

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

FRIDAY 24 OCTOBER 2025, 10AM – 1PM

**Halliwell Jones Stadium, Warrington Conference Centre, Mike Gregory Way,
Warrington, WA2 7NE**

AGENDA

<u>Time</u>	<u>Agenda Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	
10:00	1.	Welcome Welcome, Chairman's Introduction, and Apologies for Absence	For information
10:05	2.	Minutes of RFCC meeting 11 July 2025 and matters arising (Paper) To approve the minutes of the last RFCC meeting and to receive an update on any actions and matters arising	For approval
10:10	3.	Government response to the consultation on reforming our approach to floods funding <i>Presented by Adrian Lythgo, RFCC Chairman</i>	For information and discussion
10:20	4.	Report from the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group (Papers + Information Item A) To discuss and consider the recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group. <i>Introduced by Andy Tester, EA FCRM Programme Manager, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) and Sally Whiting, EA RFCC Senior Advisor (GMMC)</i>	For information and discussion and approval
10:55	5.	Local Levy Vote 2026/27 (Paper) To discuss and agree the Local Levy to be raised in 2026/27	For decision
11:10		BREAK	
	6.	RFCC Business Plan - Project Findings	
11:25		Planning and Development Evidence Gathering (ID10) <i>Presented by Chris Findley, RFCC Member – Planning and Development and Sally Whiting, EA RFCC Senior Advisor</i>	For information and discussion
11:35		Asset Data Sharing and Mapping Project (ID4/13) Summary presentation of project recommendations <i>Presented by Jill Holden, Greater Manchester Partnership Co-ordinator</i>	For information and discussion
11:55	7.	Landscape in a Changing Climate Conference - Reflections <i>Presented by Ali Harker, Cumbria Partnership Co-ordinator</i>	For information and discussion
12:10	8.	Coastal Update <i>Presented by Carl Green, Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group and Susannah Bleakley, RFCC Member – Coastal Issues and Katie Eckford, NW SMP Co-ordinator</i>	For information and discussion
12:55	10.	Any Other Business	
13:00		CLOSE	

INFORMATION PAPERS

Info item A	Papers from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting	NW RFCC specific
Info item B	Update from the North West and North Wales Coastal Group	NW RFCC specific
Info item C	Quarterly Update from United Utilities	NW RFCC specific
Info item D	Reservoir Safety Reform Update	National EA
Info item E	River Winster Rehabilitation Project Update	NW RFCC specific
Info item F	National FCRM Update Paper	National EA

Future RFCC meetings

23 January 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
24 April 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
10 July 2026 (face to face meeting)
23 October 2026 (face to face meeting)
22 January 2027 (virtual meeting)

Future RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group meetings

28th November 2025 (Virtual Meeting)
9 January 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
10 April 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
26 June 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
9 October 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
8 January 2027 (Virtual Meeting)

NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 24 OCTOBER 2025 – DRAFT MINS FROM THE 11 JULY 2025 MEETING

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 11 July 2025

Hybrid Meeting held at Friends' Meeting House, Manchester

Attendees:

Members

Adrian Lythgo, Chairman

Councillor Giles Archibald, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

Councillor James Shorrocks, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership (Virtual attendance)

Councillor Alan Quinn, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

Councillor Daniel Barrington (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership) (Virtual attendance)

Kate Morley, EA Appointed Member – Conservation

Chris Findley, EA Appointed Member – Development and Sustainable Investment

Carolyn Otley, EA Appointed Member – Communities

Susannah Bleakley, EA Appointed Member – Coastal

Amy Cooper, EA Appointed Member - Water and Sewerage Industry

Paul Barnes, EA Appointed Member – Agriculture and Land Management (Farming)

Aimee Brough, EA Appointed Member – Agriculture and Land Management (Catchment Based Approaches)

Carl Green, Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group

Environment Agency Officers:

Nick Pearson, Area Flood Risk Manager (Greater Manchester)

Mary-Rose Muncaster, Area Flood Risk Manager (Merseyside and Cheshire)

Richard Knight, Area Flood Risk Manager (Cumbria)

Fiona Duke, Area Flood Risk Manager (Lancashire) (Virtual attendance)

Marina Powell-Currie, FCRM PSO Team Leader (Cumbria & Lancashire (C&L))

Sally Whiting, Senior FCRM Advisor

Andy Tester, FCRM Programming Manager (Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire) (GMMC))

Adam Walsh, FCRM Programming Manager (C&L)

Sarah Fontana, Capital Programme Co-ordinator

Chris Scott, Senior FCRM Advisor (GMMC)

Dave Brown, Senior FCRM Advisor (GMMC)

Katy Holt, FCRM PSO Team Leader (GMMC)

Local Authority Observers (Councillors and Officers):

Jason Harte, Westmorland and Furness Council

Ali Harker, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership

Nick Rae, Cumberland Council

Andrew Harrison, Cumberland Council

Clare Nolan-Barnes, Blackpool Council (Virtual attendance)

John Davies, Lancashire County Council

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Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Imran Munshi, Blackburn with Darwen Council (Virtual attendance)
 Louise Fortune, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Francis Comyn, Rochdale Borough Council (Part attendance)
 Jill Holden, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Matt Winnard, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
 Thomas Mawdsley, Manchester City Council
 Laura Peacock, Manchester City Council
 Matthew Sear, Manchester City Council
 Clare Kenyon, Manchester City Council

Other observers:

Hugh Ward, Lynster Farmers Group

Presenters:

Neville Elstone, Outgoing RFCC EA Appointed Member
 Jim Nettle, EA Senior FCRM Advisor (Virtual attendance)
 John Gorst, United Utilities (Virtual attendance)
 Dewi Jackson, Project Manager, Moors for the Future
 Adam Costello, EA FCRM Advisor (C&L)

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

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting, welcomed everyone and advised this hybrid (face-to-face and virtual) meeting is an experimental format to support Member attendance and facilitate decision-making both in person and online.

Adrian advised Members dialling in include Councillor James Shorrocks, Councillor Daniel Barrington along with Clare Nolan-Barnes, Fiona Duke and John Gorst.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin was welcomed to her first RFCC meeting as a representative of the Greater Manchester partnership and it was advised this will be the last meeting for Neville Elstone.

Members noted and approved the following correctly nominated RFCC LLFA Member substitutes:

- Louise Fortune representing the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on behalf of Councillor Tony Brennan
- Clare Nolan-Barnes representing the Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on behalf of Councillor Jane Hugo
- Matt Winnard representing the Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on behalf of Councillor Mark Goldsmith

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Adrian conveyed apologies from: Councillor Jane Hugo (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Karen Shore and Councillor Mark Goldsmith (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Tony Brennan (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Philip Cusack (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Stewart Davies (EA Board Member for the North West); Ian Crewe, EA Area Director (GMMC); Carol Holt, EA Area Director (C&L) and Rachel Harmer, EA RFCC Secretariat.

Adrian advised no declarations of interest had been received.

He highlighted his Chair's report shared with Members on 1 July, referencing the Spending Review announcement which includes £4.2 Billion for capital and revenue funding over the next three years and a ten-year capital funding plan of £7.9 Billion. He advised that this is an intention rather than a confirmed budget, that will be coming as part of the national Budget in October. He noted the £7.9 Billion is in broad terms the same amount of capital as will be spent this year and adjusted for inflation over the next ten years. This will be discussed later in the meeting together with the policy changes around Partnership Funding.

Members noted there is no quarterly flood incidents report this time, recognising the current dry spell. Adrian advised there have been a small number of flood incidents, recognising the significant impacts for the affected people, but was thankful there had been no widespread flooding.

Adrian highlighted the new recently published national SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) Standards. He highlighted that ASA (the Association of SuDS Authorities) is working with Defra to provide some additional guidance for local authorities and has provided a questionnaire to gather questions and guidance needs. He also reflected on the Quick Wins funding, designed to give LLFAs some flexibility to address flooding within their area, rather than using some of the long-term programme solutions. Members noted the current review (survey currently live) taking place being led by Sarah Fontana and Sally Whiting, to look at how the funding is being used, what level of funding should be allocated to this moving forwards. Members and officers were encouraged to engage with the survey regarding this important local funding mechanism.

There were no further comments or questions.

25 (24) Minutes of the RFCC meeting held on 25 April and matters arising

The minutes of the RFCC meeting held on 25 April were proposed by Councillor Giles Archibald and seconded by Carolyn Otley.

The minutes of the 25 April RFCC were approved by the Committee.

With regard to matters arising from the April meeting, Adrian advised:

- on the benefits of stronger strategic level links between the RFCC and Natural England, meetings are now being arranged to discuss how we can take this forward.
- Councillor Alan Quinn raised a question regarding EA sourcing of steel for flood schemes. Ian Crewe made a specific enquiry through Defra Procurement and

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Members were advised it appears the majority of steel used within the national capital projects is of UK origin, however not all of it is.

Councillor Quinn gave his thanks for progressing this enquiry and asked that we work to source steel from the United Kingdom wherever possible, to support our businesses and communities. Adrian asked Councillor Quinn if there is anything else the Committee can do at this point and was advised by Councillor Quinn that there isn't, but that he has written to Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP, Secretary of State for Business and Trade, on this matter.

There were no further questions or comments raised.

25 (25) Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting2024/25 Outturn

Adam Walsh provided a summary of the outturn position at the end of 2024/25. We better protected 1,352 properties against a target of 1,557 properties. This was an updated target from the 1,499 properties reported at the April RFCC meeting, due to several schemes re-profiling throughout the year. Members noted 86% of the properties better protected were against the three large schemes: Penketh and Whittle; Whitehaven Harbour, and Preston and South Ribble.

The North West had a total budget of £118 Million of which approximately £112.5 Million was spent, therefore an overall underspend of £5.5 Million. Adam advised that £1.8 Million of this was Local Levy funding which was deferred to a future year to maximise GiA spend in 2024/25. The underspend also included some Partnership Funding (PF) contributions similarly deferred to future years to align with funding profiles and comply with finance guidance.

On GiA specifically, there was a small overspend, which was within 1.25% of the £103.57 Million GiA budget. This was due to some late increases in spend arising at year-end relating primarily to four schemes: Appleby Town Centre (£700k), Littleborough (£600k), Padiham (£350k) and the GMMC Recovery Programme (£250k).

On capital efficiencies, £3.4 Million has been claimed against the North West target of £10.5 Million for 2024/25. This is an increase to the £2.6 Million claimed at the end of quarter 3. In total the North West have claimed £15 Million in efficiencies for the first 4 years of the programme. It was noted some of the large projects have yet to submit their efficiency claims and discussions are underway with the relevant EA and LA teams to submit efficiency claims as soon as possible.

Adam provided a summary of the asset maintenance programme for 2024/25. Members heard C&L Area spent 99% of their budget. This included £1.85 Million on asset electricity costs and flood basin operation compensation payments, which they were given permission to spend. GMMC Area spent 98.4% of their budget. This was to balance overspend across the wider Ops team and to keep within agreed budgets.

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For the current year, we are forecasting to better protect 6,751 properties against the North West target of 5,716.

The total capital investment funding available is £135.15 Million, which includes £121.99 Million of central Government FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid) and £9.78 Million of Local Levy.

Forecasts at mid-May 2025, when the EA undertook its baselining exercise, showed we are expecting to draw down £141.06 Million this year, which is £5.9 Million more than allocated (4.4% over programme). This is within the 5% over-programme maximum currently being set by the national programme management office.

Adam summarised key risks relating to capital programme spend and delivery for this year including the back-end loaded profile of delivery; the strong cost management required to spend within the allocation; ongoing recovery spend following the New-Years Day flooding events; and, the risk of experiencing further significant flooding resulting on further strain on the programme.

Resource Maintenance Programme 2025/26

Adam Walsh reported that budgets are slightly higher than previously reported figures due to the capital salaries recharge now being included in the budget for the first time this financial year. C&L have a £7 Million resource budget and GMMC have £5.57 Million.

Funding is also provided for the 'below required condition' assets to return them to target condition. The national target is to have 92% of assets at target condition or above. Both C&L and GMMC areas are well above that (95.5% and 93% respectively). In order to understand the health of assets, visual asset inspections are carried out, known as the T98 Inspection Programme. Members heard 99-100% of inspections are taking place on time.

An overview report was provided from the asset information data system which captures work orders. £5.377 Million of work orders are currently in the system. Members noted the maintenance programme, which is usually published on gov.uk, is currently subject to delay due to a technical issue with the system and will be provided as soon as possible. EA colleagues will advise the Strategic Partnerships when this information becomes available.

Investment Programme Refresh for 2026/27

Adam Walsh provided an overview of the 2026/27 investment programme refresh (bidding) process, being carried out in two phases, the first of which is currently underway and is at early draft stage. The Phase 1 bid will be submitted at the end of July and is currently showing a need for £213 Million in total project expenditure with the potential to reduce the risk of flooding to approximately 15,000 properties.

Phase 1 covers projects that are in or near construction, the support and enabling programme and the resource programme. For the projects in or near construction, these are projects that

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are either delivering properties in 2026/27 or are past Outline Business Case (OBC) by 1 April 2026.

Phase 2 will be a bid for existing projects not past Outline Business Case (OBC) by 1 April 2026, and all new/pipeline projects. This will take place in the autumn and will commence following the confirmation of the new funding arrangements, currently subject to a national consultation.

The draft bid summary for 2026/27 for Phase 1 (including breakdown by partnership) was provided for Members. The final Phase 1 bid will be made available for the October RFCC meeting as part of the Local Choices process. It is likely that only the Phase 1 bid will be endorsed by Committee in October, followed by consent in January, as the new funding arrangements are awaited.

Local Levy Minimum Balance

Sally Whiting provided a brief explanation of the background to the proposed Local Levy minimum balance options, and the uncertainty and risks giving rise to the suggestion to keep more Local Levy funding in reserve. She explained the distinction between the Absolute Minimum and a Minimum Working balance and reminded Members that there is already the provision for an (absolute) minimum balance in the Local Levy Strategy of 5-10% of annual income. A reminder of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting discussion was provided.

Members were asked to vote on the recommendation from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group to support a minimum working balance option of £2 Million (Option 1). This was approved.

Votes in favour: Councillor Giles Archibald, Paul Barnes, Councillor Daniel Barrington, Susannah Bleakley, Aimee Brough, Amy Cooper, Chris Findley, Louise Fortune, Kate Morley, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Carolyn Otley, Councillor Alan Quinn, Councillor James Shorrocks, Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and Matt Winnard.

There were no further comments or questions.

Local Levy Programme

Adam Walsh summarised the position on the 2024/25 and 2025/26 Local Levy programmes. £5.835 Million of Local Levy was spent in 2024/25 with £10.336 Million remaining in balances at the end of the 2024/25 year, down from £11.213 Million the previous year. The latest spend forecast for 2025/26 is £9.56 Million with an expected remaining balance of £5.858 Million at the end of the 2025/26 financial year, which would be a significant reduction on the previous year.

Local Levy Requests**Padiham Flood Risk Management Scheme - £3.7 Million (in 2027/28 and 2028/29)**

Jim Nettle provided Members with an overview of this scheme to reduce flood risk to 77 residential properties, 69 business premises, 3 public buildings and improve critical infrastructure at Padiham. He referenced numerous major flooding events experienced in

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Padiham in recent years. He gave an overview of the works that have been completed so far, and the current programme of works timeline. Members were advised of a variety of funding contributions including GiA (£6 Million), a previously approved RFCC Local Levy contribution of £1.3 Million (£300k not yet spent), Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal 3 funding, Green Recovery Funding, and other government department funding. This leaves a current funding gap of £3.7 Million forecast in the financial years 2027/28 and 2028/2029. The RFCC is requested to provide additional Local Levy to fill this gap to make the scheme fully funded. This £3.7 Million is in addition to an existing £1.3 Million of Local Levy, which totals £5 Million and is within the limits set by the Local Levy Strategy.

Resolved: The RFCC approved the £3.7 Million Local Levy request for the Padiham Flood Risk Management Scheme.

Votes in favour: Councillor Giles Archibald, Councillor Daniel Barrington, Susannah Bleakley, Aimee Brough, Amy Cooper, Chris Findley, Louise Fortune, Kate Morley, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Carolyn Otley, Councillor Alan Quinn, Councillor James Shorrocks, Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and Matt Winnard.

Blackpool, Manchester Square Pumping Station - £250K (2025/26)

Clare Nolan-Barnes provided an overview of Manchester Square Pumping station, constructed in 2009 which protects approximately 4000 properties from surface water flooding along Blackpool's main frontage, whilst also protecting Blackpool's tramway and highway. The pumps and associated connection to culvert are now time expired and require capital maintenance to enable the protection of properties in this main location of the town. Blackpool Council have been working with the pump manufacturers to find a short-term solution, but a more in-depth survey and study is required to assess the requirement for pumping surface water from this area and the requirements to works to the adjacent culvert that discharges the surface water to sea. Clare advised United Utilities (UU) will also be engaged in the study as the culvert is shared by both Blackpool Council and UU. She highlighted the significant health and safety issues also posed by the deterioration of the culvert.

Resolved: The RFCC approved the £250K Local Levy request for Blackpool, Manchester Square Pumping Station.

Votes in favour: Councillor Giles Archibald, Paul Barnes, Councillor Daniel Barrington, Susannah Bleakley, Aimee Brough, Amy Cooper, Chris Findley, Louise Fortune, Kate Morley, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Carolyn Otley, Councillor Alan Quinn, Councillor James Shorrocks, Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and Matt Winnard.

Property Flood Resilience Programme

Adam Costello provided a brief summary of the overview provided by Shannon Gunning at the recent RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting.

