be influencing and nudging householders to make greener and more sustainable front garden design choices. This network is illustrated here.



In order for the project to have a real impact, it needs to seek to influence all the relevant sectors to ultimately influence the choices that householders make.

## 5. Project plan and duration

Delivering the garden displays at the RHS Urban and Tatton shows has been a significant undertaking and has taken the majority of the project time and resource in the first 17 months. Work on other deliverables, and engagement with other sectors, has had to be limited. Now we have the show garden in its permanent home, the growing social media reach, some informative data, and some sector connections, on which to build and continue to influence positive change.

The relocated garden at Whitaker Park will be formally opened in October 2024. Over the coming months, there will be further development of the project webpages on The Flood Hub, there will be some showcasing of the relocated garden, and some of the work with local authorities across the Northwest will commence. However, this will be the extent of the remaining activity that is possible up to May 2025, with the current funding.

The project team have been reviewing the project plan and gathering feedback from partner organisations. Given its high-profile success and the significant opportunity to build on this, the project is proposing that the duration and RFCC funding support for the project be extended by 3 years. Establishing a presence and bringing about real change in a range of different sectors inevitably takes time.

## 6. Sectors and deliverables

### HOUSEHOLDERS

**Objective:** For householders to retain as much greenspace as possible within their front gardens, choose permeable paving for driveways and better manage their rainwater using sustainable drainage (SuDS) and rainwater harvesting.

**Activities/Deliverables:**

1. **Creation of Householder SuDS Design Guide** – Focusing on Rainwater Harvesting and SuDS at a householder scale.
  - Include DIY Guides for the most popular features from the Unpave the Way Garden.
  - Distribute Guide to householders by making it downloadable via social media, Unpave the Way webpage and local authority webpages.
2. **Continued management of Unpave the Way webpage and social media channels**
  - Grow informative and helpful content available for householders on webpage and social media.
  - Plan focused awareness weeks to be hosted on social media highlighting the impacts of impermeable paving, the benefits of SuDS, design ideas, what to ask garden designers/ driveway contractors. Awareness week to be coordinated between EA, Flood Hub, UU, NW LA's.
3. **Media engagement** to distribute project messaging.
  - Engage with media outlets i.e., radio station interviews, news articles, magazines, podcasts.
  - Explore opportunity for a UU TV Commercial focused on saving and slowing the flow of rainwater outside homes.
4. **Support United Utilities project related initiatives**
  - United Utilities is currently considering householder feedback from the RHS Urban and Tatton Shows.
  - Support United Utilities new initiatives/incentives for householders to encourage application of permeable paving and water butts into front gardens.

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES

**Objective:** For Local Authorities to more actively guide householders to make sustainable front garden design choices, through the information they provide on their websites, in planning documents, and through the development management process.

**Activities/Deliverables:**

1. **Engagement (with LLFA, LPA and Highways)** to raise awareness of the project, explore opportunities and trial initiatives, such as:
  - Planning applications informative.
  - Improvements to dropped kerb application process.
  - Promotion of 2008 planning permission requirement.
  - Enforcement action for impermeable driveways without planning consent.
2. **Webpage template for local authorities promoting SuDS for householders**
3. **Standard pro forma guidance on SuDS as part of pre app advice**
4. **Influence local policy changes in local plans and supplementary planning documents (SPDs)** to promote permeable driveways as standard in new minor and major development.



We have started the process of engaging with Local Authorities, some of whom who have already expressed a keen interest to work with the project to trial new initiatives.

### GARDEN/DRIVEWAY CONTRACTORS

**Objective:** For contractors to inform their clients about sustainable drainage, flood risk and the planning permission requirement. For contractors to offer sustainable design options with permeable paving and retained green space (and to dissuade the use of artificial grass).

#### Activities/Deliverables:

##### 1. Engagement with contractors/suppliers

- Organise meetings and workshops with contractors and suppliers to raise awareness of the project within these industries, understand barriers to permeable paving incorporation, gain feedback, and explore opportunities for new initiatives which promote permeable paving products as the first option for driveways.
- Promote widespread adoption of the Unpave the Way Contractor Checklist to improve surface water management and reduce flood risk.
- Promote signposting of the 2008 5m2 planning permission requirement on contractors' websites.

##### 2. Market Research

- Conduct research regarding influencing small business contractors which operate on a community scale.

##### 3. Collaborate with industry associations/educational institutions

- Establish working relationships with related associations such as Interpave to explore initiatives to promote better front garden design and increased uptake of permeable driveways.
- Work with professional industry bodies (Interlay and BALI), colleges and companies offering apprenticeships to embed new course content focusing on flood risk, surface water drainage, permeable paving and SuDS.
- Explore new learning opportunities within the industry such as a contractor training academy with online courses/webinars which promote permeable paving and sustainable drainage to existing contractors.

### MATERIAL SUPPLIERS (BUILDERS MERCHANTS, GARDEN CENTRES)

**Objective:** For suppliers and retailers to promote permeable paving, sustainable drainage and rainwater harvesting to customers and to dissuade the use of artificial grass.

#### Activities/Deliverables:

- Engage with suppliers and retail stores to understand what permeable paving products they have available for purchase.
- Increase suppliers/retailers' awareness of the project and knowledge of SuDS.
- Encourage diversification of permeable paving and SuDS products amongst existing product stock.
- Provide project leaflets for retail stores and content for websites and social media.
- Explore opportunities for permeable paving/ SuDS display in stores.



## COMMUNITIES/COMMUNITY GROUPS

**Objective:** For individuals within community groups to retain greenspace in their front gardens, choose permeable paving for driveways and use SuDS, and to then influence householders' choices within their wider community.

### Activities/Deliverables:

1. **Engagement with Rawtenstall/Rossendale community groups** - permanent location of the Unpave the Way Garden.
  - Engage with local community groups to conduct guided tours of the Unpave the Way Garden and increase knowledge of sustainable drainage (SuDS) and flood risk.
  - Explore opportunities for community driven depave initiatives on impermeable front gardens.
2. **Collaboration with Flood Action Groups**
  - Supply informative material, leaflets and posters for them to distribute amongst the community.
  - Attend community drop in events to raise awareness of the project amongst communities.
  - Explore opportunities for community driven depave initiatives on impermeable front gardens.
3. **Engagement with Community Groups across the North West** with shared interests in the project.
  - Engage with 'In Bloom' Groups, Civic Pride Groups, Parish Councils and environmental/sustainability minded groups by attending meetings and community events to share project messaging.
  - Supply informative content to share on social media and leaflets/posters for them to distribute amongst the community.

## HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

**Objective:** For Housing Associations to implement permeable driveways as standard in new housing stock and to consider retrofitting SuDS into existing housing stock where appropriate within flood risk areas.

### Activities/Deliverables

1. **Engagement with housing associations**
  - Attend meetings to raise awareness of the project, understand barriers to permeable paving and small-scale SuDS incorporation, gain feedback, and explore opportunities for a change in housing design approach.
2. **Determine viability of new initiatives such as:**
  - Change in policy for permeable driveways to be included as standard in new housing stock.
  - Retrofit initiatives for existing housing stock such as, removal/reduction of existing impermeable paving, incorporation of small-scale SuDS (i.e., rain gardens) and water butts.

## HOUSING DEVELOPERS

**Objective:** For Housing Developers to implement permeable driveways as standard on new development and to include householder scale SuDS.

### Activities/Deliverables

#### 1. Engagement with housing developers

Attend meetings and workshops to raise awareness of the project, understand barriers to permeable paving and small-scale SuDS incorporation in new development, gain feedback, and explore opportunities for a change in new housing design approach.

#### 2. Determine viability of new initiatives such as:

- Project leaflets in show home/ given out in new homeowner packs.
- Sustainable garden example in show home/development.
- Payment initiative: homebuyers have the option to choose sustainable garden features during the building process.
- Test site/pilot scheme for incorporation of permeable driveways on new development.

## HOME OWNERSHIP SECTOR

**Objective:** For the process of buying and selling a home to provide more incentive to homeowners to comply with the front garden planning permission requirement or make sustainable choices.

### Activities/Deliverables

#### 1. Engagement with the estate agent sector to:

- Explore how project information could be distributed to homeowners i.e., leaflets in stores/newsletters via email.
- Learn how permeable driveways and green front gardens affect property price.

#### 2. Engagement with the solicitor/conveyancing sector to:

- Understand how the 5m2 planning permission is addressed during the buying/selling process and to determine if planning permission for a driveway is checked during the property searches.
- Explore opportunities for awareness of the planning permission requirement to be promoted by solicitors to sellers/buyers.

#### 3. Engagement with property surveyor sector to:

- Understand if planning permission for driveways is checked during the property surveying process. If not, then seek for this to be included in the list of checks carried out during the surveying process.

## EDUCATION SECTOR

**Objective:** To educate and influence the householders of the future and to inspire careers within the sector. To explore opportunities for university students to gain valuable experience through conducting research associated with the project.

### Activities/Deliverables

#### 1. Engagement with students and teachers to raise awareness of project.

- Host project workshops to share knowledge.
- Organise site visits to the Unpave the Way Garden

#### 2. Create educational material for inclusion in school curriculum

- Collaborate with the Flood Hub to create educational material for use by teachers in the school curriculum.

**3. Conduct research to support project initiatives**

- Explore research opportunities with university lecturers and students' i.e., dissertations.
- Collaborate with students and professional institutes e.g. CIWEM on carrying out research to measure the scale of the paving over front gardens issue.
- Use research findings to support project initiatives e., lobbying for change in national policies.
- Explore opportunities for product innovation with universities i.e., plastic/concrete free permeable paving or SuDS/rainwater harvesting for renters.

**NATIONAL POLICY MAKERS**

**Objective:** For policy makers to consider strengthening existing policies and guidance on the implementation of SuDS including permeable surfaces in residential settings.

**Activities/Deliverables**

**1. Influence existing policies**

- Provide formal feedback to public consultations on policies with links to the project.
- Seek opportunities to influence national change.

**2. Presentation of project findings**

- Present key project findings to policy stakeholders i.e., Defra.

**GARDEN DESIGNERS**

**Objective:** For garden designers to inform their clients about sustainable drainage and flood risk, about the planning permission requirement and to offer design options with permeable paving options and retained green space (and to dissuade the use of artificial grass).

**Activities/Deliverables:**

- 1. Engagement with garden designers** to raise awareness of the project, explore opportunities and trial initiatives, such as:
  - Distribute project information i.e., leaflet/newsletter and links to webpage via email.
  - Create social media content targeted at garden designers.
  - Use existing contacts within the RHS to understand how to influence the garden designer industry.
  - Explore opportunities to further promote project messaging via the RHS e.g. RHS website and magazine.
  - Explore opportunities for article features in garden design magazines.
- 2. Engagement with related societies/institutes** such as Society of Garden Designers, British Association of Landscape Institutes (BALI) and the Association of Professional Landscapers to host workshops/webinars to spread project messaging with its members.
- 3. Engagement with educational institutes** such as Myerscough college and Reaseheath College to understand if sustainable drainage is promoted within their horticulture and landscape courses and to promote project messaging.

**7. Success measures**

The project is identifying a range of measures covering each target audience to assess the effectiveness of the deliverables. Examples include:

- Extent of change made by North West local authorities’ to their planning and development processes which influence driveway creation e.g. webpage template adoption.
- Quantity of webpage and social media user interactions.
- Number of downloads of the Householder SuDS Guide from the project webpage.
- Survey data which indicates householders increased awareness willingness to change behaviour.

**8. Project Schedule**

During 2025/26 the project will continue to focus on householders and increase its engagement with local authorities. 2025/26 will also be an exploratory phase for the sectors not yet engaged, seeking key contacts and opportunities for collaboration. The following two years will see phased focussed effort on engagement with all other sectors, based on the opportunities identified and the degree of influence each sector is considered to have. The indicative programme is set out below.

Target Audience	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Householders	★	★	★
Local Authorities	★	★	★
Contractors	E	★	★
Suppliers	E	★	★
Communities/Community Groups	★	★	★
Housing Associations	E	★	★
Housing Developers	E	★	★
Home Ownership Sector	E	★	★
Education Sector	E	★	★
National Policy Makers	E	★	★
Garden Designers	E	★	★
Key:			
E Exploratory phase    ★ Focussed resource input    ★ Moderate resource input			

## 9. Costs and funding contributions

The project costs to date have been made up of the project manager resource, and the costs of the garden designer and garden exhibits for the RHS Urban and Tatton shows. The total cost for the first two years will be around £158K. £28K of this was funded by United Utilities or through in-kind contributions.

Looking ahead to the proposed three-year extended duration, the primary cost will be for the project manager resource plus some allowance for costs associated with the deliverables. At this stage no deliverables of significant cost are anticipated. The estimated cost for the additional three-year period is £200K.

United Utilities have been asked to provide additional funding for the extended project and conversations are progressing. This may reduce the amount of Local Levy funding required.

### Project costs (£K)

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Project Management resource	50	54	60	60	60
RHS Urban Show exhibit		10			
RHS Tatton garden exhibit and relocation to Whitaker Park	3	40			
Misc costs		1	5	10	5
TOTAL	53	105	65	70	65

### Funding contributions (£K)

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
RFCC	53	77	65	70	65
United Utilities		20			
Supplier in-kind contributions		8			
TOTAL	53	105	65	70	65

## 10. Recommendation

The Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group are asked to reflect on the success to date, consider the proposal, and support the continuation of the project for a further three years with an additional Local Levy funding contribution of £200k.

**NORTH WEST RFCC FINANCE & BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING  
4 OCTOBER 2024**

**Refreshing the North West RFCC Business Plan**

**Recommendation**

The Sub Group are recommended to support:

- Option B, to extend the timeframe of the current Business Plan by two years to March 2027, with a light-touch consideration of the existing strategic aims by the Strategic Partnership Groups leading the ambitions.
- Ongoing consideration of new project proposals that are consistent with the ambitions and strategic aims.

**1. Background**


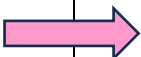



1.1. The RFCC’s current Business Plan covers the timeframe of April 2022 – March 2025. The purpose of this paper is to ask the RFCC to provide a steer on the approach to refreshing the Business Plan beyond March 2025.

**2. Plan Structure**

2.1. The detail of the plan was developed through extensive engagement with RFCC members, officers and wider partners including workshops at sub-regional partnership level and consultation on the final plan document.

2.2. The Business Plan is the RFCC’s North West translation of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. The National Strategy will be subject to periodic review but looks ahead to 2100 so will remain relevant for the foreseeable future. The five ambitions of the RFCC’s Business Plan cover the full scope of flood and coastal resilience activity and remain relevant and important.

Figure 1

National Strategy Ambitions	RFCC Business Plan Ambitions
Future risk and investment	 Accessing investment and funding
A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change	 Building community resilience
	 Increasing Risk Management Authority Capacity and Collaboration
Climate resilient places	 Managing Water at Catchment Scale with Nature
Today’s growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow’s climate	 Achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure

### 3. Strategic Aims

- 3.1. The Plan on a Page (Appendix 1) shows the strategic aims against each of the ambitions which were agreed for the 2022 – 2025 plan. The actions or projects progressed have been in direct response to these strategic aims. Of the 12 strategic aims agreed, all except three have had projects explicitly addressing them and those outstanding three have still been addressed to some degree through the ongoing engagement work of RMAs and the RFCC.
- 3.2. When the Business Plan is refreshed, it will be appropriate to review these strategic aims to determine whether these remain our biggest priorities or whether there should be any changes of emphasis or focus.

### 4. Programme of projects and investment

- 4.1. We have progressed a total of 21 projects within the current Business Plan. By March 2025, ten of these are expected to have been completed. Eleven have an ongoing investment need, due to contractual commitments, prior RFCC approvals, or where there would be a significant loss of capacity or reduction in service were funding not to continue (e.g. for The Flood Hub website, community engagement support, and the additional people resources supporting the partnerships and supporting delivery of the capital programme).
- 4.2. Figure 2 below shows the level of investment in Business Plan projects since 2022. Each year to date the RFCC has allocated between £1.2 and £1.4 million. In the early years, as projects were still being scoped and started, the allocated funding was not fully used. Now in 2024/25, we expect to spend all the allocated funding plus some of the re-profiled allocation from last year.
- 4.3. Figure 3 indicates the level of investment proposed to continue the ongoing Business Plan projects over the next two years. Some of this is committed. The rest, while not formally committed at this stage, is the investment needed to continue to support high priority initiatives like the Flood Hub website.