Members noted:

- Engagement has taken place with Local Authorities since the April meeting, which has involved presentations to partnerships and an expression of interest process to identify local authority interest in using the EA's PFR Framework and in progressing PFR projects if funding was available. He summarised that there had been a high response rate and that a very significant majority of LAs had heard of the framework, were

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interested in using it if funding was available, and could offer up known communities that could benefit from PFR.

- The PFR project pipeline will be developed over the next 6 months from a current potential list of communities and further engagement will take place with LAs to discuss key priority areas
- Specific prioritisation criteria to shape the pipeline are to be fully developed.
- There will be review and assurance arrangements put in place for determining the prioritisation in which sub regional partnerships will play a key role. One of the roles of these arrangements will be to ensure an even spread of PFR across the sub regional partnerships.

Given that it is early days for PFR delivery in the North West, and given the upcoming changes to funding rules, there is a clear need for reviews during this three year period, to examine the levels of success in securing GiA, and the experience of PFR delivery in the North West (both community uptake, as well as officer capacity and process).

Adam advised there will be continuous review and refinement of the North West PFR pipeline to ensure the funding is being used to greatest effect in reducing the impact of flooding. The exact timing of these reviews is still to be determined, but likely to be annual. He hopes to be able to provide an update on any GiA funding secured for 2026/27 to the January 2026 RFCC meeting.

Councillor Giles Archibald made the point that prioritisation should ensure reasonable distribution of PFR measures across contributing authorities.

Resolved: The RFCC approved the Local Levy request to support the implementation of a Property Flood Resilience programme for the North West, with investment of £675K in 2026/27, £900K in 2027/28 and £1,125K in 2028/29.

Votes in favour: Councillor Giles Archibald, Paul Barnes, Councillor Daniel Barrington, Susannah Bleakley, Aimee Brough, Amy Cooper, Chris Findley, Louise Fortune, Kate Morley, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Carolyn Otley, Councillor Alan Quinn, Councillor James Shorrocks, Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and Matt Winnard.

Resolved: The North West RFCC:

- noted the 2024/25 capital and resource programmes outturn
- noted the progress in delivering the 2025/26 capital and resource programmes
- noted the draft Phase 1 capital programme refresh bid for funding in 2026/27
- noted the progress in delivering the 2025/26 Local Levy programme
- approved the Local Levy minimum working balance of £2 Million (Option 1)
- approved the £3.7 Million Local Levy funding request for the Padiham Flood Risk Management Scheme
- approved the £250K Local Levy funding request for the Blackpool, Manchester Square Pumping Station
- approved the Local Levy funding request for the Property Flood Resilience Programme (£675K in 2026/27, £900K in 2027/28 and £1,125K in 2028/29)

NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING – 24 OCTOBER 2025 – DRAFT MINS FROM THE 11 JULY 2025 MEETING**RFCC Business Plan Update**

Sally Whiting provided an update on delivery of RFCC Business Plan projects, referring to additional detail in the information papers and on the North West RFCC SharePoint site. She summarised the progress status of projects, reported on the in-year investment and spend forecast, and indicated investment needs for the next two years.

Sally reported on two projects which have completed during the last quarter and asked Members to formally acknowledge their completion.

- Investment Feasibility Project (ID1), led by GMCA with work done by Jacobs.

Members received a short summary of the project and its outputs, with reference to the presentation provided by Chris Isherwood from Jacobs to the recent Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup meeting.

- RFCC Sharepoint site (ID18), created by Sally Whiting and Rachel Harmer, launched in December 2024, which provides a platform for sharing information on North West RFCC business. This website will be continuously updated and improved to ensure the RFCC community have direct access to meeting papers and presentations, investment programme information, national guidance, and membership information.

Sally also provided Members with a summary of notable Business Plan successes including:

- The Flood Poverty Project (ID8), which won an Innovation in Climate Resilience award achieving national recognition.
- Unpave the Way Project (ID12), which has been highlighted as best practice nationally with a case study on the CIRIA Susdrain website and a double-page article in the latest edition of the ADA (Association of Drainage Authorities) magazine.

Neville Elstone thanked Sally for her report and underlined the importance of all the work in the Business Plan.

There were no further comments or questions.

Resolved: The North West RFCC formally recognised the completion of two RFCC Business Plan projects: Investment Feasibility project (ID1), and RFCC SharePoint site (ID18).

Votes in favour: Councillor Giles Archibald, Paul Barnes, Councillor Daniel Barrington, Susannah Bleakley, Aimee Brough, Amy Cooper, Chris Findley, Louise Fortune, Kate Morley, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Carolyn Otley, Councillor Alan Quinn, Councillor James Shorrocks, Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and Matt Winnard.

There were no further questions or comments.

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Members noted the current Investment Reform consultation, open until 29 July, and Adrian thanked those who have been able to share their draft consultation responses with him prior to this meeting.

Adrian provided Members with a summary of the aims of the reform and advised the objective for the session this morning was to provide an opportunity for colleagues to say anything they wanted to in the public domain about those responses and also to establish areas of consensus which may support an RFCC discussion and consultation response.

Nick Pearson informed Members of some consultation webinars taking place. He advised that, under the proposals, most projects in delivery from April 2026 will be under the new funding rules, but those with contractual commitments to construction are expected to remain under the current funding rules.

Nick gave a brief introduction to the two main proposals within the consultation, around eligibility for funding, and prioritisation.

Funding eligibility:

- All FCERM projects to have the first £3 Million of their project costs fully funded by Defra without the need for external contributions (Contributions Free Allowance)
- A flat rate of 90% Defra funding to costs above £3 million.
- FCERM asset refurbishment projects are fully funded by Defra.

Three proposed options for prioritisation:

1. By value for money and flood risk.
2. By value for money and flood risk with additional priority given to bolster specific policy outcomes.
3. Providing additional priority to projects which raise additional partnership funding beyond their required amount, which could be done alongside approaches 1 and 2.

Adrian briefly touched on the calls for evidence also within the consultation, to inform flood funding in the longer term, on alternative sources of funding, and on how English devolution can support flood risk management, boost local resilience and align with local growth priorities. The proposed flood funding rules would result in more projects being eligible for Defra funding, which will create improved opportunities for RFCCs, through the annual consenting role, to have a greater say in which projects are approved. The consultation recognises the possible option to explore giving RFCCs more discretion over the prioritisation e.g. towards specific strategic objectives, alongside the value for money and flood risk approach.

Councillor Giles Archibald commented that the transition between the current and new funding models doesn't appear to be clear enough which will lead to uncertainty and anxiety. He expressed a strong view on the 2012 limitation that this should be removed in the new funding arrangements, given the increasing impacts of climate change. He also feels that the role of natural flood management (NFM) is understated and not given enough visibility and emphasis.

Clare Nolan-Barnes raised her concern around the transition arrangements, highlighting that Blackpool have some significant projects, presented to the Committee approximately 1 year

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ago, which could be impacted by this transition. She expressed concern about the 90% funding principle advising that securing contributions for capital schemes is already a challenge, so there's a real concern about where the other 10% funding will be obtained from.

Paul Barnes commented with regard to the new capital projects that RFCCs need to have clear oversight of their priorities, otherwise decisions will be taken out of their hands.

Carolyn Otley commented that the Committee needs to be able to take a more ambitious approach with NFM and be able to make sure that as an RFCC we can target it to the places we're able to make the most difference. She expressed that the consultation document isn't clear that will be the case and also suggested the Committee may want to respond suggesting that a more ambitious approach involving other Defra funding schemes would be appropriate; to make NFM effective, we need to think of it not just in terms of flooding, but also land management.

Susannah Bleakley echoed concerns around coastal work, recognising the typically high cost of schemes. She reflected that it can be extremely difficult and not cost effective to try and seek partnership funding especially relating to some of the deprived coastal communities. She raised questions on adaptation and the apparent lack of discussion around this. She highlighted concern about the emphasis on prioritising the highest risk places which does not appear to recognise the most sustainable solutions. She asked if it may be possible for funding to be specifically earmarked for the coast and suggested better integration with other partners, such as Natural England.

Matt Winnard reflected concerns raised within the Cheshire Mid Mersey partnership about the proposal to increase the funding for capital maintenance (from 21% to 51% of the investment programme) and whether any of this would be available for local authorities. He raised a general question about how the new investment rules would impact local authorities, highlighting that the consultation didn't show how the programme would support smaller scale schemes.

Richard Knight referred back to Carolyn Otley's comments and to the delivery of NFM projects by environmental NGOs (National Government Organisations), which while having significant benefits, does raise some questions and concerns about the need for strategic oversight to ensure money is spent in the places where it gets the best outcome for flood risk reduction.

Carolyn highlighted that in the current national £25m NFM programme, the grant agreements they have with eNGOs prevent flood risk management authorities from being involved in the projects.

Richard also supported the need for more NFM in the future programme, but also the continued need for more traditional engineered schemes, for example in Carlisle, where there has already been investment in measures. There are a range of tools we should continue to use to reduce flood risk.

Amy Cooper provided a water industry perspective which included being supportive of the need for more co-funding of schemes, noting the water industry has been outlined as one of

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the key areas for alternative sources of funding. She advised they have significant water quality drivers and the associated investment can be used to deliver various co-benefits including reduced flood risk. She also questioned whether there may be some situations where Defra may be called upon to allocate greater than 90% funding (above the £3 million threshold), for schemes in deprived communities without the ability to raise funding from other sectors. Amy also noted recognised the concerns raised about NFM and coastal work.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin recognised that significant amounts of investment are still required and a range of different types of intervention continue to be needed.

Kate Morley highlighted the NFM pipeline development work being led by David Kennedy for Cumbria, but which will provide an approach for use across the North West. This will put us in a stronger position to draw in national funding.

Aimee Brough echoed her support for increased funding for NFM but recognised some of the practical challenges of making it happen, often being dependent on willing landowners, the need to address it at catchment scale, and the different drivers and limitations on different partners (e.g. water companies). She asked what the RFCC can do to help this.

Amy Cooper responded reporting on a recent conversation with the RFCC about the potential to unlock more integrated modelling between partners, which could inform their future programme, albeit fixed to their planning cycles.

Carolyn Otley checked her understanding that whilst the consultation proposes a big increase in capital maintenance, she understands this to be major capital maintenance to refurbish assets rather than normal routine maintenance. She recognised that is still a gap for the LLFAs around resource funding. While recognising that issue is perhaps slightly outside the scope of this consultation, it does not fix that issue.

Adrian responded that it's not yet fully clear whether the refocus of funding towards capital maintenance will benefit all RMAs or just the EA's assets. He advised hearing from EA officers that the programme is intended to capture LA capital asset maintenance as well but as yet this has not been written anywhere. He suggested this may or may not be something that individual responders to the consultation ask the government to clarify, irrespective of any RFCC response.

Adrian thanked Members for sharing some of their very clear views about the consultation proposals. He advised he has been fortunate to be able to read six or seven draft responses that had been shared with him in advance of the meeting. He summarised that at a very high level these draft responses show their support in general for the funding eligibility proposals (first £3 Million and then 90% above that) with some absolute support for that direction of travel, but noting that the transition from the old to the new system is critical. He noted views that the transition cannot be achieved in a single year as there are large number of schemes in the current programme that would need to continue to be funded. That appeared to be an area of consensus.

He recognised the clear ambition for shifting investment into broader resilience measures for the long term and expressed that the prioritisation of this is important, with the RFCC potentially having an enhanced role in guiding that prioritisation. He also highlighted the

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shared view of the critical importance of being able to plan at scale across different functional boundaries and funding approaches.

Adrian suggested there is enough consensus to do a short RFCC response to the consultation. This will cover only those areas of clear consensus and not arguments that only one or two Members support.

He recognised one of these being the 2012 rule, highlighting that in the current regime, properties built after 2012 can't receive funding for flood risk reduction measures, because in theory they should have been subject to planning permission and shouldn't be at flood risk. He noted this has been covered in some responses, but not all.

Members were asked if they were happy to support Adrian preparing a short, focussed response to the consultation, focussing on prioritisation and transition. He advised this will be shared with Members prior to being submitted. On the raising of hands Members approved this action.

Votes in favour: Councillor Giles Archibald, Paul Barnes, Councillor Daniel Barrington, Susannah Bleakley, Aimee Brough, Amy Cooper, Chris Findley, Louise Fortune, Kate Morley, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Carolyn Otley, Councillor Alan Quinn, Councillor James Shorrocks, Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and Matt Winnard.

Adrian thanked Members for their input, recognising that there is a good opportunity within the proposed changes, but there is also a risk in that the process could present challenges during the implementation phase. He reflected that the Committee will need to follow the outcomes of the consultation process through to the changed arrangements. He added that the national grouping of RFCC Chairs will also be making a collective response.

There were no further comments or questions.

25 (27) Cumbria Climate Change Risk Assessment

Councillor Giles Archibald and Carolyn Otley introduced this item advising of the work that has been led by the CiFR Project.

Members were advised that the Climate Change Risk Assessment (CCRA) developed for Cumbria was based on UKCP18 projections. They heard global temperatures are increasing and have already risen around 1.5 degrees centigrade from the pre-industrial era, causing changes to our climate bringing in higher temperatures with more intense rainfall. There are projections of up to 35% higher peak rainfall figures by 2070. Peak river flows in the North West which could be 52% higher by 2080. Risks include increased flood and drought, wildfires, infrastructure vulnerability and health impacts. Carolyn played the BBC video of 'A weather forecast for the 2050s' which presented a stark vision of the future.

Carolyn Otley conveyed that there has previously been no simple summary of climate change data for Cumbria that can be used with communities. She highlighted the team at Nottingham Trent University, who have a longstanding relationship with Cumbria through the Local Resilience Forum and are working on how to influence behaviour and get people thinking

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about climate change and its impacts. The Cumbria CCRA and report will give climate projection data for Cumbria, broken down by Local Authority areas and 11 communities. Interactive climate projection maps will be available online.

The narrative part of the CCRA is based around the risks identified in the National Climate Change Risk Assessment, which include: Environment and Ecological Systems; Landscape Heritage and Culture; People, Homes and Houses; Critical Infrastructure; Commerce; High Temperatures and risks specific to Cumbria.

Members noted many of the risks are linked to one another and can cascade to cause further risks and that the CCRA will help to start conversations with communities about the risks, how they connect and how Cumbria may wish to adapt to them.

Key risks include:

- Hotter, drier summers leading to drought and wildfires
- More frequent and extreme swings between hot and cold, and dry and wet weather leading to damage and landslips, potentially damaging underground infrastructure
- Loss of communications leading to difficulties receiving warnings and challenges coordinating response

Carolyn reported on the significant flooding that occurred in Stockdalewath in May 2024, the damage that was caused to 48 properties and the loss of power and communications with the affected community.

Carolyn advised that CiFR is funded as part of the national Defra Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme – a different Defra funding source that is managed by the EA and delivered by Westmorland and Furness Council on behalf of both the Cumbria LAs. Richard Knight thanked Carolyn for her recognition of the dramatic flooding that happened in Stockdalewath and wished to highlight that this community is one that doesn't benefit from the current partnership funding rules. He would like threat to life to be a greater consideration, to support communities which while relatively low numbers of properties can see some dramatic flooding with serious risks. Carolyn added that some of the properties had flood water up to shoulder height, including one bungalow with vulnerable residents. This incident is being seen as a case study with government involvement.

Paul Barnes highlighted the AMOC climate change scenario (Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation), which would lead to greater impacts, and secondly raised his concerns about water security and having private companies responsible for water.

Neville Elstone whether AMOC had been considered within the Cumbria CCRA. Carolyn responded to say the methodology for the CCRA used existing datasets, which doesn't take account of AMOC. They remain live to the potential for climate change scenarios to evolve.

There were no further comments or questions.

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Kate Morley, Dave Brown (Environment Agency), Dewi Jackson (Moors for the Future) and John Gorst (United Utilities) presented this item.

Having requested the agenda item, Councillor Giles Archibald was invited to offer some opening remarks in which he emphasised the impacts of climate change and the need to accelerate and upscale our peatland restoration as a matter of urgency, for all the environmental and adaptation benefits it provides. Members were given an overview of what peatland restoration work has already been done in the North West, an outline of partners' plans for the coming years, an indication of the scale of need and opportunity, and barriers to upscaling and accelerating the work. The focus for the RFCC is on the flood risk benefits of peatland restoration, but the wider benefits are fully recognised and welcomed. It was noted the poor state of peatland has been driven by air pollution over the last 150 years which commenced during the industrial revolution.

Members heard about the Great North Bog which is a partnership of partnerships, set up to try and address and meet the peat restoration ambitions within the 25-year Environment Plan. This helps to coordinate and collaborate to identify sources of funding and share best practice.

An overview of the work which has already been done and is currently taking place in the North West was provided, primarily delivered by the three North West peat partnerships - Moors for the Future, the Lancashire Peat Partnership and the Cumbria Peat Partnership, led by Cumbria Wildlife Trust. To show the benefits of current work, Dave reported on monitoring and sampling work being undertaken by the universities of Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle.

John Gorst provided an overview of previous, current and future peatland restoration work being funded and led by United Utilities, who are a major landowner owning 57,000 hectares of land across the North West. UU have a heavy reliance on upland reservoirs for their water supply, which sit amongst peatland landscapes. UU have been investing in and delivering peatland restoration for over 20 years with a number of different drivers – water quantity (storage and supply), water quality (reducing colour and turbidity and therefore treatment costs), biodiversity, and climate mitigation.

John provided outline information on the level of ambition for peatland work within UU's current AMP programme, running from now until 2030, along with a summary of three key catchment areas currently being worked on.