Figure 2

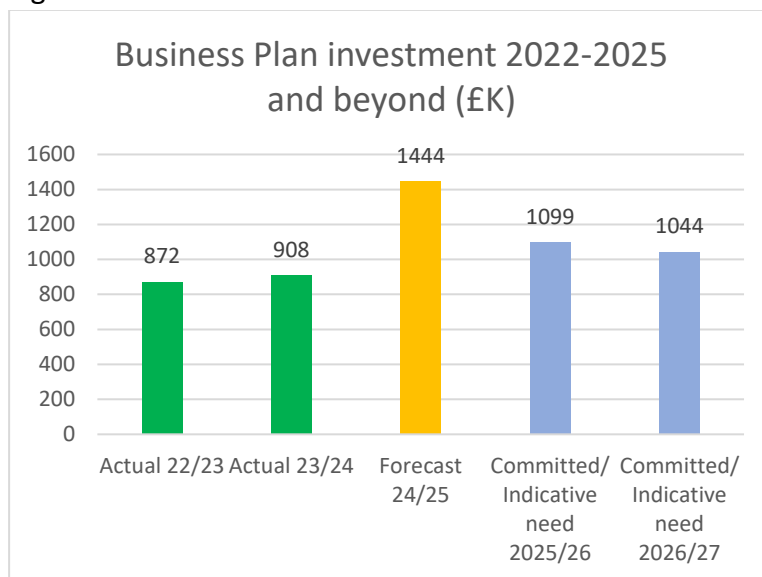
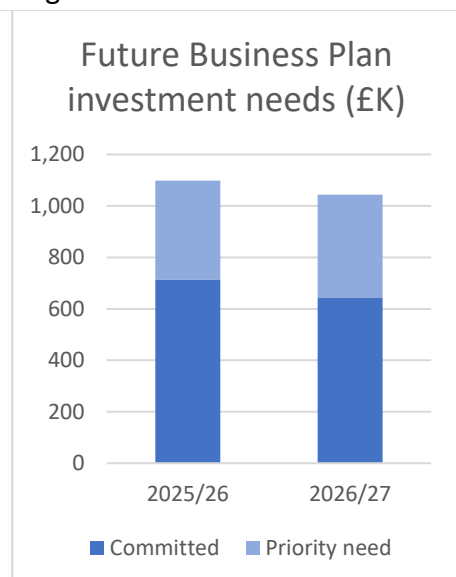


Figure 3



**5. Approach to refreshing the business plan**

- 5.1. Overall the basic structure and aims of the current Business Plan remain highly relevant and fit for purpose and while there will be a benefit to reviewing and refreshing the detailed strategic aims, it is not essential to carry out a full refresh of the business plan in the remainder of 2024/25 in order for us to continue to progress projects and initiatives which are adding value.
- 5.2. We have recently had a change of government and we are still awaiting the Autumn budget statement and to see what policy or funding changes might be made.
- 5.3. For these reasons, it feels pragmatic and appropriate to extend the timeframe of the current Business Plan.
- 5.4. One consideration is how the Business Plan timeframe aligns with RFCC Chair terms. The current RFCC Chair’s term runs until the end of August 2026.
- 5.5. Two extension options are proposed on which the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group is asked to provide a steer.

**Option A – Extend the timeframe of the plan by one year to March 2026**

(with the refresh process taking place Autumn/Winter 2025)

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows another year to observe any changes likely to be introduced by the new government.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would handover an existing Business Plan (probably for at least 2 years) to the new Chair which they had no role in shaping.</li> <li>• The refreshed Business Plan would still need to allow for ongoing committed investment (to March 2027).</li> </ul>

**Option B - Extend the timeframe of the plan by two years to March 2027**

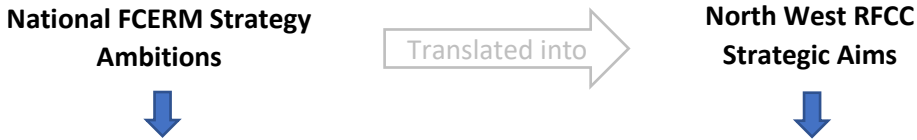
(with the refresh process taking place Autumn/Winter 2026)

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows more time for any policy changes to be introduced, giving us a clearer view on how the Business Plan could adapt/support.</li> <li>• Aligns with the end of the current capital investment programme (March 2027).</li> <li>• No current Business Plan commitments extend beyond March 2027 so this timeframe would allow a more thorough consideration of the ideal range of projects, support and investment.</li> <li>• The new RFCC Chair would oversee the final 7 months of the existing Business Plan, providing some continuity, enabling them to evaluate it, and then play a key role in shaping the next Business Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This timeframe provides limited continuity across the change of RFCC Chair.</li> </ul>



**6. Recommendation**

- 6.1. Option B (to extend the timeframe of the current Business Plan by two years) appears to offer more advantages. It is proposed that this is the approach taken.
- 6.2. It is also proposed that the Strategic Partnership Groups who lead on the Business Plan ambitions are asked to undertake a light-touch exercise to consider the priority of the current strategic aims, consider the extent to which the completed and ongoing projects have or are contributing to these aims, and if appropriate, propose any new or re-emphasised aims to the Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group.
- 6.3. The Sub Group is asked to continue to receive proposals for new Business Plan projects put forward by the Partnerships which respond to the existing or revised aims.



**Achieving resilience in partnership with others**

Future risk and investment	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Accessing investment and funding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To help risk management authorities and partners to attract and bring together sufficient investment to achieve sustainable flood resilience.</li> <li>- To support, embrace and adopt innovative approaches to building a more sustainable and climate resilient future through good design, green investment, and integration of environmental, social and economic benefits, underpinned by partnership working built on developing shared objectives.</li> </ul>
A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Building community resilience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To support communities, including businesses and farmers, in becoming more personally and financially resilient to the changing climate, by growing understanding and being clear that everyone must play their part.</li> <li>- To increase capability and capacity within risk management authorities to better engage with and support their communities.</li> </ul>
Climate resilient places	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Managing water at catchment scale with nature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To drive the mainstreaming of nature-based solutions as part of the flood and coastal erosion risk management approach, encouraging holistic and innovative approaches, and achieving wider environmental benefits wherever possible.</li> <li>- To increase the ambition and scale of catchment partnerships, through best practice, and effective, locally appropriate leadership and engagement.</li> </ul>
Today's growth and infrastructure resilient in tomorrow's climate	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Achieving climate resilient planning, development &amp; infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To facilitate a strategic relationship with the planning and development sectors in the North West to embed full consideration of sustainability, resilience, adaptation and environmental regeneration, into processes and decision making.</li> <li>- To facilitate a more proactive, joined up approach between risk management authorities to collectively address the complex legacy of asset ownership and responsibility, moving towards more effective management and reduced flood risk.</li> <li>- To build strategic relationships with infrastructure providers in the North West to bring an ambitious, collaborative approach to achieving sustainable infrastructure which will be resilient in tomorrow's climate, and which seeks to influence national government policy.</li> </ul>

**Increasing risk management authority capacity and collaboration**

A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To enable risk management authorities to build strong and effective partnerships to innovate and make best use of their collective resource to move faster towards achieving resilience.</li> <li>- To improve communication and information sharing, from, within, and into, the RFCC, its partnerships and its wider network.</li> <li>- To strengthen the role of the RFCC as supporter and critical friend to risk management authorities, seeking to improve performance, and addressing barriers to this.</li> </ul>
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**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE****18 OCTOBER 2024****NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT****RECOMMENDATION:** The RFCC are asked to note the content of this report.

The challenge to build a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100 was set in the 2020. The [Roadmap to 2026](#) set a number of challenges and milestones for the coast that sets out the practical actions to achieve this ambition. With three overriding ambitions to achieve: Climate Resilient Places, Growth and Infrastructure and A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change. The route along this Roadmap has seen better protecting and preparation of communities by significant investment in coastal assets and in innovation which contribute to wider priorities including local nature recovery, carbon reductions and more integrated water solutions. Innovative programmes such as Our Future Coast will shape the future for greater community resilience and ensure joint outcomes for nature and the environment. The conveying and better understanding of the risk faced, have been achieved through significant milestones such as the delivery of the Shoreline Management Plan Explorer which will be enhanced early in the New Year by the National Coastal Erosion Mapping being integrated into the site.

Whilst the focus of the current programme is focused on protection of property the future will see a greater emphasis on community wellbeing and the infrastructure and amenities that deliver places that people aspire to live. Resilience of assets will remain at the heart of this health and prosperity led agenda. In 2023 around 400 natural hazards resulted in circa 87,000 deaths and economic losses amounting to \$202.7 billion<sup>1</sup>. These figures highlight the urgent need for resilient infrastructure and preparedness in building a sustainable future. The Coastal Group working on these principals is embarking on a demonstrator project based around the Fylde coast area that will identify critical infrastructure and its resilience to coastal erosion and flood risk. By working in collaboration with strategic planners across the infrastructure providers we aim to build collaborative partnerships to help shape and inform investment decisions and future pipelines of work.

Collaborative working is key to the success of this initiative and forms the core of the coastal group's values. We are core members of the North West Coastal Forum and share key business objectives with the RFCC. Within this is the development of a Coastal Centre of Excellence in the North West which will build upon the skills and knowledge gained through the Our Future Coast project to deliver the initiatives and projects necessary for resilient and economically viable coastal communities.