Kate Morley provided an overview of what elements are needed to make peatland restoration happen based on the experience and collective knowledge of the people who are working in this field. These included funding, strategic drivers, modelling in relation to communities at risk of flooding, permissions, and landowner willingness/consent.

Dewi highlighted that partnership projects bring together different interests within a complex funding landscape to develop and deliver multi-benefit projects. Members noted Moors for the Future and other partners are mostly project funded, which means that staff are hired on short term contracts, losing that experience and expertise at the end of a project. This is exacerbated by some short-term funding cycles.

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Councillor Giles Archibald thanked everyone for their presentations, however raised his concern that there is still much more work to be done and it is his understanding that almost 90% of peatland in the North West is degraded. He called for further funding to be provided for peatland restoration to reduce flood risk to communities.

Adrian Lythgo referred back to the funding reform consultation which may or may not prioritise peat restoration, although natural flood management in general is a strategic objective. There is a requirement to make a strong case for why peatland restoration should be a key part of the increased NFM component. This could help partners to access funding. Referring to the supply chain challenges from reliance on short-term project funding, he reinforced that in order for this work to be scaled up, this needs greater certainty of funding over sustained periods. He remarked that LAs have an important role to play in this work in terms of leadership of place and talking to large landowners, apart from UU, and in terms of their own land, and through making peat restoration a local priority.

Adrian asked what this Committee can do to help those two things going forwards, recognising that the ambition is dependent on how much funding can be secured.

Adrian stated that he hoped the information and discussion gave Councillor Archibald some hope – there is more we can do, but we are heavily dependent on national funding policy which will direct investment towards different types of flood risk management measures. He suggested when the government has clarified how the new policy works and what the changes are, we will take stock and see where we can go from there.

There were no further comments or questions.

25 (29) North West NaFRA2 Update

The meeting ran short of time for this item so the update provided by Marina Powell-Curry was high level and covered key messages only. The full slides were provided to Members prior to the meeting.

Adrian set the context clarifying for Members the importance of flood risk data being improved through NaFRA2 as it is expected to drive the pipeline of work in the new policy environment and investment programme.

Marina provided an overview of the flood risk data for the North West, which although is a step forward, there are some issues which still need to be addressed. These relate to:

- (Check Your Long-Term Flood Risk) Asset Failure / Breach Scenario issues
- New National Model (NNM) - deficiency of water level data
- Flood Map for Planning (FMfP):
 - Issues with “with defences” and “without defences” and climate change flood risk layers
 - Source of flooding unclear
 - Direct Rainfall modelling possible duplication
 - Functional Floodplain
- Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea (RoFRS)
 - Risk of flooding of lakes and down stream

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- Climate Change
 - Tidal interpolated scenarios data is currently incorrectly showing a 1.9 metre instead of the 1.41 metre sea level scenario

Members noted the data issues mean that the risk is not being represented correctly everywhere. Data for areas in GMMC such as Salford, Chester and West Kirby are currently being worked on.

Members noted NaFRA2 is able to receive regular updates to address issues and as risk changes, however a lot of these updates rely on local mapping and modelling. Current funding for modelling is £8 Million nationally, but much of this funding pot is being used to support the capital programme.

Adrian Lythgo thanked Marina for her presentation and advised the Committee will return to this at a future point. He advised NaFRA2 is an ongoing model, which all risk management authorities have the ability to change so that it reflects the right risks locally. However, he recognised that we may need to devote some money locally to make sure that we're addressing the highest risks associated with data and modelling issues, which will inform the future investment programme.

There were no further comments or questions.

25 (30) Any Other Business

For the benefit of those who were attending their first Committee meeting, Members introduced themselves.

Aimee Brough, the new EA-appointed Member for Agriculture (Catchment Approaches), advised that her day job is working for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on the Integrated Water Management Plan alongside Jill Holden.

Adrian advised the next meeting on 24 October will be held in person as it is the annual Local Levy setting meeting. He welcomed feedback from today's first hybrid meeting.

Members were reminded of the arrangements for the visit to Mayfield Park following today's meeting.

Adrian thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting was closed.

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NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group

Draft minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2025

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

Attendees:

Terri McMillan (Chair)	RFCC Member – General Business and Assurance
Adrian Lythgo	NW RFCC Chairman
Cllr James Shorrocks	RFCC Member – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Philip Cusack	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P'ship
Cllr Alan Quinn	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P'ship
Cllr Mandie Shilton Godwin	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P'ship
Cllr Tony Brennan	RFCC Member - Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Mark Goldsmith	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic FR P'ship
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities
Kate Morley	RFCC Member - Conservation
Chris Findley	RFCC Member – Planning and Development
Carl Green	Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group
Richard Knight	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Cumbria
Nick Pearson	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Greater Manchester
Adam Walsh	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, C&L
Andy Tester	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, GMMC
Sally Whiting	Officer – EA Senior Advisor (RFCC)
Paul Bowden	EA Ops Local Delivery Lead, GMMC
Nikki Beale	EA Ops Local Delivery Lead, C&L
Rachel Harmer	RFCC Secretariat

Support Officers/Observers:

Ali Harker	Co-ordinator - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Jason Harte	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Nick Rae	Officer – Cumberland Council
John Davies	Officer - Lancashire County Council
Lorah Cheyne	Co-ordinator - Lancashire Partnership
Louise Fortune	Officer – Knowsley Council
Fran Comyn	Officer - Rochdale Borough Council
Cllr Laura Boyle	Tameside Council
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer – Blackpool Council
Matthew Winnard	Co-ordinator - Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Guy Metcalf	Officer – Cheshire East Highways
Katie Eckford	Officer – North West SMP Co-ordinator
Laura Lamb	EA FCRM Senior Advisor, C&L
Ayush Sheth	EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Elizabeth Griffin-Bennett	EA, FCRM Senior Advisor

Presenters:

Shannon Gunning	EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Iwan Lawton	EA FCRM Advisor, C&L
Adam Costello	EA FCRM Advisor, C&L
Dave Kennedy	EA FCRM Senior Advisor, C&L

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1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Terri McMillan opened the meeting, welcomed all those in attendance and introduced herself as the new Chair of the RFCC's Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group.

Terri advised apologies had been received from Councillor Giles Archibald (Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Cllr Mhairi Doyle (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Cllr Jane Hugo (Lancashire partnership); Amy Cooper (EA RFCC Member – Water and Sewerage Industry); Aimee Brough (EA RFCC Member – Agriculture (Catchment Based Approaches)); Susannah Bleakley (RFCC Member – Coastal Issues); and Carol Holt, EA Area Director (C&L).

We noted and accepted the correctly nominated substitutes of:

- Jason Harte on behalf of Councillor Giles Archibald for the Cumbria Partnership.
- Clare Nolan-Barnes on behalf of Councillor Jane Hugo for the Lancashire Partnership.

Terri also welcomed meeting presenters; Shannon Gunning, Iwan Lawton, Adam Costello and Dave Kennedy.

2. Feedback from the RFCC Meeting on 11 July 2025

Adrian Lythgo highlighted the key decisions from the 11 July 2025 RFCC meeting, where the RFCC:

- **Approved** the Local Levy minimum working balance of £2 Million (Option 1)
- **Approved** the £3.7 Million Local Levy funding request for the Padiham Flood Risk Management Scheme
- **Approved** the £250K Local Levy funding request for the Blackpool, Manchester Square Pumping Station
- **Approved** the 3-year Local Levy funding request for the Property Flood Resilience Programme (£675K in 2026/27, £900K in 2027/28, £1,125K in 2028/29)
- (noted the RFCC Business Plan update)
- **Acknowledged the completion** of two RFCC Business Plan Projects (ID1 Investment Feasibility Project, and ID18 RFCC SharePoint Site).

3. Investment Programme Update 2025/26

Terri McMillan acknowledged the new and improved format for the papers, recognising that EA Programming teams have worked hard on this to present the information in a clearer and more user-friendly way.

Andy Tester highlighted some recent changes relating the investment programme.

First, Members were advised of the terminology change, from 'capital programme' to 'investment programme', given new financial rules about what activity can be classed as capital, and the greater mix of capital and resource funding making up the programme.

Second, Andy explained the CDEL (Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit) and RDEL (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit) split. Based on National Audit Office (NAO) findings there is a new requirement to make a slightly different distinction between capital and resource and for this to be more transparent. The activity dictates the type of spend and therefore we are not able to move

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funding between CDEL and RDEL. There are national level CDEL and RDEL budget allocations which we need to adhere to. Therefore the CDEL/RDEL split along with the overall spend/allocation will be managed and reported over the course of the year, and we will be required to meet the budget on all three elements. This is an added complexity which will be managed by Programming teams and reported to the RFCC as simply and clearly as possible.

Thirdly, Andy provided some further focus on the revised format of the report, making use of consistent graphs and simple data tables, supported by narrative, and with detailed appendices available for reference. He also referred to the wider suite of reports with similar-look reports being provided at partnership level up to whole North West level for the Subgroup and RFCC. He expressed his hope that Members found the reports easier to read and pick out key information.

Andy Tester went on to present the overview of the investment programme for the current year, 2025/26, covering the forecast for properties to be better protected against the North West target. We are currently forecasting to fall slightly short of the North West target but within 90% which equates to Green on the national scorecard. Andy reported that the teams are also working to see what else could be achieved over the next couple of quarters to reach our target and hopefully exceed it. Overall we are in a strong position.

He also covered the funding that has been allocated (including FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid) and Local Levy) and latest spend forecasts. Latest forecasts show that we are expecting to draw down £5.9 Million more than the £141.06 Million allocation, representing a 4.4% overprogramme. This is within the maximum 5% overprogramming advised by the national programme management office at this point in the year, so again a strong position.

On capital efficiencies claimed, Andy acknowledged that we in the North West have struggled to reach our targets year on year. This year we have seen an increase over previous years and so while it was a slow start, we have started to make some ground. We are aware of live submissions still working through the process.

Andy wished to flag that our failure to meet our efficiency targets year on year could represent a potential risk in relation to confidently securing funding in the future.

He highlighted other risks for the programme this year. While the North West is in a good position on RDEL spend, there is a forecast overspend on RDEL nationally which could impact local flexibility. This is not materialising currently but we were providing early warning that we could be asked to manage down spend at a local level. He reiterated the reputational risk around the shortfall on efficiencies claimed and our ability to secure future funding.

Thirdly, delays to local choices may impact scheme progression. We are currently having to manage the programme with caution in terms of contractually committing to spend which could delay implementation. There are schemes that are due to get into contract in the next few months that are having to hold off pending the GiA allocation. Any delays in the Local Choices stage to finalise the allocation will exacerbate this.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin asked what the implication would be of there being less resource available as a result of a national overspend and how this sits with devolution and combined mayoral authorities?

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Adrian Lythgo advised he believes this is one of the things that will change, but at the moment for us as an RFCC, with our links back into the mayoral combined authorities and your ability to influence decisions on what is or isn't in the national programme, we have an informal influencing role, but we can't change it. If the EA nationally determines that all the areas that are on budget need to cut back to cover for the areas that are overspending, then that is what we have to do.

Resource Maintenance Programme 2025/26

Nikki Beale provided an overview of the resource maintenance programme for 2025/26 For Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L) Areas. We noted the forecast to spend to budget with no overprogramme.

She covered C&L's 'below required condition' assets, which is what drives the asset reconditioning programme. She reported that both North West areas have a very high percentage of assets at required condition, well above the national target of 92.5%. However in terms of local area targets, C&L are showing as red due to the 97.7% target being really high. They currently have 96.6% of all assets at the right condition but there is a lot of reconditioning work required right now and the assets are still as challenging and complex to fix.

Paul Bowden explained the situation for the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) area where there are a lot more 'below required condition' assets mainly as a result of the December 2024/January 2025 flood events. GMMC are currently at 92.6% against their 93.4% target, which is expected to be reached but which relies heavily on all planned GMMC work being delivered.

Nikki and Paul provided overviews of their routine maintenance work programmes (work orders). We heard planned and programmed work after the end of September/ October time tends to tail off and work becomes more reactive. Examples of work that has been carried out recently including:

- Taking advantage of the dry weather and low river levels during the summer channel clearance work took place, including work on the River Medlock.
- Large desilts on Bedford Brook in Leigh, in September where just under 1600 tonnes of silt was removed from the brook upstream of the pumping station.
- Clearing debris screens, removing blockages and other reactive work due to the first named storm of the season.

Nikki shared the good example of making best use of funding and resources where the skills of the EA Field Teams were used to deliver permanent repairs to the embankment on Eller Brook, Lancashire. This provided excellent value for money, a good outcome for the local landowner, which is a community farm, delivering social, environmental and economic benefits.

Jason Harte asked whether any need to reduce RDEL spend would most likely impact capital schemes or routine maintenance, and whether any reduced commitment to repair BRC assets could lead to more capital projects in future. Nikki Beale advised with regard to below required condition assets, they have a ceiling limit of £0.5 Million and any repair above £0.5 Million becomes a capital maintenance project and part of the bigger investment programme. She advised that CDEL and RDEL rules still apply, and as we are not creating new assets but rather repairing existing assets, this RDEL proportion does fall into the reconditioning programme. Funding for the reconditioning programme is currently quite healthy but she could not say what the future position would be.

Carolyn Otley highlighted the list of assets below required condition and noted that the Lyth Valley

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and Winsters areas were included where the RFCC has recently invested Local Levy funding. She advised it would be helpful to get some reassurance that the fact that those assets are below required condition won't impact on the money the RFCC is investing. Nikki advised from the EA funding point of view maintenance is based on the flood risk relating to the asset system. The Lyth Valley is classed as a low flood risk system and the EA therefore struggles to justify funding for those low flood risk assets in the programme. It has to be a local choice to repair.

Adrian Lythgo provided further clarification on CDEL and RDEL and the distinction between the wider investment programme and the EA's asset maintenance programme. The wider investment programme consists of both capital and resource spend, the resource side providing the capacity to get the capital away. What Paul and Nikki are presenting here is the resource (RDEL) element of the EA's asset maintenance programme in the region.

Paul reported that there is funding that has been provided nationally to increase the EA incident response skills so the EA can train their supply chain partners in operating EA assets and supporting the EA through incidents.

He also reported that engagement between the EA Ops Teams and the strategic flood risk partnerships had begun to be strengthened with attendance at the Merseyside strategic meeting. He has also contacted both GM and the Cheshire Mersey partnership groups to arrange attendance at their meetings soon. This will give the opportunity to provide more detail at local authority level on what maintenance work is being delivered in their areas and when.

We noted there are continuing issues with the AIMS database which is still impacting on the maintenance programme being published on the gov.uk website. An update on this will be provided as soon as possible. Nikki advised that in the meantime she has shared with both Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Partnership Groups, an Excel copy of the EA maintenance programme.

Finally, Paul reported on the indicative resource maintenance allocation for 2026/27, they had heard last week that the indicative allocation for the North West is £14.6 Million. This is across both C&L and GMMC Areas but as yet there are no further details including on the Area split. Once received this will be provided to Members.

We recommend the RFCC:

- Notes the formal name change from 'capital Programme' to 'investment programme' and the additional reporting on CDEL (Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit) and RDEL (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit) for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid (FCERM GiA)
- Notes the progress on delivering the 2025-26 Investment programmes.
- Notes the pressure on RDEL projects and potential impacts on the Local Levy programme

4. Investment Programme Forward Look 2026/27

Andy Tester provided an update on the refresh process to determine the GiA funding allocation for 2026/27. Our bids were submitted to national at the end of July.

We know that:

- Funding bids submitted as part of this year's annual refresh have far exceeded available budgets. EA Area teams have already been commissioned to identify possible savings within the refresh bid which has delayed the process slightly.

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- This year is the last year of the current programme and the allocation for 2026/27 is the first allocation of a 3-year programme.

He reported that the indicative allocation was received by Areas on 1 October 2025. With reference to the normal annual refresh cycle diagram he explained that this is 4-5 weeks behind when the indicative allocation would normally be shared. However he provided some reassurance that we will be able to catch up.

Andy advised there has been learning from the 2024/25 allocation process and as much information as possible is being shared with local authorities through the current refresh cycle. The full bid which was submitted in July has been shared with partners. The first look indicative allocation will be shared with local authorities and RFCC between now and the October RFCC meeting. This is the first stage of the Local Choices process, where the Programming teams will scrutinise and analyse that data in more detail, work with stakeholders and delivery teams, and then we'll start to work on scenarios, which will take us through to 14 November. This information will then be discussed and considered at the proposed additional RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting on 28 November.

He introduced the national prioritisation guidelines which need to be adhered to in making Local Choices:

1. Moderated schemes with measures in the interests of safety and other legal health and safety implications.
2. Specific allocations to high risk debris screens and Enabling and Support programmes should be adhered to.
3. Schemes in construction by 1st April 2026 (This presents some real challenges due to bids now exceeding the available budgets).
4. Development of schemes that form the new 3-year programme strategic direction to maintain assets and invest in resilience. (We are now in a transition phase where we are coming to the end of a programme and about to introduce new funding rules, new outcome metrics and new strategic priorities.)

Adrian Lythgo remarked that RFCC Chairs usually have an opportunity to at least input on any national guidance coming around allocations, but this is the first time he has seen this detail. He reinforced that RFCCs don't have that much discretion anyway and that this set of rules is pretty much tying our hands in terms of the local choices that we have.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin commented when the new national funding rules come through they will require careful scrutiny.

Adrian Lythgo highlighted that the fourth criteria is asking us to look at the direction of travel for the new national funding policy, which currently has not been published. He indicated this might tell us something about the extent of likely change between what was published for consultation and what the final position is. He advised there is going to be more discussion when we receive the indicative allocation at the October RFCC meeting and then there will be an additional meeting on 28 November to go through additional Local Choices details.

He advised the funding allocation will probably be more restrictive than usual for two reasons: firstly the quantum of money, which even though it's the same as previous years, the new funding policy will increase competition for that money in the longer term. Secondly, in the short term, these Local Choices rules are perhaps even more restricted than they normally are.

We noted the North West's bid was for a total of 86 projects, which equates to just under £207 Million in total project expenditure (TPE). Not all of this is going to be funded and there will be some challenging conversations and decisions to be made in terms of Local Choices. A comparison between the bid and the resulting indicative allocation will be presented at the October RFCC meeting where we can then start to have an informed discussion.

We recommend the RFCC:

- Notes the details of the submitted Phase 1 funding bid (submitted on 31 July 2025)
- Notes the proposal to hold an additional meeting on 28th November to endorse Local Choices.

5. Local Levy Programme Update

Andy Tester provided an updated overview of the Local Levy programme. The resource at the start of 2025/26 was £15.418 Million (£4.681 Million income plus £10.337 Million carried forward from 2024/25, and £0.4 Million of interest earned on the balance). The latest spend forecast for 2025/26 is £9.137 Million, which will leave an expected remaining balance of £6.282 Million at the end of the 2025/26 financial year.

We noted there are no requests for Local Levy funding this quarter, other than the request that will be discussed under the Business Plan agenda item.

Adrian Lythgo reminded us of the previous agreement to provide £164K of Local Levy funding to support the River Winster Rehabilitation Project earlier this year, which is now complete. Jason Harte provided an overview of the success of the project, where the river which has been blocked for some time has now been cleared. He advised that the learning from the work done by the Lynster Farmers Group alongside Westmorland and Furness Council will be shared with others and a briefing note will be available for the October RFCC meeting. He thanked the RFCC for supporting the project, which is a great success story.

We noted the update on the Local Levy programme.

6. RFCC Business Plan Update and Proposal

Sally Whiting provided us with a progress update on the RFCC Business Plan, covering the progress status of projects and the spend forecast against allocation, as well as an indication of future investment needs.

Sally reported issues or delays affecting a couple of (Amber rated) projects which are currently being actively addressed:

- Community flood resilience work supported by partner Newground (ID5, 5A, 6 and 7)
New contractual arrangements need to be put in place, taking a different approach than has been used previously, which is taking some time to work through. We are working on a short-term transitional arrangement and there will be a procurement process to identify the chosen supplier going forwards, which may or may not be Newground. It is the intention that GMCA will lead on this procurement process.
- NFM Pipeline (Cumbria ID22)

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The project scope and approach are still under review to ensure the best value for money and effectiveness. Dave Kennedy is working through the details of this.

Sally reported two projects as having been completed, requesting that the Subgroup formally acknowledge their completion: Planning and Development – Evidence Gathering (ID10) and Asset Data Sharing and Mapping (ID4/13). Summary findings from both projects will be presented at the October RFCC meeting and outputs from the projects are also available on the NW RFCC SharePoint site.

Sally reported one investment reprofiling change relating to the Wyre NFM Project (ID2.1). In 2022, the RFCC approved a 9-year (2022-2030) contribution to this innovative green financing project, with annual payments of up to £45K (i.e. £405K). Payments were significantly lower in the early years as they were pro rata based on the proportion of NFM measures installed. Factoring in inflationary increases in line with CPIH means payments in this and future years will be higher. Overall, the estimated cost is £403K therefore representing a reprofiling of, and not an increase to, the original allocation across years.

Sally highlighted a future funding ask from the National Flood Forum (NFF) for the RFCC to provide a small contribution to a 24-hour helpline for people who are experiencing flooding. This new proposal has been taken to the national RFCC Chairs requesting small contributions from each RFCC. The NFF are the only organisation to offer a 24-hour helpline and this will fit into our community flood resilience Business Plan ambition.

Finally, Sally introduced a new project proposal which follows the peat restoration item at the July RFCC meeting. Since then, EA technical leads have developed a proposal to help accelerate and upscale peatland restoration across the North West, for which there is a request that the RFCC provide £150K of Local Levy investment in 2026/27. This will develop our peatland restoration programmes putting us in a better position to secure other funding. The funding will be used in different ways in the three different peat partnership areas but will represent a strategic proactive move by the RFCC to boost our peatland restoration. This short-term action will increase the scale and pace of delivery in the future, while we await the outcome of the national investment reforms. A supplementary presentation providing some additional detail was provided by Dave Kennedy, the EA technical lead for Cumbria. He highlighted that:

- A significant amount of communities at flood risk lie downstream of degraded peatlands.
- Peatland restoration can offer significant benefits for downstream flood reduction.
- The academic sector science and evidence is showing benefits of restored upland peatland.
- Estimated costs for restoring the upland peat within the North West region to be circa £100 Million.

We heard this project will help to create a pipeline of projects and help us to link into other funding sources and other partners going forwards, which can be tailored to each of the areas. The proposal provides for £50K of funding for each of the three North West areas (Cumbria; Lancashire; and Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire), to be used in different ways, depending on current action, other partners and funding, and the maturity of the peat partnerships.

Terri McMillan thanked Dave for his presentation advising it is interesting and good to see the images of how money is applied to make tangible benefits to the community and beyond.

Jason Harte advised that Councillor Giles Archibald strongly supports this initiative but also suggested it be tied in with the Local Nature Recovery Strategies. He had also asked if the funding

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can be directly given to the existing peat partnerships. Dave Kennedy advised that this is the aim - to provide the money to those who are doing the work on the ground, but this will need to be confirmed as it is managed slightly differently in each area.

Councillor Alan Quinn advised the presentation in July showed the good level of return in investment and advised he is happy to support this project.

We voted to support a Local Levy funding request of £150K for a Peatland Restoration Funding Development Project.

There were 11 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Jason Harte, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Brennan, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrocks, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley and Kate Morley.

We voted to formally recognise the completion of projects ID10 and ID4/13.

There were 9 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Jason Harte, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Shilton-Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrocks, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley and Kate Morley.

We noted:

- the update report on implementation, including the issue relating to projects ID5, 5a, 6, and 7.
- the funding reprofiling for the Wyre NFM project (ID2.1).

We recommend the RFCC:

- Notes the update report on implementation, including the issue relating to projects ID5, 5a, 6, and 7.
- Formally recognises the completion of projects ID10 and ID4/13.
- Notes the funding reprofiling for the Wyre NFM project (ID2.1).
- Approves the investment of £150K in 2026/27 for the Peatland Restoration Funding Development Project.

7. North West Property Flood Resilience Funding – proposed prioritisation methodology

Shannon Gunning (EA Flood Risk Advisor) reminded Members of their July approval for Local Levy funding to support the delivery of Property Flood Resilience (PFR) projects over a three-year period. Since July the team have worked at pace to develop a robust and transparent prioritisation process to ensure projects are assessed fairly and funding is allocated appropriately. The proposed methodology for prioritisation was set out in the supporting meeting paper, along with an overview of the feedback from the consultation.

The following scored criteria were proposed and shared for consultation:

1. Highest level of flood risk per benefitting properties
2. Number of internal flooding events in the past 10 years experienced by the properties being put forward for PFR
3. Has engagement already been had with the community members
4. Level of deprivation in the community

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In addition to the scored criteria, some supporting information is proposed which may also play an important role in informing the final selection of projects. This includes: property numbers, partnership area, flooding mechanism, estimated flood depths, previous GiA spend or PFR measures, resource capacity for delivery, year of delivery and intended delivery mechanism.

These proposals have been subject to consultation with local authorities during September. Seven responses were received, with all five sub-regional partnerships represented.

Adam Costello then provided a brief response to each of the key themes raised through the consultation.

- Level of Deprivation – This was generally supported as a scoring criteria by all respondents. However, there was a suggestion that the level of deprivation of an area may not necessarily reflect that of an individual homeowner's circumstances. There were also queries about consistent sourcing and application of deprivation data.
- Flood history – This criterion is widely supported, however useful suggestions received that the time period for counting historic flood events should be increased from 10 years.
- Level of engagement - Northwest Hub leads were keen that the level of community engagement was a scored criteria and was counted. Experience in PFR across the country says that getting a community on board is really important, especially when you're promoting something different to a traditional flood scheme. Respondent again generally supported the view that this should be valued. However, the point was made by quite a few that significant engagement can be difficult to obtain without guaranteed funding first.
- 2012 rule - Respondents expressed a wish for this Levy funding pot to be exempt from the existing rule that limits partnership funding to only those properties built prior to 2012. The argument from respondents was that with increased storm events due to climate change, and updates to modelling, properties built after 2012 could be at flood risk in the present and future.
- Bidding period - Concerns were raised over the initial proposed bidding period for the first year of funding, which is proposed to run between October and November 2025. This concern is acknowledged and ideally this would be longer, but at this stage it is felt necessary for the first year of funding starting in 2026/27 so that we can have projects ready to hit the ground running from April 2026.
- Scoring weighting - Valuable suggestions were received on adjusting the weighting of the criteria.

Adam advised how this feedback had been applied to develop the following clarifications or revisions:

- Using Gov.uk Check your Long Term Flood Risk tool to capture flood risk data (Criterion 1)
- Setting a standard consistent Deprivation Index (Criterion 4)
- Changed historic events to the implementation of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (Criterion 2)
- Reviewed the weighting of the criteria
- Due to tight timescales the bidding period for the first period is shorter

Adam advised that there will be an assurance group for the PFR prioritisation and a Terms of reference is currently being worked up. Iwan Lawton provided an overview of the project timeline and advised the PFR Assurance Group will:

- provide a consistent application of prioritisation processes and scoring
- provide support for decision making, where projects in the same partnership area receive

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identical scores

- provide a balanced distribution of funding across different partnerships

Iwan also provided an overview of the planned next steps for the project, which includes:

- Providing guidance to the local authorities on the bidding period
- Opening the bidding period
- Establishing a Pipeline and Assurance Sub group
- Review applications in line with prioritisation process at Assurance Sub group
- Share list of prioritised projects at January 2026 RFCC meeting

The Subgroup was asked:

- If they support the use of the four proposed prioritisation criteria and the proposed weighting?
- If they think the 2012 rule should apply to this funding pot?
- For any other feedback

Terri McMillan clarified that the meeting paper preceded the adjusted prioritisation criteria presented today and these specific questions but she feels the information provided today is comprehensive enough for a recommendation to be made.

Councillor Philip Cusack commented on the 2012 rule being onerous on householders particularly where properties have changed hands and appears to disadvantage the householder when the objective was to influence developers. He added that the 2012 funding rule should not apply to this funding pot.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin remarked that it will be interesting to see some worked examples in due course of how the weightings are applied.

In the meeting chat function Carolyn Otley advised she is aware of several mapping projects which have looked at flood risk and deprivation which have experienced challenges. Deprivation data is only available to LSOA level, which misses the fact that discrete areas within a LSOA that flood frequently can become much more deprived.

Adrian Lythgo suggested that on the deprivation index criteria there is a free form box where authorities can provide additional information to pick up the comment about very local concentrations of deprivation and other factors that should be considered. Carolyn Otley agreed with this suggestion. She also highlighted that while we may wish to prioritise PFR investment in more deprived communities, there are often high levels of private rented properties and it can be very hard to access and secure consent from landlords.

Jason Harte reported that Cumbria supports the proposed criteria and weighting. He commented that the EA PFR Framework ends in 2026 with optional 2 year extension until 2028 and the Local Levy PFR Funding Programme runs until 2029. He asked if the EA framework be extended to cover the life of this Local Levy funding programme. Shannon advised that the Framework is managed by the national framework review team and she could not provide any information on future intentions. Members will be updated when information is available.

We voted on the use of the proposed prioritisation criteria and the proposed weighting. There were 10 votes in support.

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Votes in favour: Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Shorrock, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Brennan, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Quinn, Jason Harte, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Kate Morley and Carolyn Otley.
The proposal was approved for recommendation to the RFCC.

We voted on whether the 2012 rule should apply to this funding pot.

There were no votes in support.

It was therefore concluded that the recommendation of the Subgroup is that the 2012 rule should not apply to this Local Levy funding and programme.

We recommend the RFCC:

- Supports the use of the proposed prioritisation criteria and the proposed weighting.
- Confirms that the 2012 funding rule should not apply to this funding pot.

8. Quick Wins Funding Review Recommendations

Sally Whiting provided an overview of the Quick Wins funding review, led by her and Sarah Fontana since July. The purpose was to review the successes, challenges and learning from Quick Wins in previous years, and to inform the RFCC's decision on the level of Quick Wins funding for 2026/27 and beyond.

Sally advised the review has been conducted in conjunction with local authority partners through the establishment of a review group. The process also gathered feedback widely from local authorities using Quick Wins funding, and EA officers supporting them, through a survey. Responses saw all five partnerships represented. The review group has also served as a forum for sharing best practice.

Sally presented three key proposals from the review relating to: the total Quick Win funding allocation; the allocations to partnerships; and improvements to the management and process of Quick Win funding.

The first proposal from the Quick Win Review Group is for a total Quick Win allocation of £800k per year and for this to be a formal three-year funding commitment. This will enable the partnerships to have certainty of the level of Quick Wins funding over the next three years to allow a pipeline of projects to be delivered within each of the partnerships. In total this is an allocation of £2.4 Million over the next three years.

Secondly, on the split of funding across the partnerships, Sally confirmed that previously the funding has been equally split across the partnerships. A range of different criteria have been considered as part of the review which would result in a different allocation to each partnership. The potential criteria (e.g. population, flood risk, number of LLFAs) were considered and modelled to show what the resulting funding allocation would be.

Two options for the partnership allocation methodology are proposed:

- **Option One** – even split between the partnerships
- **Option Two** - Half the allocation split evenly between partnerships and half based on surface water flood risk

Sally briefly set out the rationale and pros and cons of these options. The difference in allocation between the partnerships was a specific consideration (given that data and criteria don't always accurately reflect challenges on the ground). Option 2 has been chosen as one that does not create too much of a disparity between the lowest and highest levels of allocation but still uses data to reflect the flood risk.

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Sally presented the Local Levy balance scenario graph which illustrates what the overall impact of the proposed £800k per year total allocation would be on Levy balances.

Sally provided additional insight into the advantages of the RFCC approving a three-year allocation which gives the partnerships much more flexibility in the exact funding used in each year, enables shaping of a more efficient programme, and removes problems around year-end claims. There is a proposed tolerance for the partnerships to use up to 25% more or less than the annual allocation. However, Sally was keen to make clear that there remains the expectation that the partnerships will seek to develop a programme which broadly adheres to the annual allocations, and there should not be any back-end loading of the spend across the three years.

She reported that the review group has also discussed decision-making and approvals, along with where the decision-making role sits. A key aim is to make the funding as open and flexible as possible, whilst still complying with funding rules. EA assurance and approval of projects is still required as part of the EA/Defra grant claim process but the EA will continue to seek to make this as light-touch and proportionate as possible. She highlighted there will be a review of the Quick Wins guidance once the proposals are confirmed.

Jason Harte advised the Cumbria Partnership supports the £800k per year Quick Wins allocation over the next three years. However they do not support Option 2 for the partnership allocation. Cumbria are heavily reliant on the Quick Wins funding stream and have consistently spent their full allocation in previous years. They would greatly welcome the opportunity to receive more Quick Wins funding.

Members were asked to vote on the proposed annual Quick Wins funding allocation of £800k. There were 11 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Jason Harte, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Brennan, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrocks, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley and Kate Morley.

Members were asked to vote on this being a formal three-year allocation of £800k per year for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 (a total of £2.4 million). There were eleven votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Jason Harte, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Brennan, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrocks, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley and Kate Morley.

Members were asked to vote on the two options for partnership allocation methodology.

Option 1: Equal split of funding between the five strategic partnerships.

There were **seven** votes in support of option 1.

Votes in favour:

Jason Harte, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Shorrocks, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Cusack, Carolyn Otley and Kate Morley.

Option 2: Half the allocation split evenly between partnerships and half based on surface water flood risk

There were **four** votes in support of option 2.

Votes in favour:

Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Brennan, Cllr Quinn and Chris Findley.

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We recommend the RFCC:

- approves an annual Quick Wins funding allocation of £800K.
- approves the three-year allocation of Quick Wins funding from 2026/27 to 2028/29 (total £2.4 million).
- approves Option 1 for an equal split of the funding to partnerships.

Adrian Lythgo proposed that these recommendations from the Subgroup be taken to the additional meeting in November, rather than the upcoming RFCC meeting on 24 October, as would normally happen. This allows the final decision re Quick Wins funding be taken at the same time as and as part of the Local Choices discussion including any other proposals to deploy Local Levy to support the wider investment programme. He highlighted that, at the RFCC meeting in October, the RFCC will need to grant delegated authority to the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup, to give full decision-making powers for the additional Subgroup meeting in November.

9. Minutes from the 27 June 2025 RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting

Members were asked to approve the draft minutes of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup meeting held on 27th June 2025.

Councillor Alan Quinn proposed and Carolyn Otley seconded the minutes, which were approved and taken as a true record of the meeting.

10. Any Other Business

There were no further items of business.

11. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting is 28th November 2025.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2025

SPENDING REVIEW 2025 AND INDICATIVE FCRM GRANT-IN-AID (GIA) ALLOCATIONS FOR 2026/27

Recommendations:

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

1. Note the latest FCRM Investment Programme position for 2025/26.
2. Consider the indicative FCRM GiA allocations for the Investment Programme (appendix A) and the asset maintenance programme (appendix C) for 2026/27.
3. Discuss local priorities for investment and where relevant, consider local choices.