**Coastal Group Activities****1. SMP Explorer Content Update**

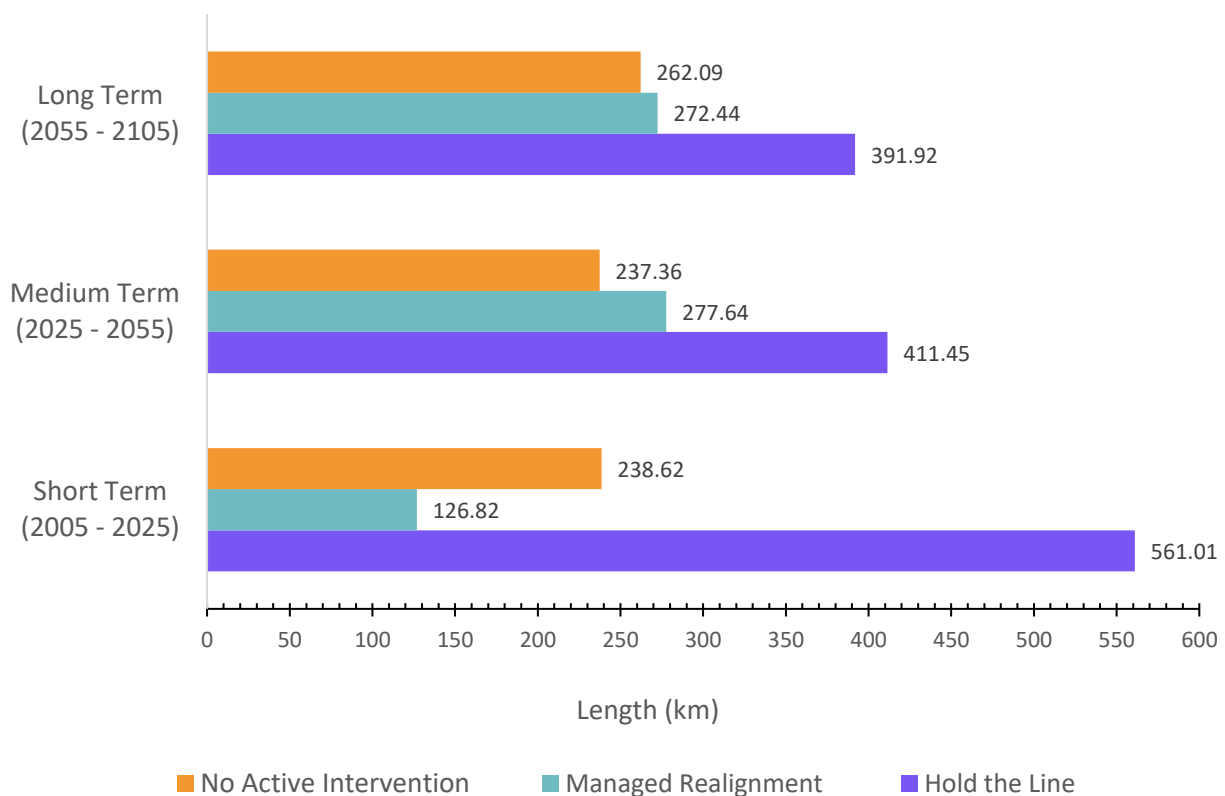
- Website Update: The SMP Explorer Website is scheduled for an update in November 2024.
- Yearly SMP Action Plan:
  - Local Coastal Group members have been asked to submit their yearly SMP Action Plan updates.
  - Deadlines:
    - Local updates due by 27th September 2024.
    - National updates due by 18th October 2024.
  - Cross-border SMP Actions: These were examined during a workshop held with Jacob Kevern, Chair of the Welsh Coastal Forum, on 12th September 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> [World Bank Blogs](#)

## 2. SMP Refresh into Action

- **Managed Realignment:** Approximately 157.6km of the North West North Wales region is transitioning to Managed Realignment policies as we move into epoch 2.
- Discussions are focused on what successful adaptation looks like for affected communities.
- **Funding Challenges:** Managed Realignment projects face funding difficulties. A pipeline of potential sites is being compiled for future funding opportunities.
- **Adaptation Pathways:** in collaboration with the Our Future Coast Project we are exploring adaptation pathways and trigger mechanisms to streamline decision-making processes related to adaptation.
- **Welsh Government Stock Take:** A stock take has been requested to evaluate how effectively North Wales has delivered on SMP policies in epoch 1 (2005–2025). The North West is keen to adopt this approach and is collaborating with the Welsh Coastal Forum.



## 3. Coastal Secretariats Group

A Coastal Secretariats Group has been established in collaboration with other Coastal Groups across England. The purpose of this group is to foster collaboration, share ideas, tackle issues, exchange best practices, and learn from one another. The first meeting is scheduled for 24th October 2024 and will be chaired by the North West Coastal Group.

## 4. Coastal Group Handbook

A Coastal Group Handbook is being drafted to offer guidance for both new and existing members of the Coastal Group. The handbook will cover topics such as governance, roles, responsibilities, and outline a five-year action plan for the group. It is distinct from the National Coastal Handbook, which is also undergoing updates.

## 5. Mapping Critical Infrastructure

The Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCC) are interested in assessing the number of coastal assets at risk due to inadequate investment and the SMP peer review has made recommendations to better engage with

infrastructure providers on the coast. A project is being scoped out to map critical infrastructure in the North West & North Wales region.

- **Ambition:** to map critical infrastructure and interconnectedness on the North West & North Wales coastline.
- **Aim:** 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. This includes assessing the long-term impact of flood and coastal erosion risks.
- **Comprehensive mapping** will cover the following sectors within an **initial pilot study area**. The focus will be on identifying interdependencies, criticality, and vulnerabilities within the following sectors:
  - Electricity
  - Gas
  - Water
  - Transport
  - Wastewater
  - Communication
  - Coastal Infrastructure.
- **Key Goals:**
  1. Critical Infrastructure Identification: Clearly identify critical infrastructure and their interdependencies to prioritize investments for resilience.
  2. Strategic Framework for Collaboration: Develop a coordinated, long-term strategy to enhance the resilience, capacity, and sustainability of infrastructure.
  3. Support for Climate and Carbon Goals: Align infrastructure-focused actions with climate goals such as carbon neutrality, biodiversity net gain, and flood management strategies.

## 6. Derelict Boats Project

- The Marine Litter and Derelict Vessel Prevention Project, funded by the Welsh Government under the Nature Networks Programme, is a three-year initiative (2022–2025) managed by Natural Resources Wales' Marine Operations department (Project Manager: Joanna Soanes).
- In its first year (2022), the project mapped abandoned derelict vessels (ADV) around Wales using ArcGIS, selecting the Dee Estuary as the first removal site for year two. During 2023, individual vessels in the Dee Estuary were documented, and vessel owners were notified during a stakeholder meeting, ahead of planned removals in March and April 2024.
- In its final year (2024–2025), the project will continue ADV removals in other areas and will produce guidance for authorities on ADV removals and end-of-life vessel management for owners.

## Our Future Coast

The programme has now reached exactly half way and the momentum is certainly building at pace now. With so much still to do and the time ticking for the next two and half years Our Future Coast forges on with some exciting new developments!

Programme Manager Bea Beggs will unfortunately be leaving the project for family in the south at the end of October but interviews for her successor are on 25<sup>th</sup> October and the application for this post is still live:

[Wyre Council | Current Vacancies \(jgp.co.uk\)](#)

### **Test & Trial Progress**

Capital delivery has now started at sites in Fylde and Lancaster with other sites following shortly in 25/26. Each trial is an iterative process of testing what could work, under what circumstances, using various materials and then adjusting to get determine best practice. Case study development has begun and as expected recording and analysing the learning in real time is critical to this. Further, on WP4 Adaptation Pathways, the first meeting to test approaches to developing Adaptation Pathways for particular sites is scheduled for October 2024 and will be the start of an iterative process; The first site being looked at is Hest Bank.

### **Engaging Our Communities**

Engagement at some key sites is moving from co-design to co-planning with the community becoming involved in assessing feasibility study findings and considering the options provided by contracted report – a vital step in resilience building and in long term coastal management community support. At other sites engagement is carefully navigating around some very tricky issues and discussions to move to a place of supported pilot study and collaborative working on hinterland flood management.

### **Monitoring and Research**

Monitoring has continued with the Duddon Estuary now completed. Work has started on reports to interpret the data that has been captured starting with Roa Island to inform studies and some of the Saltmarsh sites to inform the deployment of Natural Sediment Traps at Bolton-le-Sands and Hest Bank.