Headline messages:

- The programme is currently on track and well-placed to meet the 52,000 properties better protected target by March 2026.
- This RFCC Committee meeting is an important step in ensuring local choices and priorities are considered in the funding allocation process for the first year of a new 3-year investment programme (2026-2029), ahead of consenting the programme in January 2026.
- The start of this new 3-year investment programme will largely be made up of projects in construction with a transition to a greater focus on natural flood management, asset maintenance and property level resilience later on in this investment programme period. This is expected to align with the Flood Funding policy reform.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This paper is the first formal stage of allocating Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) Grant in Aid (GiA) for 2026/27, the first year of the next 3-year FCRM Investment Programme (2026-2029) which starts on 1 April 2026.
- 1.2 This year's programme refresh has been complicated by the timing of Spending Review 2025 (SR25). Bids for funding exceed available budget by more than previous years and means that not all the schemes that are planning to enter construction phase by 1 April 2026 are affordable.
- 1.3 Therefore, this also means all schemes currently in development are unaffordable, a position not experienced before. This is a challenging position that is reflected across the country. We recognise that difficult decisions will need to be made through local choice discussions on which projects to fund.

- 1.4 2026/27 would have been the final year of the original 6-year (April 2021 to March 2027) programme and as a result many projects are in construction. Starting the new programme a year early from April 2026 means more of the available budget is committed to those projects in construction. The funding committed to these in construction projects reduces through the 3-year period allowing a transition to new projects based on new funding rules.
- 1.5 For the routine maintenance of Environment Agency assets, our indicative approach is to maintain the £138million of funding that was available in 2025/26. This was an increase of £18million on 2024/25 as the new government instructed the Environment Agency to divert more funding into the management of assets. With funding pressures on the wider programme however, the level of funding towards our significant repairs is expected to reduce – with the Asset Recondition programme being indicatively allocated £30million.

2.0 FCRM Investment Programme – Latest position

Current in-year performance – 2025/26 update

- 2.1 Of the 52,000 2-year properties better protected target across 2024/25 and 2025/26, over 40,000 properties have been better protected so far, of which over 12,500 have been delivered by local authorities, internal drainage boards and water companies. This leaves a further 12,000 properties to achieve the target. Forecasts indicate the target will be achieved by 31 March 2026.

Spending Review 2025 (SR25)

- 2.2 In the SR25, announced on 11 June 2025, government committed a total of £4.2billion funding for FCRM to build and maintain defences over the next 3 years (April 2026 to March 2029).

10 Year Infrastructure Strategy

- 2.3 Government published their 10 Year Infrastructure Strategy on 19 June 2025. On flood resilience, government has stated that it is providing certainty over the budget for flood defences by committing £7.9billion of capital funding (2026-27 to 2035-36) for a new 10-year FCRM Investment Programme. This figure is not directly comparable to the £4.2billion over 3 years. See appendix D.

Flood Funding policy reform

- 2.4 Following the review of Defra Flood Funding policy reform consultation responses, plans are currently with the Minister to support the transition to the next FCRM Investment Programme. An announcement on the outcome of this is expected during the autumn.

3.0 FCRM GiA Investment Programme allocation for 2026/27 and beyond

- 3.1 The FCRM GiA for the Investment Programme 2026/27 has been summarised in table 1.

Table 1. Summary of FCRM GiA for 2026/27

2026/27	Capital (CDEL) (£m)	Resource (RDEL) (£m)	Total (£m)
FCRM Investment Programme	866	185	1,051

- 3.2 The initial funding bids received through the annual programme refresh exceeded available budget for 2026/27 by £300-400million, with £190million of this being for schemes due to start construction by 1 April 2026. The main reason for this position is due to the large number of schemes that are in construction, and the increasing costs of delivering FCRM schemes. Local Environment Agency teams have since reviewed and looked at reducing bids, by reprofiling, rescoping or pausing schemes – but the available funding is not sufficient to cover the total need.
- 3.3 The indicative allocations have been made in line with the prioritisation approach approved by the Environment Agency Board, following consultation with RFCCs (appendix E).
- 3.4 As part of the indicative allocations, a 5% over-programme of £38million has been included and will be managed in year (2026/27). To try and accommodate projects, each RFCC will be given an over-programme to work to (see appendix A). This is based on projects which would have been next in line for an allocation in line with the prioritisation approach but are currently unaffordable.
- 3.5 During the 3-year Investment Programme (April 2026 to March 2029) there will be a transition, as we complete projects that are in construction, towards new projects that will follow new funding rules following the Government's policy review. This is for both Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authority led projects. Projects not yet at Full Business Case (FBC) will be assessed to ensure they are in the best locations that deliver the Government's strategic objectives. There is an expectation of an increase in natural flood management, property level resilience, and investment in deprived communities as we move through the 3-year programme.
- 3.6 RFCCs may wish to consider how they support projects in early-stage development. The proposed options for completing local choices, may provide more opportunity to consider how they could make space for this in their programme. £12million of resource funding is being allocated to support development of projects – particularly those delivering asset repairs, natural flood management and surface water measures. This has been prioritised based on the number of properties at flood risk in each RFCC (based on the National Flood Risk Assessment), with a minimum of £0.5million going to each RFCC. RFCC allocations can be found in appendix B.
- 3.7 Local choice decisions through RFCCs are an important step in the allocation round. Given the challenges specific to this year's programme refresh, flexibility from normal timelines is being given so RFCCs can take the best approach to suit their local needs. These options include:
- Option 1: Use October RFCC Committee meetings to undertake local choices once indicative allocations are finalised at the end of September.
 - Option 2: Have a strategic discussion at October RFCC Committee meetings with local choices being completed with more time for discussion by using RFCC Sub-Committee meetings in December.
 - Option 3: Moving October RFCC Committee meetings to November to discuss local priorities and to undertake the local choices process.
- 3.8 Under all options, local choices will need to be shared with the Environment Agency's National Portfolio Management Office by Friday 12 December.

High Level Allocation

- 3.9 In table 2, the Environment Agency's Portfolio Management Office have made allocations across the programme with the high-level allocations.

Table 2. Indicative FCRM GiA allocation against elements of the programme.

Programme	2025/26 (£m)	2026/27 (£m)	2026/27 (£m) Capital (CDEL)	2026/27 (£m) Resource (RDEL)
Programme to meet legal obligations associated with flood risk management works (ESA)	9.3	17.5	17.5	0.0
Small scale projects (enabling & support)	37.7	32.4	16.0	16.4
Support salaries (salaries for work supporting the FCRM Investment Programme)	48.0	49.9	0.0	49.9
New and replacement schemes	700.5	751.4	717.6	33.8
Recondition schemes for assets below target condition	56	30.0	4.5	25.5
Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	52.0	43.4	30.1	13.3
Natural Flood Management programme	10.8	14.1	10.5	3.6
Incident Management	9.2	9.2	6.4	2.8
National once and FCRM Portfolio (including Fleet, Depots and IT invest to save, flood storage reservoirs, carbon reduction technology)	74.2	78.6	46.8	31.8
River Thames Scheme (RTS) & Thames Estuary Phase 2	-	25.3	16.8	8.5
TOTAL ALLOCATION (to RFCCs in indicative allocations)		868.6	772.4	96.2
TOTAL ALLOCATION (all)	1120.0	1051.8	866.2	185.6
BUDGET	1120.0	1051.8	866.2	185.6

*1120 includes accounting treatment and additional asset maintenance allocation for 25/26 part of £72m

- 3.10 As part of the SR25 settlement £25.3million has been allocated for the River Thames Scheme and Thames Estuary Phase 2 strategy development. Other Thames Estuary works are prioritised against other schemes in the programme using our usual prioritisation methodology (appendix E).

Properties better protected

- 3.11 The Environment Agency and Risk Management Authorities are currently forecast to better protect over 30,000 properties in 2026/27. This figure is based on our existing methodology for the properties better protected metric used in the current programme (2024-2026). We anticipate having a new 'properties benefitting' measure for the next programme and that it would be higher than the 30,000 for 2026/27.

Partnership funding

- 3.12 Given most of the schemes in 2026/27 are in construction, there is very little to no unsecured partnership funding, so we do not expect new funding rules (once confirmed) to impact on funding asks for 2026/27. Partnership funding contributions

will be required as new projects emerge, and as the investment programme moves from schemes in construction phase to those in development phase.

Carbon

- 3.13 This FCRM investment is helping communities become more resilient to the impacts of climate change, ensuring our management of flood risk adapts to the changing climate whilst helping to mitigate future emissions. The Government has a legal requirement to meet Net Zero Carbon by 2050, and any long-term infrastructure programme needs to reduce emissions in line with this target.
- 3.14 To help review how best to minimise emissions, the Environment Agency are providing measures of carbon alongside flood outcome measures and costs. This year for Environment Agency projects, the annual review enables any updated programme scenarios to calculate emissions and measure the results against reduction targets of 45% by 2030.
- 3.15 Within the infrastructure sector, reducing carbon often also reduces energy or materials and can therefore reduce costs. Using both cost and carbon measures in the annual review ensures the consented FCRM programme is optimised to deliver on future GiA and UK Net Zero carbon targets.

Efficiencies

- 3.16 Collectively, Environment Agency and Risk Management Authority led projects have realised efficiencies that total £164million so far in the current programme (April 2021 – June 2025). This equates to over 5% of FCRM GiA spend.

Key risks

- 3.17 Risks are actively managed to meet organisational objectives of the current FCRM Investment Programme (2024-2026).
- 3.18 Alongside the management of current programme risks, a number of transitional and future programme risks have been identified. At the time of writing, the risks are being reviewed for their potential impact and how they could be mitigated.
- 3.19 Risks have been identified and categorised into transitional risks, new risks and risks from the current programme.
- 3.20 Transitional risks (as we move to the new one, with a new funding policy and strategic direction, and new key metrics) include:
 - Uncertainty around future programme impacting our ability to build appropriate new delivery framework arrangements.
 - Uncertainty of key go/no-go decisions for larger individual projects getting into contract, delaying delivery, and not meeting community expectations.
 - Time it will take to implement changes to ways of working for new funding rules and metrics, and wider changes being made to improve delivery.
- 3.21 New risks for the next programme not relating to transition, include:
 - Lack of understanding and visibility of capital and resource budget allocations and expenditure
 - Risk we (both Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authorities) do not secure the right skills and capabilities to deliver the changing shape of the next programme, including reducing use of consultants and contractors
 - Withdrawal of support of Microsoft Projects Online (POL) which is used for project management within the Environment Agency.

- 3.22 Risks from the current programme that will continue to apply to the next programme, include:
- Risks relating to data quality
 - Impact of flood events and other incidents on delivery
 - Risk of higher than anticipated cost inflation
 - Inability to meet Partnership Funding requirements
 - Slow processing of flood risk and environmental permits needed to deliver the work.

4.0 FCRM GiA asset maintenance resource allocation for 2025/26

- 4.1 The Environment Agency anticipate protecting the level of resource funding for Environment Agency asset maintenance in 2026/27, retaining the increased £138 Million figure from 2025/26 following Minister Hardy's steer of reallocating funding for existing assets.
- 4.2 The £138 Million continues to cover three elements within asset maintenance allocations:
- decommissioning of assets,
 - asset management projects (those which are not single asset specific), and
 - direct asset maintenance.
- 4.3 For the 2026/27 allocation, the Environment Agency will continue to allocate maintenance funding to our obligatory items first, before prioritising the remaining funding based upon flood risk. Obligatory items are those works that are deemed 'must fund' activities for the Environment Agency to meet its legal or statutory requirements. These are funded as a priority first before other maintenance items are ranked based upon a range of factors including flood risk.
- 4.4 Within the maintenance allocations, Environment Agency operational Field Teams will be funded, allowing them to undertake maintenance and respond to incidents.
- 4.5 Prioritising maintenance funding for 2026/27 will see changes in RFCC level allocations compared to previous years, but the Environment Agency has ensured that no RFCC will see a reduction of more than 5% from 2025/26 funding levels.

5.0 Recommendations

The RFCC Committees are asked to:

1. Note the latest FCRM Investment Programme position.
2. Consider the indicative FCRM GiA allocations for the Investment Programme (appendix A) and the asset maintenance programme (appendix C) for 2026/27.
3. Discuss local priorities for investment and where relevant, consider local choices.

Dan Bond, Deputy Director, Portfolio Management Office

Appendix A: FCRM GiA indicative Investment Programme allocation by RFCC

Appendix B: Table showing Resource funding allocations by RFCC for project development.

Appendix C: FCRM GiA Indicative Maintenance allocation by RFCC

Appendix D: Summary of funding allocations and announcements

Appendix E: Environment Agency Board approved interim allocation principles and prioritisation approach (July 2025)

Appendix A: FCRM GiA indicative Investment Programme allocation by RFCC

This table presents the RFCC regional breakdown of the GiA allocations. These are the figures Environment Agency Teams are currently working with. There will be some differences between the high-level figures in Table 2 above as explained in the footnote below.

RFCC	GiA indicative allocation 2026/27 (£m)	GiA indicative allocation 2026/27 Capital (CDEL) (£m)	GiA indicative allocation 2026/27 Resource (RDEL) (£m)	Forecast maximum properties better protected 2026/27	Planned share of over-programme (£m)
Anglian Eastern	50.59	48.19	2.40	447	4.97
Anglian Great Ouse	6.79	6.62	0.17	221	0.00
Anglian Northern	93.32	91.30	2.02	5,144	5.35
North West	143.98	141.89	2.09	12,707	17.77
Northumbria	20.13	19.71	0.42	464	0.00
Severn and Wye	6.75	6.59	0.16	291	0.10
South West	45.54	44.67	0.87	1,398	0.87
Southern	77.36	76.00	1.36	6,033	2.76
Thames	62.97	53.28	9.69	702	2.29
Trent	62.06	61.51	0.55	456	0.00
Wessex	127.69	124.45	3.24	913	0.99
Yorkshire	54.31	52.89	1.42	2,117	2.59
Total	751.4	727.1	24.39	30,893	37.69

*Schemes (Capital Maintenance /Defence/Property Flood Resilience)

** Properties Better Protected currently in line with current properties better protected and does not reflect the future metrics or target calculation using new properties calculations.

*** The total schemes line includes the budgets associated with River Thames Scheme (RTS) & Thames Estuary Phase 2 associated budget in table 2, plus an additional capital salaries uplift for Environment Agency schemes

Enabling and Support Programme

RFCC	GiA indicative allocation 2026/27 (£m)	GiA indicative allocation 2026/27 Capital (CDEL) (£m)	GiA indicative allocation 2026/27 Resource (RDEL) (£m)
Anglian Eastern	3.1	0.8	2.2
Anglian Great Ouse	6.7	1.1	5.6
Anglian Northern	10.1	4.2	5.9
North West	13.9	2.5	11.4
Northumbria	5.6	4.5	1.1
Severn and Wye	10.1	4.1	6.0
South West	5.1	1.6	3.5
Southern	7.6	1.7	5.9
Thames	6.3	4.3	2.0
Trent	3.4	1.6	1.8
Wessex	5.5	2.3	3.2
Yorkshire	9.2	2.4	6.8
Total	87.0	31.2	55.8

*This total also includes allocations to strategies and big strategic projects from the innovation allocation in table 2. Part of the standalone Environmental Statutory Allowance allocation, Recondition (REC), and small-scale projects.

** The enabling and support programme includes, Bridges, Environmental Statutory Allowance, Hydrometry & Telemetry, Modelling & Forecasting, REC, Studies, Strategies and Big Strategic Projects

Appendix B: Table showing the breakdown of Resource funding for early scheme development by RFCC (based on level of properties at high risk)

RFCC	Resource funding split based on properties at high risk (with a minimum allocation £0.5m (£m))
Anglian Eastern	0.50
Anglian Great Ouse	0.50
Anglian Northern	1.75
North West	1.15
Northumbria	0.50
Severn and Wye	0.54
South West	0.78
Southern	1.21
Thames	1.99
Trent	0.94
Wessex	0.51
Yorkshire	1.73
Total	12.10

Appendix C: Table showing the indicative breakdown of Resource funding (RDEL) for Asset Maintenance allocations by RFCC

RFCC	Resource Indicative allocation 2026/27 (£m)
Anglian Eastern	9.4
Anglian Great Ouse	5.7
Anglian Northern	12.0
North West	14.8
Northumbria	3.1
Severn and Wye	4.3
South West	5.4
Southern	12.7
Thames	22.7
Trent	18.1
Wessex	11.3
Yorkshire	18.6
Total	138.1

Appendix D: Summary of funding allocations and announcements

	2-year period (£2.65bn)		3-year Spending Review settlement (£4.2bn)¹ <i>Precise figures TBC through Defra Group Business Planning in Autumn 2025</i>			10-year settlement (£7.9bn)²
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	From 1 April 2026 until 31 March 2036
CDEL (£k)	737	854	866*	865	860	7.9bn over 10 years
RDEL (£k)	543	520	520	520	520	Not announced
TOTAL (£k)	1,280	1,374	1,385	1385	1,380	
Spend covers	FCRM Investment Programme, Asset Maintenance, Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP), Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme & support costs		FCRM Investment Programme, Asset Maintenance, Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP), Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme & support costs			Capital funded investment on new defences & capital maintenance

*£866million due to reprofiling £26m across 3 years to help Defra group manage wider pressures.

¹ [Spending Review 2025](#)

² [UK Infrastructure: A 10 Year Strategy](#)

Appendix E: Environment Agency Board approved interim allocation principles and Prioritisation approach (July 2025)

FCRM allocation principles – interim principles to be used for 2026/27 allocation

1. **Invest to achieve our ambition of a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change.** The right allocation decisions are made to ensure places and infrastructure are resilient and can adapt to future flooding and coastal risks in a changing climate. Investment is targeted in places with the greatest risk, whilst also supporting the Government's wider growth agenda, and considering all forms of intervention.
2. **Fully fund legal obligations** to continue to comply with all our legal duties, including in relation to asset operation, maintenance and response, health and safety, creating compensatory habitat for new schemes, and complying with biodiversity net gain requirements. **Provide appropriate funding for essential specialist services** that enable delivery of flood and coastal risk outcomes.
3. **Following confirmation of Spending Review 2025, invest our full FCRM budget to better protect properties and infrastructure throughout England by the end of the programme from all sources of flooding.** Embrace a board range of innovative resilience measures and nature-based solutions, alongside traditional protection measures and the maintenance, refurbishment and replacement of our existing assets.
4. **Prioritise natural flood management, measures to address surface water risk and the upkeep of existing assets.** Ensure effective refurbishment, maintenance and replacement of current flood and coastal erosion infrastructure to sustain resilience and achieve agreed programme targets. Build balanced programmes that reflect national and local needs and priorities and deliver value for money. Work with Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) to maintain an adaptive pipeline of local investment needs, balancing expenditure between preserving existing assets and developing new projects.
5. **Work in partnership** with all delivery partners and stakeholders through effective engagement. Local priorities are fully considered by Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs). Ensure capital (CDEL) and resource (RDEL) funding is invested in the right way and is compliant with accounting procedures.
6. **Support our carbon and sustainability ambitions.** Encourage investment and delivery to support the UK Government's target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the UK economy by 2050. Encourage innovation to support the Environment Agency's ambition to meet a 45% carbon reduction target by 2030. Encourage all Risk Management Authorities to meet their carbon reduction ambitions.
7. **Work in collaborative partnerships to secure funding and deliver multiple benefits.** All Risk Management Authorities working collaboratively and with local partners and partnerships, securing partnership funding (particularly from private investors) and jointly realising innovative, cost-effective solutions with a range of benefits. Make greater use of public sector corporate agreements (PSCA) with IDBs to undertake maintenance work where appropriate and where it offers better value for money. Work with others to implement decommissioning of existing assets where they no longer provide a flood risk benefit, their decommission reduces future liability and it is value for money to do so.
8. **Invest to achieve a wider range of outcomes:**
 - **Maintain our ability to warn and inform people** at high risk of flooding from rivers or the sea **and respond to incidents** so as to save lives and property.
 - **Enhance the environment.** Continue to contribute to wider net environmental gain, creating and improving habitat and rivers alongside flood and coastal schemes, including delivery of nature-based solutions.
 - **Benefit the economy.** Maximise efficiency savings and value for money.

- 9. Remain agile and responsive** to change, incidents and risks to ensure maximum outcomes from investment and stability in the overall investment programmes. Continue to deliver innovative approaches and solutions.

Funding will be prioritised based on the interim allocation principles, and Defra's current Partnership Funding Policy, whilst also taking note of the direction of travel set in their investment reform consultation.

The prioritisation used for allocating funding is:

- Approved urgent cases based on health and safety or statutory grounds, and time-bound partnership funding contributions.
- Already in construction by 30 September 2025.
- Planned to be in construction by 1 April 2026 (subject to a check on viability including confidence project will be fully funded in time to start construction).
- Projects that start and complete construction within 2026/27 that will deliver properties better protected by 31 March 2029 (subject to a check on viability including confidence project will be fully funded in time to start construction).
- Remainder of programme ranked by adjusted partnership funding score (high to low).
- Ensure we get the balance right between looking after our existing assets, property flood resilience projects, surface water schemes, natural flood management projects, and new defences in new places.

The following caveats apply:

Allocations are subject to projects progressing through normal project gateways, and subject to further review of project viability and confidence.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2025

INDICATIVE ALLOCATION FOR 2026/27

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

- 1.1 In June 2025 the Government committed a total of £4.2billion funding for flood and coastal risk management to build and maintain defences between April 2026 and March 2029 – as set out in the Spending Review 2025 (SR35).
- 1.2 The new 3-year investment programme will start on 1 April 2026 where the programme will transition to align priorities with the Governments new funding rules which were announced on 14 October 2025.
- 1.3 The annual refresh process is in place to allow Risk Management Authorities to apply for grant in aid funding for flood schemes. The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) make local choices and consent the implementation of the programme.
- 1.4 The indicative grant in aid (GiA) allocations for 2026/27 have been set out by the Environment Agency (EA), in consultation with RFCCs.
- 1.5 There is an anticipation that we will see an increased investment in natural flood management, property level resilience, investment in deprived communities and in capital maintenance of existing defences as we move through the new three-year programme to March 2029.

2.0 Programme Refresh

- 2.1 The funding bids received through the annual refresh at the end of July far exceeded the available budget by a greater margin than previously seen, we have therefore focused on funding projects which are already in construction whilst also accounting for statutory obligations. As a result, an additional step was introduced into the Refresh process to enable further review of construction projects throughout September, which subsequently delayed the indicative allocation.
- 2.2 If a proposed scheme hasn't secured funding for 2026/27, it doesn't mean the scheme has to permanently stop. In future years the project – including those in development – will be prioritised against the new funding policy to ensure best value for money.
- 2.3 Where current projects haven't secured funding the Environment Agency have committed to supporting project teams and communities through:
 - Reconsider project proposals using the new policy to secure funding by other means or by applying for funding (GiA) in a future year. Where necessary proposals will be reconsidered using the new funding rules to improve prioritisation.
 - Continue with the existing project when funding becomes available, as it strongly aligns with the new funding rules.

- Support the project team to seek additional contributions, this will help their prioritisation for funding when it becomes available.

3.0 Local Choices

3.1 The indicative allocation was released on 1 October 2025 by the EA PMO to the EA Area Programme teams.

3.2 Due to the delay in receiving the indicative allocation, local choices has been delayed. The revised timeline for local choices is now:

- 1 October 2025 – Indicative allocation received.
- 1 October 2025 to 14 November 2025 - Local Choices.
- 28 November 2025 - RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group.
- 12 December 2025 – Indicative allocation returned to EA National Portfolio Management Office.

3.3 Projects included in local choices must contribute to one or more of the following criteria:

- Moderated schemes with measures in the interest of safety (MIOS) and other legal and health and safety implications.
- Specific allocations to high-risk debris screens and Enabling and Support programmes of work.
- Schemes that are in construction by 1 April 2026.
- Development of schemes that form the new 3-year programme strategic direction to maintain assets and invest in resilience.

3.4 The following table shows the indicative allocation for the North West, split by regional partnership.

Investment Programme Refresh Bid and Indicative Allocation

Partnership	EA/LA	TPE 26-27 Phase 1 (£)	GIA Bid	TPE Indicative Allocation	ALL GIA Indicative Allocation
Cumbria	EA	26,271,111	24,851,111	24,704,111	23,464,111
	LA	14,949,309	12,219,309	11,166,309	11,066,309
	Total	41,220,420	37,070,420	35,870,420	34,530,420
Lancashire	EA	42,665,617	39,024,384	18,524,000	16,315,000
	LA	58,974,880	53,069,380	51,309,880	51,209,880
	Total	101,640,497	92,093,764	69,833,880	67,524,880
CLA Cross Partnership	EA	24,621,687	24,496,687	13,348,951	13,348,951
	Total	24,621,687	24,496,687	13,348,951	13,348,951
Merseyside	EA	0	0	0	0
	LA	2,978,000	2,878,000	100,000	0
	Total	2,978,000	2,878,000	100,000	0
Greater Manchester	EA	31,920,808	26,931,692	23,074,808	21,989,808
	LA	1,260,000	1,135,000	531,000	431,000
	Total	33,180,808	28,066,692	23,605,808	22,420,808
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	EA	2,761,000	2,620,000	0	0
	LA	624,370	624,370	100,000	0
	Total	3,385,370	3,244,370	100,000	0
GMMC Cross-Partnership	EA	13,977,400	13,572,400	12,132,400	12,132,400
	Total	13,977,400	13,572,400	12,132,400	12,132,400
Total North West	EA	142,217,623	131,496,274	91,784,270	87,250,270
	LA	78,786,559	69,926,059	63,207,189	62,707,189
	Total	221,004,182	201,422,333	154,991,459	149,957,459

Investment Programme Indicative Allocation – scheme by scheme breakdown

CLA

Project ID	Project Name	Environment Agency Area	Lead Risk Management Authority - Name	Lead Risk Management Authority - Type	County	Gateway 2	Total Project Expenditure Bid 2026-27	Total Project Expenditure Indicative Allocation 2026-27	Total rOM's 2026-27
2020/21-001085	Blackpool Beach Nourishment Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	14/06/2023	22,430,000	17,190,000	1012
2019/20-000071	Kendal Appraisal Package Kendal FRM Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	10/04/2019	21,968,268	21,968,268	0
2019/20-000123	Preston and South Ribble	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	18/02/2020	17,164,000	17,164,000	0
2019/20-000118	River Calder, Padiham	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	04/09/2019	15,380,000	0	0
2020/21-000718	Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	15/03/2022	15,000,000	14,100,000	915

2019/20-000096	Wyre Beach Management Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Wyre Borough Council	District	Lancashire	10/03/2020	14,133,116	14,133,116	6878
2019/20-000111	Millom and Haverigg Flood Alleviation	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	03/07/2025	9,233,809	9,233,809	0
2022/23-011639	Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	29/04/2022	8,100,187	5,990,187	791
2020/21-006336	Anchorsholme Coast Protection Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	15/08/2024	5,500,000	4,000,000	0
2019/20-000088	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	23/12/2019	3,051,617	0	0
2020/21-001427	Glasson Dock Gate	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	31/03/2026	2,900,000	4,000,000	0
2023/24-013186	CLA Pumping Station Refurbishments	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	18/09/2024	2,700,000	2,200,000	0
2023/24-012605	Newbiggin A5087 Coast Road Coastal Erosion	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/08/2025	2,700,000	0	0
2019/20-000067	Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	18/11/2021	1,472,466	1,472,466	64
2020/21-000989	Burrow Beck Conveyance Improvements	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	02/06/2023	1,429,500	0	17
2020/21-004673	Cumbria River Restoration Package	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	01/04/2021	1,287,000	0	0

2023/24-012751	Garstang Gate Repair	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	07/08/2023	1,240,000	0	0
2020/21-001103	Darwen Central , Darwen	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	01/09/2025	1,000,000	1,000,000	59
2023/24-013021	Parton FCERM	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	20/12/2025	675,000	675,000	67
2020/21-000906	Stanhope Road, Carlisle	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/12/2025	600,000	600,000	72
2020/21-000882	Silloth Groyne Replacement	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	29/08/2025	600,000	0	0
2025/26-014478	CLA Property Flood Resilience	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	02/03/2026	562,500	0	50
2019/20-000075	Skirting Beck, Egremont	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	18/09/2017	520,000	520,000	0
2023/24-012586	Harraby Surface Water Investigation	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/12/2025	450,000	450,000	81
2019/20-000085	The Sluice, Back Drain	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	03/03/2026	371,000	0	100
2019/20-000074	South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	27/02/2026	300,000	300,000	0

2019/20-000042	Starr Hill Sand Dunes Environmental Works	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	14/03/2013	283,764	283,764	0
2020/21-001104	Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	01/08/2025	233,000	233,000	28
2020/21-001106	Chester Close , Blackburn	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	08/09/2025	230,000	230,000	58
2020/21-010109	Corby Weir Fish Pass Project	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	24/10/2025	200,000	0	0
2020/21-000880	The Tannery, Burton in Kendal Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	190,000	0	11
2023/24-013203	Wyre Catchment Readiness Project	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	01/07/2024	125,000	125,000	15
2020/21-008104	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	10/01/2016	100,000	100,000	0
2020/21-001362	NFM - Trawden Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	02/08/2022	100,000	0	0
2020/21-008102	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Cumbria & Lancashire	Lancashire County Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	10/01/2016	100,000	100,000	0
2023/24-012588	Wigton Road, Carlisle Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/12/2025	83,000	0	9

2023/24-012594	Renwick, Cumbria	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	70,000	70,000	22
2023/24-012584	Castle Carrock Surface Water Scheme 2	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	65,000	0	6
2019/20-000054	Cote Beck, Halton Flow Control	Cumbria & Lancashire	Lancaster City Council	District	Lancashire	31/03/2026	65,000	0	0
2023/24-012582	Grasslot Street Maryport	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	60,000	0	0
2020/21-001357	NFM Hodder and Ribble Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	31/03/2026	60,000	0	0
2025/26-014351	Cumwhinton Flood Alleviation	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	57,000	0	10
2019/20-000116	Fleetwood and Copse Brook	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	14/07/2023	50,000	0	0
2020/21-001359	NFM Alt Crossens Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	12/04/2024	50,000	0	0
2020/21-001348	NFM - Lune Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	08/04/2025	50,000	0	0
2023/24-013056	Grange Coastal Defences	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/10/2025	37,500	0	0
2020/21-005451	Crossens and Redbridge (Cutting the Carbon)	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	22/01/2021	30,000	0	0

2020/21-001367	Pennine Peat Partnership Upland Peat Forest of Bowland - Linked to Pennine Peat Partnership	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	31/03/2026	30,000	0	0
2023/24-012592	Croglin Beck Culvert	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	28,000	0	4
2024/25-014152	Jacks Key NFM	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	30/08/2024	27,000	0	0
2022/23-012316	CLA Landscape Maintenance - Rickerby	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	09/03/2023	16,781	16,781	0
2022/23-012314	CLA Landscape Maintenance - Carlisle Phase 1	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	09/03/2023	10,681	10,681	0
2019/20-000069	Carlisle Appraisal Package Low Crosby	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	01/12/2021	10,000	0	0
2023/24-012563	ENVCLA_Janson Pool 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	20/10/2023	10,000	10,000	0
2023/24-012559	ENVCLA_RiverMede 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	01/08/2023	10,000	10,000	0
2023/24-012561	ENVCLA_Wild Boar 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	17/07/2023	10,000	10,000	0
2023/24-012562	ENVCLA_Yoad Pool 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	21/07/2023	10,000	10,000	0

2022/23-012315	CLA Landscape Maintenance - Gosling Sike	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	09/03/2023	8,915	8,915	0
2020/21-010333	ENV Catterall Bridge Replacement	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	18/02/2022	5,000	5,000	0
TBC69	Capital Recondition Projects CLA	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross Partnership	01/04/3030	10,800,000	3,768,764	0
2020/21-005712	CLA Asset Management Planning Project	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross Partnership	01/04/3030	750,000	750,000	0
2024/25-013508	Altmouth Asset Review	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	01/04/2024	650,000	650,000	0
2022/23-011902	Cockermouth Asset Reconditioning Project	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	17/04/2028	397,000	397,000	0
TBC29	Hydrometry & Telemetry Capital Projects- CLA	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	01/04/3030	2,057,000	386,000	0
TBC46	Modelling and Forecasting Capital Projects CLA	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	01/04/3030	954,000	254,000	0
2020/21-001154	Lancaster Phase 4 - Mill Race Surface Water Study	Cumbria & Lancashire	Lancashire County Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	01/11/2026	40,000	40,000	0

GMMC

Project ID	Project Name	Environment Agency Area	Lead Risk Management Authority - Name	Lead Risk Management Authority - Type	County	Gateway 2	Total Project Expenditure Bid 2026-27	Total Project Expenditure Indicative Allocation 2026-27	Total rOM's 2026-27
2019/20-000081	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	10/05/2018	18,196,808	18,196,808	733
2021/22-011450	Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	01/04/2022	13,000,000	12,100,000	0
2023/24-013055	River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	11/03/2024	7,989,000	0	0

2019/20-000097	Sankey Brook Flood Risk Management Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cheshire	25/10/2024	2,761,000	0	0
2019/20-000082	Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	12/10/2018	2,378,000	2,378,000	907
2024/25-013710	ENVDidsbury FSR Drawdown	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	31/05/2024	2,000,000	2,000,000	0
2023/24-013430	Liverpool City Council - Ordinary Watercourse Culverts	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Liverpool City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	01/10/2025	2,000,000	0	1762
2020/21-006416	Salford Flood Alleviation Improvements	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	05/06/2014	1,000,000	500,000	0
2025/26-014353	Property Flood Resilience GMMC EA	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	02/03/2026	945,000	0	50
2019/20-000091	The Pool, Southport	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	30/09/2024	703,000	0	55
2019/20-000056	Shaw, Cringle, Ley and Willow Brook	Greater Manchester,	Manchester City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	22/09/2025	525,000	431,000	10

		Merseyside & Cheshire							
2020/21-001179	Turf Hill	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	20/10/2025	415,000	0	21
2020/21-001358	Poise Brook - Offerton Green and Hazel Grove	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	02/03/2026	357,000	0	0
2022/23-011936	Haley Road South Burtonwood Surface Water Management Project	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Warrington Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	01/11/2025	270,000	0	25
2020/21-001328	Timperley Brook Surface Water Management	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	30/12/2025	220,000	0	0
2023/24-012756	St Helens Cemetery and Crematorium Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	St Helens Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	01/08/2025	145,000	0	0
2020/21-008115	Cheshire-Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	19/11/2021	100,000	100,000	0
2020/21-003280	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Liverpool City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	19/11/2021	100,000	100,000	0

2020/21-008116	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Manchester City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	31/12/2021	100,000	100,000	0
2020/21-001138	Sefton Strategic Surface Water Management Plan Delivery Programme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	01/04/2024	100,000	0	0
2020/21-000705	Whiston Lane Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	30/03/2026	75,000	0	20
2023/24-012682	Old Mill Place, Tattenhall	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	27/02/2026	69,370	0	10
2023/24-012705	The Paddocks, Whitegate	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	31/03/2025	40,000	0	10
2023/24-013365	ENVGMMC RECOVERY	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	13/03/2024	32,400	32,400	0

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
24 OCTOBER 2025
LOCAL LEVY 2026/27

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Local Levy Vote for 2026/27

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 2026/27, to take place at the 24th October 2025 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 2026/27 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. The rules around this funding have been subject to a [recent consultation](#) which indicates significant change is coming from April 2026, in some ways making more GiA available to projects but also increasing demand so that not all projects will be funded.