### **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. Examples of this can be seen by the relocation of Formby windblown sand trials to the Fylde Dunes project and the inclusion of OFC in a Northern Partnership Group for Nature North and in a Nature North international learning trip.

### **Working in Partnership**

Our next Partnership Workshop is planned for the 13<sup>th</sup> November at Morecambe Town Hall. All Welcome.

### **Training in 2024**

Project manager training to be completed for partners across the project later this month 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](mailto:carl.green@wyre.gov.uk))
- Bea Beggs, OFC Programme Manager ([bea.beggs@Wyre.gov.uk](mailto:bea.beggs@Wyre.gov.uk))
- Amy Collier, OFC Assistant Project Manager & Dissemination Lead ([amy.collier@wyre.gov.uk](mailto:amy.collier@wyre.gov.uk))
- Susannah Bleakley, Comms and Engagement Lead ([susannah@sbleakley.com](mailto:susannah@sbleakley.com))
- Graham Lymbery, Monitoring Lead & Adaptation Pathways Co-Lead ([lymbery.graham@gmail.com](mailto:lymbery.graham@gmail.com))
- Joseph Earl, Engagement Officer North & Morecambe Bay Partnership ([Joseph@morecambebay.org.uk](mailto:Joseph@morecambebay.org.uk))
- Nicola Parkinson, Engagement Officer South, Lancashire Wildlife Trust ([nparkinson@lancswt.org.uk](mailto:nparkinson@lancswt.org.uk))

**Coastal Centre of Excellence in the North West**

A proposal for the Coastal Centre of Excellence in the North West (CCENW) has been now drafted by Suzi Ilic (previous coastal advisor) and Carl Green with contributions from Katie Eckford and Andy Shore. The proposal contains 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 proposal will be reviewed by the coastal advisor and the chair of NWRFC.

While the primary role of the centre will remain focused on risk of coastal flooding and erosion and delivery of the NW SMP, the proposal looks at synergies with other organisations that work on the coast and coastal communities. The centre will be in good position to work jointly on solutions of challenges beyond coastal flooding and erosion such as land use in coastal catchments influencing water quality and sediment delivery to the coast, water quality due to pressure on waste water systems, coastal landfills, housing and infrastructure development, coastal squeeze on habitats and climate action plans. These challenges provide opportunities for joint alternative funding outside FCERM.

Working in this new landscape requires agile staff, with skills and expertise currently not found in all local authorities. The centre will enable to address this gap, by bringing together staff with expertise currently present in single local authority, expertise developed in OFC and by providing staff training and development, students' internship, placements in collaboration with Higher Education sector in NW.

**Summary**

In the North West we are well along the Roadmap to 2026 with significant investment and impressive delivery of coastal defence infrastructure improvements by the Coastal Protection Authority Councils. Other key coastal outcomes have been delivered through partnership, including the SMP refresh and delivery action plans. The SMP Explorer allows greater visibility to the SMP and an improved interface with the planning system. We are at the midpoint of the Our Future Coast innovation project and have learnt and shared greatly from our communities which will shape the delivery of both Nature Based Solutions and greater coastal change adaptation.

Throughout the process we are building skills and networks critical to the delivery of climate resilient places. The Coastal Centre of Excellence will build upon these competences and partnerships to develop coastal guardians skilled to meet the challenges of the next decade. We also continue to work with our partners to understand criticalities and align investment, to play our part in ensuring infrastructure will be more resilient to current and future risks from flooding and coastal change.

I would like to thank Bea Beggs our OFC Programme manager for her dedication and drive to make the project a success. I am sure she will take fond memories from her time working on the North West coast. She leaves a strong team of enthusiastic and motivated individuals who are ready for the challenge ahead.

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

# North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee



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

### 2. Flooding Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 25 June 2024 and 22 September 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 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	3	0	0
Merseyside	31	17	0	2
GMCA	1	1	0	0
Lancashire	2	13	2	1
Cumbria	1	19	0	1

### 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 was 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 received on 11 July 2024 which contained challenges and amendments to our plan.

Between 11 July and 28 August 2024, Uuw responded to Ofwat's Draft Determination in the form of various representation documents. These documents include our evidence base and rationale to support the business plan that was submitted in October 2023.

The next stage of the process is Final Determination in December 2024 whereby Ofwat will make their final changes and corrections to our proposed business plan for 2025–2030. These will then be in effect when the new Asset Management Period (AMP) begins on 1 April 2025.



You can find out more about our business plan and draft determination representations 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/pr24-proposed-plan-supplementary-documents/>).

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

In early September 2024, Defra shared the draft DWMP Cycle 2 guidance with all ten water and sewerage companies in England and Wales. A four-week consultation period, allowing feedback from all companies, concluded in early October. We currently anticipate the final DWMP Cycle 2 guidance to be published later in the year.

#### **5. Place-based Planning across all 5 counties**

Since the last quarterly update, there have been several appointments as the 5-county structure is embedded and established. This includes recruitment to support the wider embedment of our place-based planning approach and changes to the asset manager role to increase the numbers and separate out the activities.

The place-based planning team is also now fully resourced, with a manager dedicated to long term planning with partners in each county, as well as key internal colleagues in UUW. The team has developed and launched an internal Partnership Opportunity Pipeline, which aims to capture, track and report the opportunities that are identified across the north west. This tool has been designed to work hand in glove with the regulatory frameworks of DWMP and Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) to ensure a seamless collation of opportunities.

The Place Based Planning web page on the corporate website (<https://www.unitedutilities.com/corporate/responsibility/stakeholders/catchment-systems-thinking/place-based-planning/>) has also been updated and we will continue to update with case studies.

The previous asset manager role has been separated into two new roles: Risk Managers and Strategic Asset Managers. The Risk Managers are predominantly focused on shorter term risks within the next five years and sponsor the current capital programme. Two risk managers have been appointed per county and they are currently transitioning into this new structure. The Strategic Asset Managers are focused on the development of the long-term plans (2030 onwards) and strategies for the county. Each county has its own Strategic Asset Manager, and these are all now in place.

##### **5.1 Cumbria**

Activity in Cumbria continues to focus 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 also continue to build up a Cumbria Partnership Opportunity Pipeline, seeking to explore opportunities with a range of organisations with aligned aims.

We have recently welcomed additional support from a UUW graduate who will be spending part of their time in support of Cumbria place-based planning activity.

##### **5.2 Lancashire**

A substantive Place Based Planning Manager has been appointed to the county of Lancashire who brings three years of experience from working in the Greater Manchester County. Their key focus in the short

term will be to understand and engage with stakeholders across the county and identify where there are opportunities to align stakeholder interests with UUW.

Activity continues to progress the objectives of the Fylde Hub partnership and plans are in place to review the aims and objectives at an upcoming workshop to solidify collaboration. There has also been increased involvement with Lancashire's Local Nature Partnership as it establishes a terms of reference, vision and objectives.

If there are opportunities that you would like to raise with the PBP manager in Lancashire, please don't not hesitate to get in touch with [dee.grahamslaw@uuplc.co.uk](mailto:dee.grahamslaw@uuplc.co.uk) to discuss.

### 5.3 Merseyside

Collaboration between UUW, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and Mersey Rivers Trust continues with the aim of finalising a vision document with a working title of 'Our vision for a sustainable water future' (Figure 1). This will pave the way for a five-year action plan setting out how partners will work together into the long-term to improve water management in the Liverpool City Region.

In parallel opportunities identified across the LCR for potential partnership or rainwater management are being logged for investigation on the Partnership Opportunity Pipeline. This includes a variety of public realm opportunities highlighted in strategies such as Liverpool waterfront, Birkenhead waterfront and Liverpool Green Lanes proposition.



Figure 1: Liverpool City Region vision (working title)

### 5.4 Greater Manchester

The Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) 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 neighboring 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 project in Stockport has also highlighted a need for a town centre drainage strategy and since the last quarterly report the IWMP team have been working with Stockport council and Jacobs to develop the scope and produce a commissioning brief.

Over the summer the IWMP team onboarded a 12-month intern from Uuw as the IWMP analyst and a Programme Manager, based within Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA), 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 are currently recruiting for a Project Lead, based within GMCA, with experience of the planning, infrastructure and water sectors to support the team, the trilateral partnership and local authorities in developing and delivering projects to achieve the outcomes and priorities as outlined in the Annual Business Plan and devolution deal.

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. Since the last quarterly report, Imperial College London have been commissioned to develop a model for Greater Manchester based on the WSIMOD modelling platform over the next six months to provide initial modelling capabilities that will inform where investment can be directed to achieve maximum impact, and further engagement continues with the University of Manchester around a future model with increased functionality and capability.

## **5.5 Cheshire**

Engagement continues across the county to identify opportunities for greater collaboration and partnership working. Sessions are planned in Cheshire East to discuss opportunities surrounding Quarry Bank Mill that will focus on reducing the impact on the sewer network and providing additional benefits of biodiversity and amenity.

There are ongoing discussions with the Environment Agency and partners around long-term catchment resilience including flood risk in Warrington and Northwich with feasibility studies around broader catchment interventions continuing.

There are early discussions across the Weaver Gowy catchment with regards to trialling a Water and Wildlife Credit scheme to secure long-term water supply resilience to meet future demand. Alongside this there is the potential for wider catchment interventions including natural flood management that could tie in and provide benefit downstream including Northwich.

## 6. 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 £57 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.

Eight schemes have now achieved project in use status. Mainly public realm regeneration schemes ranging from small single street regeneration (Devonshire Street, Carlisle) to large scale blue roof interchange project in Stockport. All schemes are focussed on providing climate resilience capacity in the sewer network for the future.

Devonshire Street scheme consisted of raingardens, tree pits, recreational seating, cycleway and cycle storage along Devonshire Street, Carlisle town centre (Figure 2). The aim was to re-direct surface water runoff from the local shops and businesses within Devonshire Street into the newly installed SuDS features, with the aim to increase the space and experience for pedestrians and businesses by widening the pavements on both sides of the road through remodelling, creating a single lane carriageway for vehicles, incorporating two loading bays to support the local businesses.





**Figure 2:** Devonshire Street, Carlisle street regeneration

Stockport town centre interchange redevelopment incorporates SuDS features to create green travel corridors and parks within Stockport town centre, blue green roof to attenuate all surface water and a fully publicly accessible green space with recreational facilities (Figure 3). Additional housing development to increase amenities including permeable paving, tree pits, rain gardens, cycleways is also part of the redevelopment of Stockport West area. These features will attenuate flows into the green features and a local watercourse as opposed to them entering the current sewer network, aimed at providing climate resilience benefit to UUW sewer network. The Green Recovery element of the project relates to design and building of SuDS systems, permeable paving, recreational play parks, blue/green roof and a green travel corridor.



**Figure 3:** Stockport town centre interchange redevelopment

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**

**18 OCTOBER 2024**

**CALENDAR OF RFCC MEETINGS FOR 2025/26**

**Recommendation:** The North West RFCC is asked to consider and approve the proposed meeting dates for 2025/6.

1. We have previously agreed the date of Friday 24 January to be our first meeting in 2025.
2. RFCC meeting date windows for 2025/6 have now been provided by our National team and in line with this guidance the following meetings dates are proposed:
  - Friday 25 April 2025 (expected to be virtual)
  - Friday 11 July 2025 (expected to be in person)
  - Friday 24 October 2025 (expected to be in person)
  - Friday 23 January 2026 (expected to be virtual)
3. The Committee is asked to consider and approve the proposed meeting dates for 2025/6.

**NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**

**18 OCTOBER 2024**

**NW RFCC RESPONSE TO THE  
NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK CONSULTATION**

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

**1. Introduction**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Consultation ran from 30 July 2024 to 24 September 2024 to seek views on the proposed approach to revising the NPPF to achieve sustainable growth in our planning system, and to seek views on a series of wider policy proposals in relation to increasing planning fees, local plan intervention criteria and appropriate thresholds for certain Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

**2. NW RFCC Response**

On behalf of the North West RFCC, a response to the consultation was prepared by Chris Findley, who is the RFCC's EA Appointed Member for Development and Sustainable Investment and who had an extensive career in planning in a North West Local Authority. The RFCC response took account of responses to the consultation prepared by North West Local Authorities, where these were available before the consultation deadline.

Responses to two consultation questions were provided and are detailed below.

**Question 80 - "Are any changes to policy for managing flood risk needed to improve its effectiveness?"**

The North West RFCC is one of 12 RFCCs nationally, established by the Environment Agency under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, to influence local priorities for flood risk management. They guide flood and coastal erosion risk management activities within their river catchments and along the coastline and their work is guided by the aims and principles outlined in the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy.

The North West RFCC recognises that the primary focus of the draft NPPF is on increasing and ensuring the delivery of new homes to meet the country's needs. Questions directly relating to this and other issues lie outside the RFCC's remit, and we offer no comment. Question 80 is the question of greatest relevance to the North West RFCC.

We are pleased to note that the draft NPPF continues to recognise the need for the planning system to properly address flood risk when seeking locations for new homes. All too often over the last 20 years we have seen that when there is a major flood almost the first media image that we will all see on our screens or in the press is of a new housing development that is under water, with inevitable questions about how such an event was not foreseen. Flooding of a home has devastating impacts for those affected, and it is important that we do all we can to ensure that we plan to avoid flood risk. Over time, the way in which the planning system deals with flood risk has improved greatly, and it is important that the NPPF

continues to contain strong guidance for LPAs on this issue. In addition, there are other measures which could support the guidance in the NPPF which are noted below.

In general, we believe that the existing framework is a strong one which we fully support, although it could perhaps be improved. The focus of flood risk tends to be on fluvial risk (rivers and other water courses exceeding their capacity), but surface water flooding is just as much of a risk, if not more so. Coastal flooding and groundwater flooding are also significant risks in some areas. These risks may need to be dealt with in different ways, whilst recognising that they can also overlap.

We would suggest that there should be a strong emphasis and presumption on sustainable drainage systems in new housing and other developments. Cumulatively there is a risk that housing developments which incorporate large areas of impermeable surfacing increase the risk of surface water flooding, and the best way of mitigating this risk would be for housebuilders and others, at whatever scale, to be required to use sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and permeable materials unless there is a strong evidenced justification for not doing so.

The North West RFCC is sponsoring the '[Unpave the Way](#)' project which seeks to address the trend in homeowners choosing to pave over previously permeable front gardens with impermeable surfacing, primarily for driveway creation, increasing surface water run-off. In 2015, research by the Royal Horticultural Society showed that 1 in 4 front gardens were completely paved over ([RHS Why we all need Greening Grey Britain](#)), a trend which has continued since, accelerated by the move towards electric vehicles and the need for charging capability in front gardens. There has been a planning permission requirement for impermeable areas exceeding 5m<sup>2</sup> in front gardens since 2008, however this is not being actively promoted and enforced by local authorities due to resource constraints, and data collected by the Unpave the Way project indicated that 64% of householders (203 respondents) were unaware of the need for planning permission. The North West RFCC would like to see national planning policy address the issue of paving over of front gardens issue driving a more sustainable approach to driveway creation promoted via the use of permeable paving, sustainable drainage (SuDS) and rainwater harvesting.

Relating to the above, although separate from the NPPF consultation, we would strongly urge the government to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. This element of the Act has been promised for implementation for some considerable time now, and clarification of the new government's intentions would be very helpful.

**Question 85 - Are there other areas of the water infrastructure provisions that could be improved? If so, can you explain what those are, including your proposed changes?**

We wish to highlight the support the RFCC is giving to [integrated water management planning in Greater Manchester](#), involving the 10 districts, the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, United Utilities and the Environment Agency. We see this as an approach which, following the GM pilot completing and us all learning lessons, can be rolled out to other sub-regions of the North West.

### **3. Recommendation**

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



## Environment Agency: RFCC update paper – October 2024

### Contents

Flooding update and our flood services:.....	2
Flood events .....	2
September 2024.....	2
Flood Action Week 2024 .....	2
Flood Content Improvement Project.....	2
Flood Warning Service .....	2
Next Flood Warning Service in 2025.....	2
Using technology to support delivery of the Flood Warning and Forecasting Service. ....	3
Delivering the FCERM Strategy and Roadmap.....	3
FCERM strategy roadmap update.....	3
Producing digital tools that help to better understand flood and coastal risks .....	4
Rural Flood Resilience Partnership.....	4
Review and Agree Data Sharing Principles.....	5
FCRM capital programme update .....	5
FCRM Capital Programme .....	5
Internal Drainage Board (IDB) Storm Recovery and Asset Improvement Fund .....	5
Reservoir Safety Reform Programme .....	5
Navigation Charges Consultation .....	6
Working with FCERM stakeholders: .....	6
Flood Resilience Taskforce .....	6
Engaging with FCRM suppliers .....	6
Events .....	6
Flood and Coast Excellence Awards 2024.....	6
The Environment Agency and London Science Museum Collaboration: Year Three.....	6
New training for RMAs to support flood and coast project development .....	7
Digital communication and education tools .....	7
International: .....	7
Japanese delegation visit – 16 August 2024.....	7
FCERM publications and announcements: links.....	7
Flood scheme openings and updates: .....	8
Ways to keep in touch with our work.....	9

## Flooding update and our flood services:

### Flood events

#### September 2024

Over 690 properties floods mainly through surface water flooding and over 8300 protected. Monday 22 and Tuesday 23 September saw excess of 130 mm rainfall in parts of southern Midlands and the home counties, more than double the long-term average for September in these locations.