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:

- **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). This has been subject to GiA availability and Partnership Funding rules in the past, which are currently changing, but there will still be significant demand for Local Levy funding to help fund schemes.
- **'Quick Win' funding** for each of the five sub-regional partnerships for small-scale interventions. This has been set at £100k per partnership per annum since 2022/23 but was increased to £250K for 2025/26 only as part of Local Choices. A review is ongoing to propose the level of Quick Win funding from 2026/27, but this is not expected to recommend less than £100K.
- 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 investment programmes.

For capital schemes, Local Levy contributions have often been 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 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.

Local Levy balance

We can carry over unspent Levy into the following year creating a reserve (or balance) which then enables us to spend more than the income raised. This balance built up to a peak of around £12 million at the end of 2022/23. Due to large programmes in recent years, the balance has reduced, to around £10.3 million at the end of 2024/25, is forecast to reduce further to around £5.9 million at the end of 2025/26, and currently, down to around £2.6 million in 2027/28. The RFCC are keen to see the balance come down, making use of the available funding. The balance does however attract interest payments which in each of the last two years have been around £500,000.

At the July 2025 meeting, the RFCC approved a new minimum working balance of £2 million, to help manage the current period of funding uncertainty. The minimum balance can be used on a case-by-case basis where there is significant risk and urgency. This minimum balance is expected to remain in place until 2027/28 when it will be reviewed. This will limit the Levy funding available to projects over the next couple of years. The annual income of around £4.7 million still allows for a significant level of ongoing investment but there is expected to be continued high demand for Local Levy investment into the future.

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. 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 ends in March 2026, when a new programme will start with new funding rules, recently subject to consultation. It is likely that more projects will qualify for more GiA funding, including natural flood management and property flood resilience, but that this funding will only go so far. The way the funding will be prioritised is not yet clear. In 2025/26 there are expected to be two phases of programme refresh, to allocate funding to both ongoing and new projects.

We have seen global price rises and inflationary pressures impacting the capital investment programme increasing the costs of flood risk management schemes. Surface water flood risk remains a very high priority in the North West which is currently underfunded and more difficult to address. New flood risk data (NAFRA2) has been published and in the future, this is expected to guide investment.

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 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, running up to 2027, 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, providing £1.24m for 2025/26, with a similar level of investment required next year and beyond.

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 the investment programme 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 2025/26 the Local Levy was set at £4.681 million. You can see below how the RFCC has voted over recent years and how this has changed the Levy raised.

Year	Levy raised (£million)	% increase on previous year
2021/22	£4.179	2%
2022/23	£4.283	2.5%
2023/24	£4.412	3%
2024/25	£4.544	3%
2025/26	£4.681	3%

What should partnerships be considering now?

Arrangements for agreeing the vote 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%, 4% and 5%.

	Rate increase options	Resulting Levy rate
2026/27	1%	£4.727m
	2%	£4.774m
	3%	£4.821m
	4%	£4.868m
	5%	£4.915m

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%, 4% or 5% increase for 2026/27.

Local Authority	2025/26 Council Tax base (Band D Equivalent)	2025/26 Levy	2026/27 Additional levy for a 1% increase	2026/27 Additional levy for a 2% increase	2026/27 Additional levy for a 3% increase	2026/27 Additional levy for a 4% increase	2026/27 Additional levy for a 5% increase
Unitary authorities							
Halton Borough Council	36,936	£74,261	£743	£1,485	£2,228	£2,970	£3,713
Warrington Borough Council	72,262	£145,285	£1,453	£2,906	£4,359	£5,811	£7,264
Blackpool Borough Council	39,756	£79,931	£799	£1,599	£2,398	£3,197	£3,997
Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	37,503	£75,401	£754	£1,508	£2,262	£3,016	£3,770
Cheshire East Council	163,261	£328,243	£3,282	£6,565	£9,847	£13,130	£16,412
Cheshire West And Chester Council	131,666	£264,720	£2,647	£5,294	£7,942	£10,589	£13,236
Cumberland Council	93,698	£188,383	£1,884	£3,768	£5,651	£7,535	£9,419
Westmorland and Furness Council	95,324	£191,653	£1,917	£3,833	£5,750	£7,666	£9,583
County councils							
Derbyshire County Council	22,252	£44,738	£447	£895	£1,342	£1,790	£2,237
Lancashire County Council	388,723	£781,543	£7,815	£15,631	£23,446	£31,262	£39,077
Northumberland County Council	145	£292	£3	£6	£9	£12	£15
North Yorkshire County Council	6,122	£12,309	£123	£246	£369	£492	£615
Shropshire County Council	2,748	£5,525	£55	£110	£166	£221	£276
Staffordshire County Council	16,764	£33,705	£337	£674	£1,011	£1,348	£1,685
Metropolitan Borough Councils							
Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council	80,625	£162,100	£1,621	£3,242	£4,863	£6,484	£8,105
Bury Council	58,698	£118,014	£1,180	£2,360	£3,540	£4,721	£5,901
Manchester City Council	140,844	£283,173	£2,832	£5,663	£8,495	£11,327	£14,159
Oldham Council	59,501	£119,629	£1,196	£2,393	£3,589	£4,785	£5,981
Rochdale Borough Council	59,825	£120,280	£1,203	£2,406	£3,608	£4,811	£6,014
Salford City Council	78,626	£158,081	£1,581	£3,162	£4,742	£6,323	£7,904
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	99,340	£199,726	£1,997	£3,995	£5,992	£7,989	£9,986
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	65,103	£130,893	£1,309	£2,618	£3,927	£5,236	£6,545
Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	80,827	£162,506	£1,625	£3,250	£4,875	£6,500	£8,125
Wigan Council	98,600	£198,239	£1,982	£3,965	£5,947	£7,930	£9,912
Knowsley Council	39,638	£79,694	£797	£1,594	£2,391	£3,188	£3,985
Liverpool City Council	120,258	£241,782	£2,418	£4,836	£7,253	£9,671	£12,089
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council	53,700	£107,966	£1,080	£2,159	£3,239	£4,319	£5,398
Sefton Council	87,368	£175,656	£1,757	£3,513	£5,270	£7,026	£8,783
Wirral Council	97,909	£196,850	£1,968	£3,937	£5,905	£7,874	£9,842
Total	2,328,022	£4,680,577	£46,806	£93,612	£140,417	£187,223	£234,029

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: 388,723 divided by 2,328,022 multiplied by £4,680,577). 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 2026/27 are indicative, based on the Band D data for 2025/26.

Band D data confirmed as current by Defra Finance, August 2025.

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 and 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.



Flood walls with glass panels on Riverside Road

Completed reservoir spillway structure

Partnership Quick Win funding

Ripponden Road,
Denshaw (Culvert
repair) (Oldham
Council)

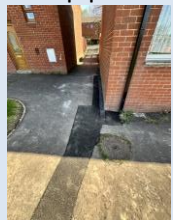


Before



After

Sandpiper Close, Blackburn



Valley Drive, Kendal



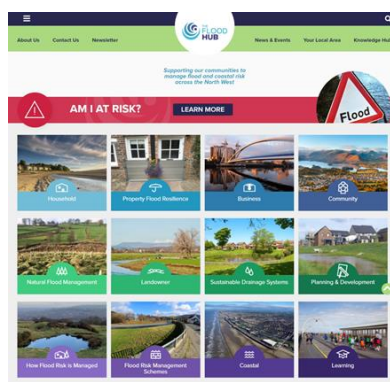
Unpave the Way project

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 Flood Hub

The North West [Flood Hub website](https://www.thefloodhub.co.uk) is actively developed and managed - the key to its success. New content is being developed and added all the time. It continues to receive record 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 an essential communications platform for informing the public and communities in the North West about FCERM schemes and Business Plan initiatives.

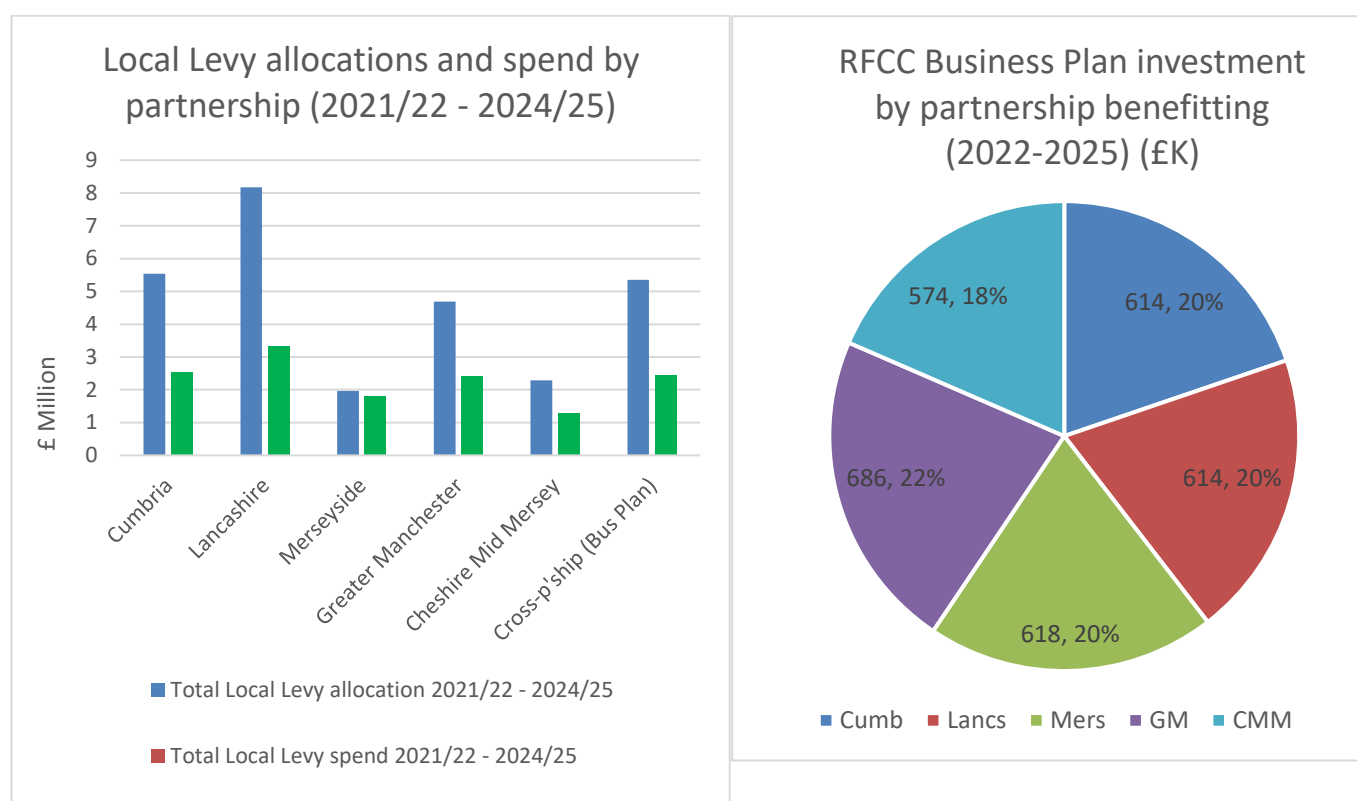


How much Local Levy investment have the partnerships benefitted from in recent years?

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

The first graph below shows how much Local Levy was allocated, and how much was claimed/spent, in each of the sub-regional partnership areas, and cross-partnership (RFCC Business Plan investment), over the first four years of the current investment programme (2021/22 – 2024/25). The second graph shows the partnership share of the investment in the current RFCC Business Plan since 2022.

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 had to be 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 2025/26 and indicative for 2026/27)

Partnership	Project/Scheme	2025/26 approved Local Levy allocation (£K)	2025/26 approved Local Levy forecast (£K)	2026/27 indicative Local Levy allocation / forecast (£K)
Cumbria	Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre (EA)	0	1,500	0
	Cumbria Quick Win Projects (LA)	250	250	100
	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations (EA)	30	30	10
	Millom and Haverigg Flood Alleviation (LA)	500	500	0
	River Winster Rehabilitation Project (LA)	164	164	0
	South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	0	0	300
	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation (EA)	10	10	10
	CUMBRIA PARTNERSHIP TOTAL	954	2,454	420
Lancashire	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations (EA)	50	50	30
	Blackpool Beach Nourishment (LA)	350	350	0
	Blackpool Manchester Square (LA)	250	250	0
	Fleetwood & Copse Brook Scheme (EA)	1,770 ¹	0	0
	Lancashire Quick Win Projects (LA)	250	250	100
	Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection (LA)	350	350	0
	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton (EA)	0	400	765
	PFR Thurnham	255	255	0
	Preston & South Ribble (EA)	0	0	2,000
	LANCASHIRE PARTNERSHIP TOTAL	3,275	1,905	2,895
Merseyside	Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral (LA)	447	0	113
	Merseyside Quick Win Projects (LA)	250	250	100
	MERSEYSIDE PARTNERSHIP TOTAL	697	250	213
Greater Manchester	Alder Forest, Eccles (EA)	400	400	0
	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects (LA)	250	250	100
	Heywood Surface Water Management Programme (LA)	0	0	75
	Hindley Group (EA)	275	275	450
	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme (LA)	0	70	0
	Poise Brook (EA)	305	305	0
	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme (EA)	1,500	1,500	500
	River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS (EA)	380	380	0
	GM PARTNERSHIP TOTAL	3,110	3,180	1,125
Cheshire Mid Mersey	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects (LA)	250	250	100
	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme (LA)	90	120	0
	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme (EA)	161	161	141
	CHESHIRE MID MERSEY PARTNERSHIP TOTAL	501	531	241
Cross partnership	Property Flood Resilience	0	0	675
	CROSS PARTNERSHIP TOTAL	0	0	675
RFCC Business Plan projects (Cross Partnership)	ID2 - Wyre Catchment NFM Project (Lancs)	45	45	45
	ID5 – The Flood Hub website	119	119	122
	ID6 - Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	10	10	11
	ID7 – Action Campaign – Flood resilience	128	128	132
	ID9A – NFM Technical Appraisal resource	35	35	37
	ID20 – Land management engagement event	12	12	0

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

	ID22 – NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	90	90	60
	ID12 – Unpave the Way	79	79	60
	ID15 – RMA Capacity Building programme	15	15	0
	ID16 – Additional capacity to support RMAs (EA and LA hosted posts)	682	682	695
	ID17 – Coastal Centre of Excellence – Business case	25	25	0
	RFCC Business Plan – Currently unallocated	0	0	105
	RFCC BUSINESS PLAN TOTAL	1,240	1,240	1,265
	LOCAL LEVY PROGRAMME TOTALS	9,777	9,560	6,834

North West Investment Programme

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

10 October 2025



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive update on the delivery and performance of the North West Investment Programme for 2025–26, including capital and resource allocations, outcome measures, and strategic planning for future years. It is the first report using a simplified format to enhance clarity and accessibility.

Key Headlines:

- On Track Delivery: The North West is on course to deliver its in-year programme, with forecasts indicating alignment to both Capital (CDEL) and Resource (RDEL) budgets.
- Outcome Measures: Forecasts show 5,148 properties will be better protected this year (90% of the target), maintaining a green RAG status. Environmental outcomes (rOM4a/b) are also progressing well.

Financial Performance:

- Total Project Expenditure (TPE) forecast is slightly over-programmed by £0.5m against a £134.09m allocation.
- GiA forecast is £2.1m over allocation (1.7%), within the national tolerance of 5%.
- Local Levy programme is forecast to fully spend its allocation.

Risks & Pressures:

- National RDEL overspend may impact local flexibility.
- Efficiency savings remain significantly below target (40% shortfall), risking future funding.
- Funding uncertainty for 2026/27 may delay scheme progression and affect delivery confidence.

Strategic Planning:

- A total of 86 projects have been submitted for 2026/27, requesting over £206m in funding and aiming to protect 13,923 properties.
- Local Choices discussions are proposed to be deferred to November to allow for better alignment with indicative allocations and stakeholder engagement.

Business Plan Progress:

- Two projects completed this quarter (ID10 and ID4/13).
- A new £150k Local Levy investment is proposed for peatland restoration development to support long-term resilience and environmental outcomes.
- Contractual delays affecting community resilience projects (ID5/6/7) present a delivery risk.

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- Provide an update on the progress of delivering the 2025-26 programmes.
- Provide an update on Local Choices and consenting process.

ACTIONS REQUESTED FROM FBASG

- Note the formal name change from ‘Capital Programme’ to ‘Investment Programme’ and the additional reporting on CDEL (Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit) and RDEL (Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit) for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant in Aid (FCERM GiA)
- Note the progress on delivering the 2025-26 Investment Programmes
- Note the update on the RFCC Business Plan
- Acknowledge the completion of two Business Plan projects.
- Review and recommend to RFCC approval of a new Local Levy Business Plan request.