### Flood services

#### Flood Action Week 2024

- Flood Action Week is a media and social media campaign scheduled for 14-20 October.
- For this year's campaign, the week will be structured around 4 key themes:
  - Understanding the risk of flooding this winter from all sources – including surface water and how the Environment Agency and partners are preparing for winter
  - Raising awareness of the impacts of flooding on different groups – including young people and children
  - Enhancing public knowledge of the immediate actions they can take to prepare
  - Raising awareness of the long-term property flood resilience (PFR) measures the public can take

Please contact us if you would like to get involved.

#### Flood Content Improvement Project

- Our [GOV.UK pages](#) which provide invaluable advice to those at risk from flooding have been overhauled. The content has been restructured and rewritten to make it easier to find, accessible and meaningful.

#### Flood Warning Service

- From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, the Environment Agency sent 12.5 million messages to the public, partners and the media. These messages informed them of flooding in their area and the Flood Warning Service they can receive. This includes messages sent via text, email and automated telephone call.
- As of July 2024, there were 1.57 million properties in England signed up to the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning Service, which sends a message directly by voice message, text or email when a flood warning is issued.

#### Next Flood Warning Service in 2025

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

## Using technology to support delivery of the Flood Warning and Forecasting Service.

- From this winter, our incident teams across the organisation will have the option to activate automation within the flood warning service, as an additional resilience measure for issuing Flood Alerts and Warnings but not Severe Flood Warnings. Better using technology and automation within the flood warning service will allow the Environment Agency to safeguard the resilience of the flood warning service at critical times and continue to provide much valued advice to partners.
- To ensure the flood warning service remains effective for users of the service, we will put in place targeted mitigation measures. These have been developed following a review of feedback from previous use of automation during industrial action and recent consultation with Regional Flood and Coast Committees (RFCCs) and Local Resilience Forums (LRFs).
- Stefan Laeger, Service Manager and Louise Hind in our Flood Incident Management team are happy to answer any questions you have on this: [louise.hind@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:louise.hind@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Delivering the FCERM Strategy and Roadmap

### FCERM strategy roadmap update

- Together with our partners, we are continuing to make good progress against the commitments outlined in the [FCERM Strategy Roadmap](#). To date, the FCERM Strategy Roadmap has led to a number of recent and upcoming successes that are designed to help risk management authorities.
  - They recognise the importance of resilience, adaptation to flooding and working with natural processes to reduce risk. These actions include: worked with coastal groups to refresh the [Shoreline Management Plans \(SMPs\)](#) around England, as well as reviewing the associated action plans and priorities
  - published the [SMP Explorer](#), which is an online map-based tool for SMP information and commissioned an [independent peer review](#) to assess the state of SMPs and identify where further improvements can be made
  - expanded the [Coastal Transition Accelerator Programme](#) to include projects in Bude, Charmouth and Swanage – these help vulnerable communities explore innovative approaches to adapt to the effects of coastal erosion
  - invested £25 million in [40 natural flood management projects](#) which use nature to increase the nation's flood resilience and will build on and embed learning from our [£15 million NFM pilot programme](#)
  - published a streamlined approach to developing and funding business cases for [Property Flood Resilience](#) (PFR) projects which will enable more PFR projects to be completed and [updated the appraisal process](#) for property flood resilience schemes to be more proportionate to the costs and risks involved
  - worked with CIWEM on [a new property flood resilience \(PFR\) website](#)
  - launched a [new framework of suppliers for PFR](#) which will result in a higher standard of PFR product and installation
  - activated the [PFR repair grant scheme](#) twice in 2023, for both Storm Babet and Storm Henk
  - took a more active strategic leadership role to help support and enable others to plan for and adapt to [surface water flood risks](#)
  - worked with Defra to inform the Government's response to the [Surface Water Review](#) produced by the National Infrastructure Committee

- o updated our [Flood Map for Planning](#) service to incorporate surface water flood risk information, enabling planners, developers and Lead Local Flood Authority officers to better account for this important source of flooding in their decisions on new development
  - o From [12 February 2024](#), the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) mandatory, bringing in new requirements for projects on our FCERM capital programme 2021 – 2027 that require planning permission. We have launched [new biodiversity net gain guidance for capital projects](#) which will help projects achieve biodiversity net gain and encourage other environmental benefits
  - o teamed up with the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) to develop a suite of [online training resources](#) aimed at planners and flood risk professionals working in the public sector
  - o published an interim [mid-programme summary](#) the £200 million [Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes](#), highlighting some of the innovations and challenges in achieving flood and coastal resilience, adaptation and coastal transition
  - o reviewed and updated the [Thames Estuary 2100 Plan](#) – this ensures that the Thames estuary remains resilient to a changing climate
  - o published our [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management \(FCERM\) Areas of Research Interest \(ARIs\)](#) on GOV.UK, allowing us to use the ARIs to concentrate our effort where research is needed most
- worked with partners and the insurance industry to [review the recovery phase](#) from a broad selection of historic major flood events and learn from other major civil emergencies
- o led conversations with local resilience forums (LRFs) on the role of the third sector in responding to significant flood incidents across the country

### Producing digital tools that help to better understand flood and coastal risks

- By the end of 2024 we have committed to publish 2 significant improvements in mapping and communicating our flood and coastal erosion risk information:
  - o A new [National Flood Risk Assessment \(NaFRA2\)](#)
  - o An updated National Coastal Erosion Risk Map (NCERM)
- In December 2024, we aim to publish a summary of the NaFRA2 and NCERM data in a report titled 'National assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk in England 2024'.
- In early 2025 we will publish the first tranche of data as part of our new NaFRA2, and the updated NCERM.
- We have made significant progress on the development of both NaFRA2 and NCERM this year, gaining feedback on the data from our partners and stakeholders.
- We will be communicating and providing regular updates on both NaFRA2 and the updated NCERM throughout the year, and into 2025. We have updated [GOV.UK page](#), which contains everything you need to know about our new flood and coastal risk information, and where future updates will be provided.
- Register [here](#) to receive future updates on our national flood and coastal erosion risk information.
- **Email:** For more information contact us at:
  - NaFRA2:** [NAFRA2@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:NAFRA2@environment-agency.gov.uk)
  - NCERM:** [SMP-R&NCERM2.Projects@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:SMP-R&NCERM2.Projects@environment-agency.gov.uk)

### Rural Flood Resilience Partnership

- With the NFU, we have committed in the [FCERM Strategy](#) to working together to 'establish a rural resilience partnership focused on helping farmers and land managers adapt to a changing climate.'

The partnership will look at how farming practices can enhance flood resilience in rural areas alongside sustainable food production’.

- The Environment Agency and NFU have worked closely together to create this Partnership. A Partnership Agreement was finalised earlier this year, with both the Environment Agency and NFU signed-up as partners alongside Country, Land & Business Association; Association of Drainage Authorities; Action with Communities in Rural England; and Natural England.
- The [Partnership launched its work plan](#) on 23 September 2024, which sets out 21 partner-led actions to deliver these aims. These focus on three key areas:
  - Developing the evidence base behind decision-making to increase resilience
  - Ensuring access to quality support
  - Engaging rural communities in flood resilience.
- The partners are now working together to develop and deliver the 21 actions for 2026.

### **Review and Agree Data Sharing Principles**

- As part of the [FCERM Strategy](#) we are committed to asset record keeping, inspection and management, best practice standards for flood risk (fluvial, coastal, and surface water), and data sharing. These actions will support Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to work together in managing flood and coastal resilience in England.
- Phase 1 of the work has focussed on defining asset data, inspection and maintenance standards to aid collaborative working and knowledge sharing across RMAs.
- Phase 2 of the work has involved developing a flood risk asset Data Sharing Portal exclusively for use by RMA partners-. A letter of intent outlining a set data sharing principles has been shared with RMAs for review.

## **FCRM capital programme update**

### **FCRM Capital Programme**

- The current flood investment programme to 2027 is £5.6 billion. This investment includes a record £5.2 billion capital investment programme, a £200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme, £170 million for economic recovery from flooding and over £30 millions of funding for flood incident management.
- The [current 6-year programme](#), 2021-2027 started in April 2021. To date we have delivered around 300 projects achieving over 88,000 properties better protected in the first 3 years of the programme having invested £2.3bn. In 24/25 we are aiming to protect a further 25,000 properties.

### **Internal Drainage Board (IDB) Storm Recovery and Asset Improvement Fund**

- The IDB Storm Recovery and Asset Improvement fund is a new £75 million grant scheme for 2024/25. It was announced as part of the former government’s Farm Recovery Fund, to help IDBs recover from recent floods events. Tranche 1 - £25 million - was formally announced by the government in February 2024; IDBs were invited to apply from the 21 May 2024.

### **Reservoir Safety Reform Programme**

- We are trialling a new process to gather feedback from reservoir engineers and undertakers on how the annual statements are created and submitted and looking for people to get involved. If

you believe you have a small raised reservoir, we would encourage you to complete a survey to identify them. You can find links to these updates on the [Reservoir Safety Reform Programme information page](#). If you are interested in being involved, or have any questions on this project please contact [reservoirs@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:reservoirs@environment-agency.gov.uk) quoting "RACE2 Digital Project".

## Navigation Charges Consultation

- We consulted on [Gov.uk](#) about a 9% increase in the Environment Agency's boat registration charges, effective from 1 January 2025. Beyond 2025, we proposed an annual update to charges in line with the Consumer Price Index. The increase to charges was proposed to apply from 1 January 2025 for the River Thames and 1 April 2025 for Anglian Waterways and the Medway Navigation. This is an important increase to achieve a sustainable balance of income against service costs in the longer term.

## Working with FCERM stakeholders:

### Flood Resilience Taskforce

- Philip Duffy and Caroline Douglass attended the first meeting of the [new Flood Resilience Taskforce](#) on 11-12 September 2024. We issued [a press release](#).
- Attendees included ministerial level representation from other government departments as well as representatives from Lead Local Flood Authorities, RFCCs, Flood Re, NFU and the Met Office among others.
- The Taskforce will ensure that the UK's preparedness for, and resilience to, flooding is reviewed regularly before the start of the main flood season. It will be continuously improved to ensure optimum protection to people, homes and businesses.

### Engaging with FCRM suppliers

- On Monday 8 April 2024, Philip Duffy hosted a roundtable bringing together senior leaders from our FCRM delivery partners who are supporting us in delivering our corporate ambitions. The roundtable focused on enhancing our partnerships to deliver the FCRM Capital Programme, promote efficiency and innovation to ensure value for money and productivity.

## Events

### Flood and Coast Excellence Awards 2024

- We hosted the Flood and Coast Excellence Awards virtually this July. Please check out the winners and highly commended published on [gov.uk](#). Over 100 people attended the online ceremony. The awards recognised the outstanding community action, professionals, partnerships and innovations that meet our aims for resilience to flooding and coastal erosion.
- We have started planning for next year's awards, with categories to capture the actions you are taking to create climate resilient places, infrastructure and communities and develop professionalism in the sector.

### The Environment Agency and London Science Museum Collaboration: Year Three

- In August 2024, the Environment Agency returned to the Science Museum in London, with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) exhibition. Visitors were able to discover a variety of careers, ideal for those passionate about the environment and curious about how to take



care of nature and to find out what skills are needed to build a more sustainable future, learn how to encourage thriving habitats and design flood defences using our wave machine. Activities were aimed at young people aged 3–17, however all age groups were welcome.

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

- 17 new eLearning modules have been made available from the [FCERM Skills Academy](#), part of the [Supporting flood and coastal projects](#) SharePoint site. Topics include how to make your economic case, partnership funding, using natural capital approaches, and mapping and modelling.

### **Digital communication and education tools**

- We continue to work with universities and children’s charities to co-create digital communication and education tools, with the latest being: “[Flooding Mucky Dip!](#)” and “[Flooding Fortune Teller](#)”. These tools will help children and young people to be better prepared for flooding and to improve their schools’ and communities’ flood resilience.

## **International:**

### **Japanese delegation visit – 16 August 2024**

- The Environment Agency hosted an official visit of the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT). The delegation met representatives of the Environment Agency, Natural England, Rivers Trust and Chalk Stream Restoration Group, to discuss biodiversity, river environment management and climate adaptation.

## **FCERM publications and announcements: links**

- [Flood and coastal erosion risk management report: 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024](#)- offering a summary of the activities carried out by risk management authorities (RMAs) in England
- [Flood and coastal erosion risk management annual report](#) – offering a summary of flood and coastal erosion risk management work carried out by risk management authorities in England
- [Natural flood management programme](#) – building on and applying what we learnt from the £15 million NFM pilot programme, which included 60 projects between 2017 and 2021
- [Natural flood management programme prospectus](#) – a guidance on how to increase flood resilience with natural flood management
- [Updates to national flood and coastal erosion risk information](#) – with information about the Environment Agency’s new national risk information for flooding and coastal erosion
- [Reservoir inspecting engineers: safety inspection of reservoirs](#) – a guidance for inspecting engineers including the reporting of section 10 inspection findings
- [Reservoirs: owner and operator requirements](#) – a guidance for inspecting engineers including the reporting of section 10 inspection findings
- [Reservoir supervising engineers: written statements and site visit reports](#) -
- [Reservoirs: How to manage your large raised reservoir](#) -A guide on how to write a reservoir written statement and a site visit report and what information to include
- [Flood risk activities: environmental permits](#) – to check if you need to apply for an environmental permit and access the forms needed

- [National flood risk standing advice for local planning authorities](#) -on when to use standing advice on site-specific flood risk assessments, and when to consult the Environment Agency
- [Preparing a flood risk assessment: standing advice –](#) to find out if you need to follow standing advice when completing a flood risk assessment and what to do
- [How to prepare a strategic flood risk assessment –](#) indicating what information local planning authorities need to include in a strategic flood risk assessment
- [Flood risk assessment: flood zones 1, 2, 3 and 3b –](#) on how to carry out a flood risk assessment so that you can complete your planning application
- [Flood risk assessments: applying for planning permission –](#) details on when to do a flood risk assessment as part of an planning application, how to complete one and how it is processed.
- The Environment Agency Blog – [Creating a better place](#)
- Latest editions of [Current Magazine](#) and [Innovation Supplement](#) available. For Current Magazine past editions press [here](#), and to subscribe, [here](#). For access the Innovation Supplement and the sister Current Magazine and previous editions, subscribe to our [LinkedIn Group](#).
- [Fourth edition](#) of the Environment Agency Newsletter. To sign up to the newsletter press [here](#)

## Flood scheme openings and updates:

- [Shell Haven and Fobbing Marshes Policy Unit: Thames Estuary 2100 –](#) on what needs to be done to manage flood risk and adapt to rising sea levels in Shell Haven and Fobbing Marshes, one of 23 policy units in Thames Estuary 2100 (TE2100)
- [Guildford flood alleviation scheme](#), working in partnership with Guildford Borough Council, and Surrey County Council to find a sustainable flood risk management scheme for Guildford town centre
- [Oxford flood alleviation scheme](#) - working in partnership in one of the biggest flood schemes in the country to reduce flood risk in Oxford
- [Bude flood defence and river restoration scheme](#) - improving flood defences and to restore the ecological potential of the River Neet between Whalesborough Weir and Pethericks Mill Nature Reserve
- [Calstock flood defence improvement scheme –](#) details on what the Environment Agency is doing to manage the risk of flooding in Calstock, Cornwall, from the River Tamar
- [Bourne Ditch \(Spitalfields\)](#): details on the flood storage area in Spitalfields
- [Leigh expansion and Hildenborough embankment scheme](#) - increasing storage capacity and involve construction of an embankment
- River Thames Scheme – [Consultation](#) completed and [construction partner update](#)
- [Restoration](#) of Gloucester flood embankment helping to better protect around 50 properties from flooding
- [Property flood resilience measures completed - Kent](#), protecting 119 properties in the community at significant risk of river-flooding in East Peckham, Kent
- £12 million [Cockett Wick seawall improvement scheme](#) completed, ensuring 3,000 homes and businesses - This scheme is a key part of the [Essex and South Suffolk shoreline management plan](#).
- New [Castlehill Aquagreen](#)- reducing flood risk for hundreds east of Hull; this is a key part of the second phase of the £28 million pound [Holderness Drain Flood Alleviation Scheme](#)



- Pioneering [Weardale Natural Flood Management project](#)- using nature to reduce flood risk in Weardale
- [Thames Estuary 2100 Plan update](#)- ensuring the Thames estuary remains resilient to a changing climate
- [Newlyn coastal research and development project](#) - allowing us to investigate their performance in an intertidal location which experiences high wave energy
- [Datchet to Hythe End flood improvement measures project](#) - aiming to better protect the communities that would previously have been at reduced risk of flooding due to the presence of Channel 1. This includes approximately 2,500 properties

## Ways to keep in touch with our work

FCRM updates on [GOV.UK](#)

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**Environment Agency**

**National FCRM Business and Stakeholder Management Team**

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

**September 2024**