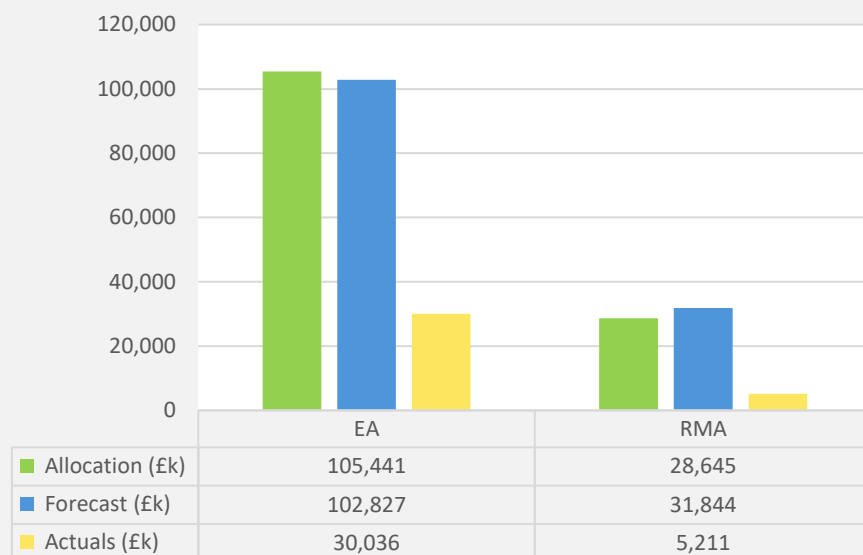
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OVERVIEW (2021–2026)

Investment Programme Overview (2021-22 to 2025-26)

	 Properties to be better protected	 Partnership funding	 Efficiency savings
 National Overview	150,000+ properties better protected between 2021-22 and 2025-26.	£1.5B in partnership contributions since 2021-22.	£164.1m efficiency savings achieved (vs. £339m target).
 NorthWest Overview	11,296 properties better protected (2021-22 to date).	10% of programme funded through partnerships.	£14.13M efficiency savings (2021-22 to Q1 of 2025-26).

NORTH WEST TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE (TPE) 2025/26

NW RFCC TPE - In-Year Investment Programme



Top 10 TPE spending projects (by forecasts)

Project Name	Lead	Allocation TPE (£k)	Forecast TPE (£k)	Actual TPE (£k)
Kendal FRM Scheme	EA	19,012	22,535	5,495
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	17,800	17,722	6,800
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	RMA	10,000	15,000	4,594
Preston and South Ribble	EA	10,660	11,024	4,088
Capital Recondition Programme GMMC	EA	9,920	9,745	2,276
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	4,500	6,217	2,300
Appleby Town Centre	EA	4,453	4,563	2,161
Capital Recondition Programme CLA	EA	4,324	4,390	417
Anchorsholme Coast Protection Scheme	RMA	4,000	4,000	0
CLA Janson Pool 23-24	EA	2,489	2,566	1,621

Commentary and Risk:

- Our latest forecast shows an over-programme of £0.5m against the Total Project Expenditure (TPE) allocation of £134.09m

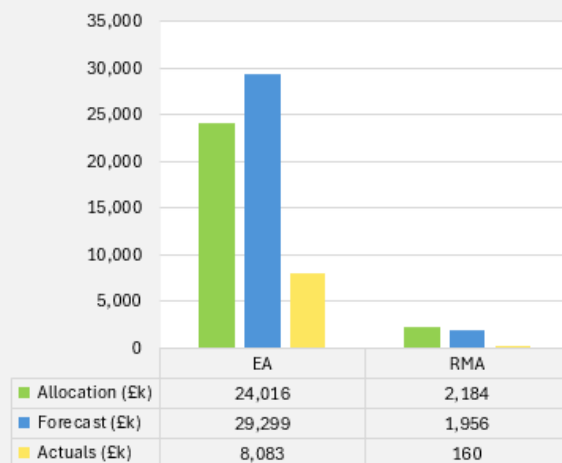
Please refer to Appendix B for the summary of all in year funding sources in terms of budget, forecasts and actuals.

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TOTAL PROJECTS EXPENDITURE BY PARTNERSHIP 2025/26

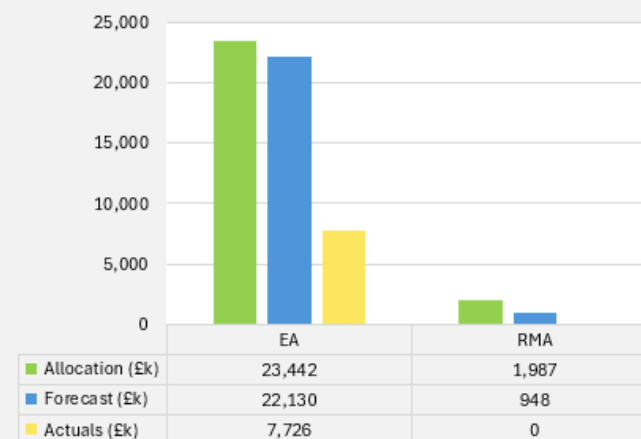
Cumbria Programme



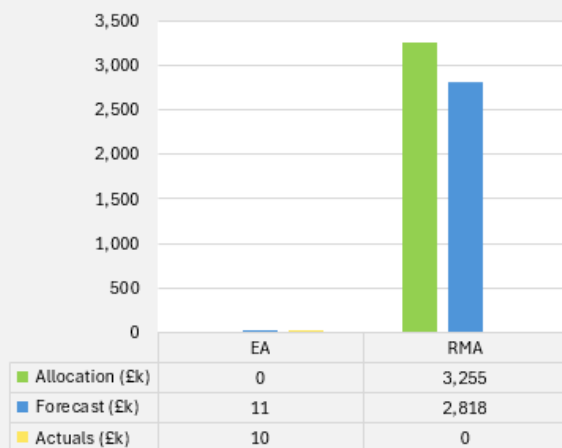
Lancashire Programme



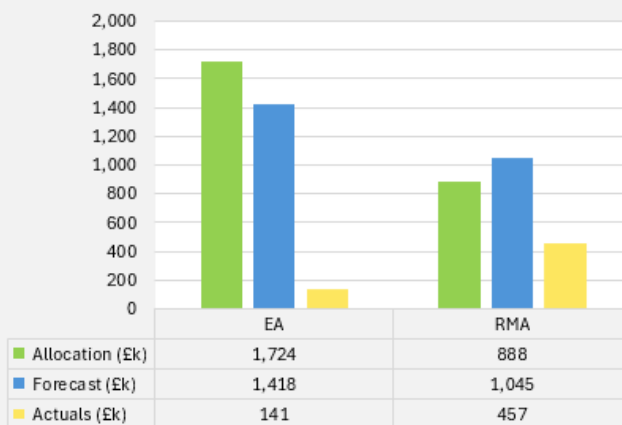
Greater Manchester



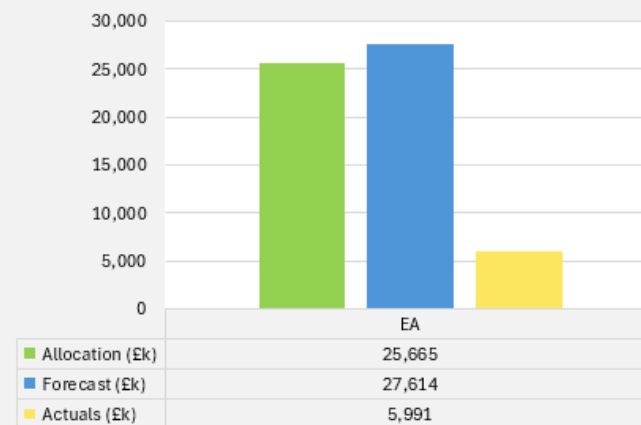
Merseyside Programme



Cheshire Programme

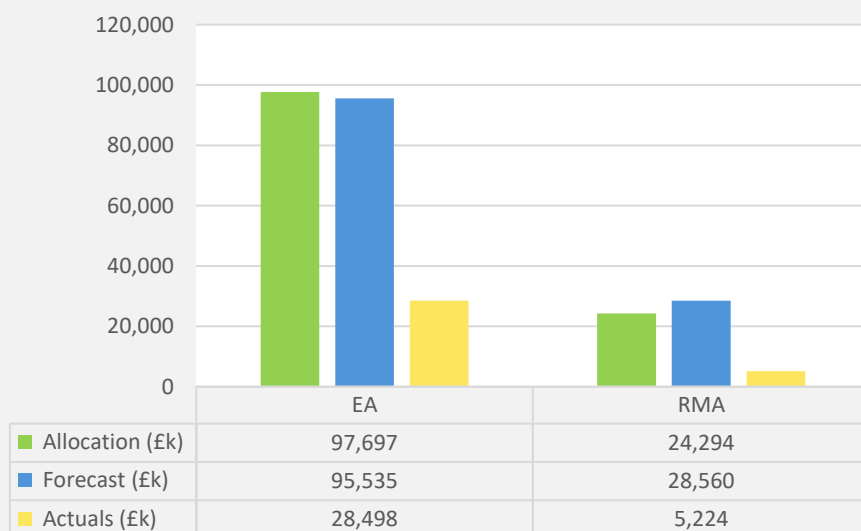


Cross-Partnership Programme



NORTH WEST GRANT IN AID (GiA) EXPENDITURE 2025/26

NW RFCC GiA- In-Year Investment Programme



GiA Capital (CDEL) / Resource (RDEL) splits

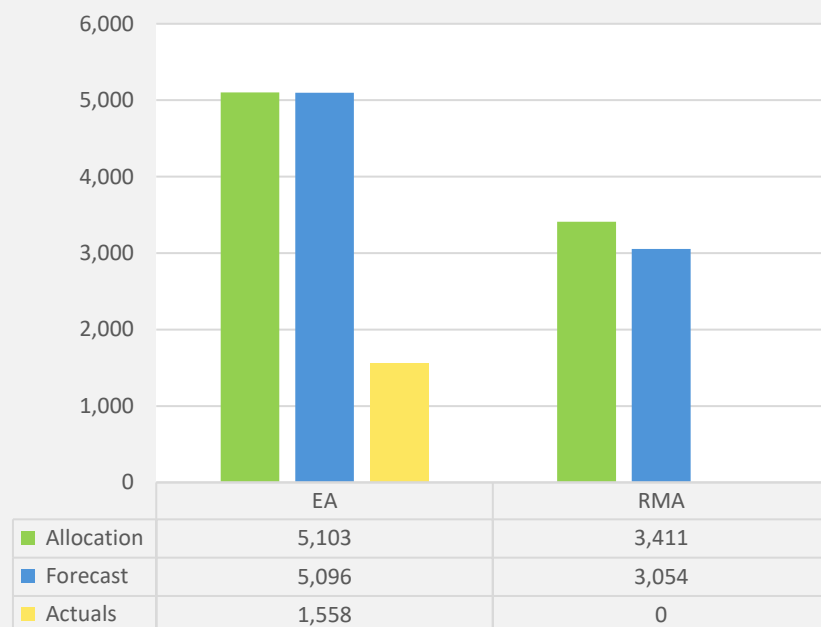
Area	Resource (RDEL)		Capital (CDEL)	
	Budget (£k)	Forecast (£k)	Budget (£k)	Forecast (£k)
Cumbria and Lancashire	5,237	5,167	76,044	76,114
Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Cheshire	5,960	5,882	35,098	35,776
North West Total	11,197	11,049	111,142	111,890

Commentary and Risk:

- The latest forecast shows a GiA over-programme of £2.1m, which is 1.7% above our North West allocation. We anticipate further reductions to this over-programme in Q3 and Q4 to bring the programme back to allocation by year-end.
- National steer is to keep the GiA over-programme below 5% and not to reallocate any reductions in forecasts to other projects. The North West is currently meeting this steer.
- The funding uncertainty for 2026/27 presents an in-year risk. Schemes expected to enter contract this year are awaiting the indicative allocation before progressing, which could result in the North West underspending against its allocation.
- We are now required to provide a GiA Capital (CDEL) / Resource (RDEL) forecast split and ensure alignment with allocation. In August, we reviewed all projects and confirmed that our 2025/26 CDEL / RDEL allocation is on budget and aligned with the National PMO requirements, as detailed in the table above.
- Nationally, there remains an overspend on RDEL, and there is a risk that we may be asked to reduce our RDEL spend to support the National position. This could impact Local Levy expenditure.

NORTH WEST LOCAL LEVY PROJECT EXPENDITURE 2025/26

**NW RFCC Local Levy projects - In-Year
Investment Programme**



Top 10 Local Levy spending projects (by forecasts) 2025/26

Project Name	Lead	LL Allocation (£k)	LL Forecast (£k)	LL Actual (£k)
Appleby Town Centre	EA	1,500	1,430	680
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	1,500	1,500	570
Millom & Haverigg	LA	500	500	0
Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	0	400	0
River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	EA	380	380	72
Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	LA	350	350	0
Blackpool Beach Nourishment	LA	350	350	0
Poise Brook	EA	305	305	74
Hindley Group	EA	275	275	79
Blackpool Manchester Square	LA	250	250	0

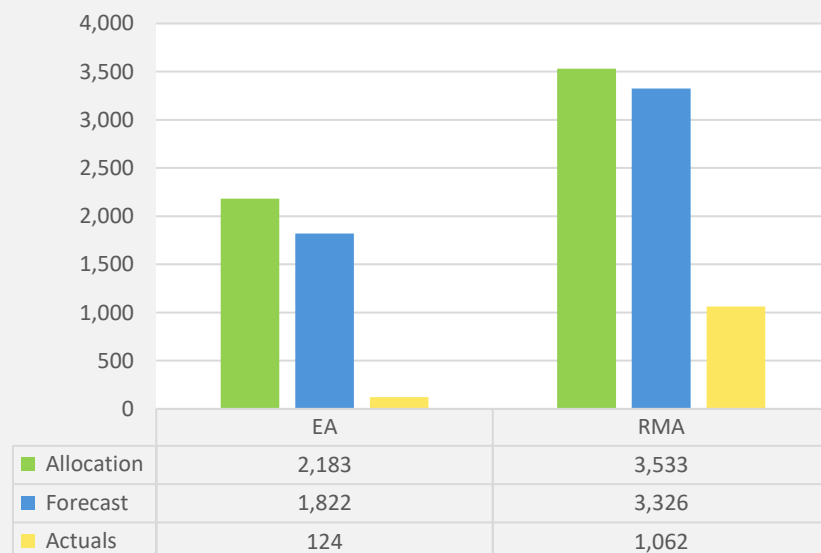
Commentary and Risk:

- The graph and table above exclude the Local Levy business plan which are covered in a separate section in this report (see 'NW RFCC Business Plan').
- Latest forecast shows we are on track to deliver the Local Levy in-year programme and spend our full allocation.

Please refer to Appendix C for the detailed list of the Local Levy programme allocation and forecasts for 2025-26

NORTH WEST OUTCOME MEASURES 2025/26 - 'PROPERTIES BETTER PROTECTED'

Properties Better Protected In 2025/26



Properties Better Protected - Top 10 contributing projects

Project Name	Lead	Target	Forecast	Delivered
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	LA	3,000	3,000	1,000
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	0	892	124
Preston and South Ribble	EA	707	707	0
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	EA	0	207	0
Liverpool Road, Gt Sankey Surface Water Management Project	LA	0	62	0
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	LA	0	47	0
Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	76	37	0
Maryport Harbour Gates	LA	26	26	0
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	LA	0	26	0
Falcondale Road, Winwick, Warrington	LA	0	23	23

Commentary and Risk:

- North West Properties Better Protected Outcome Measure forecast indicate that 5,148 properties will be better protected against a target of 5,716, achieving 90% of the target. This is classed as green RAG status as defined by National Portfolio Management Office for this measure. *Please refer to Appendix A for RAG definition*
- Key changes from the last report include a reduction of 1,600 properties against the lowers screen programme (2022-2023), which are now forecast to be delivered in 2026/27 and 2027/28. A significant portion of this change (1,250) relates to a single screen in Lancashire (Royles Brook). The delay was agreed to mitigate a health and safety concern by delivering the works during the school summer holidays.

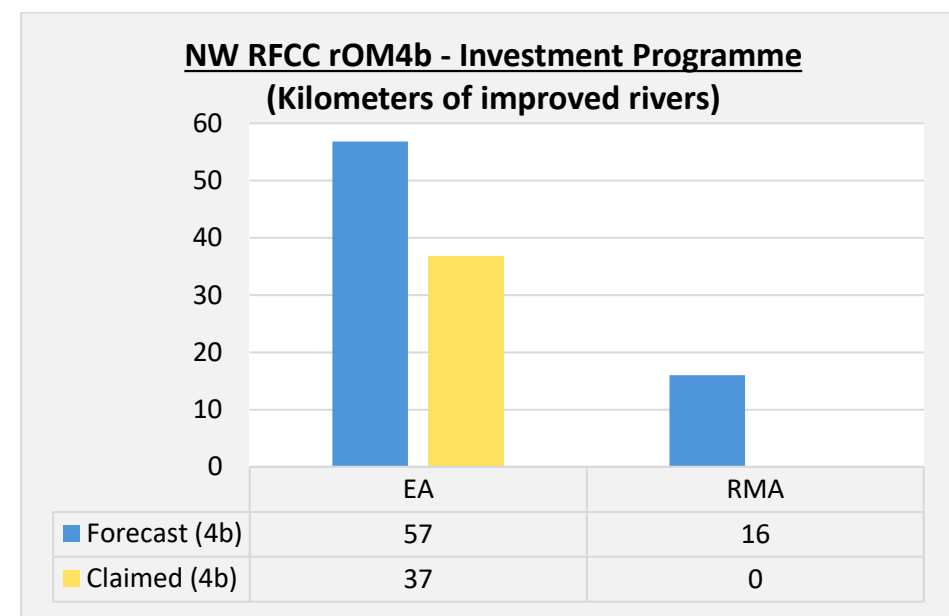
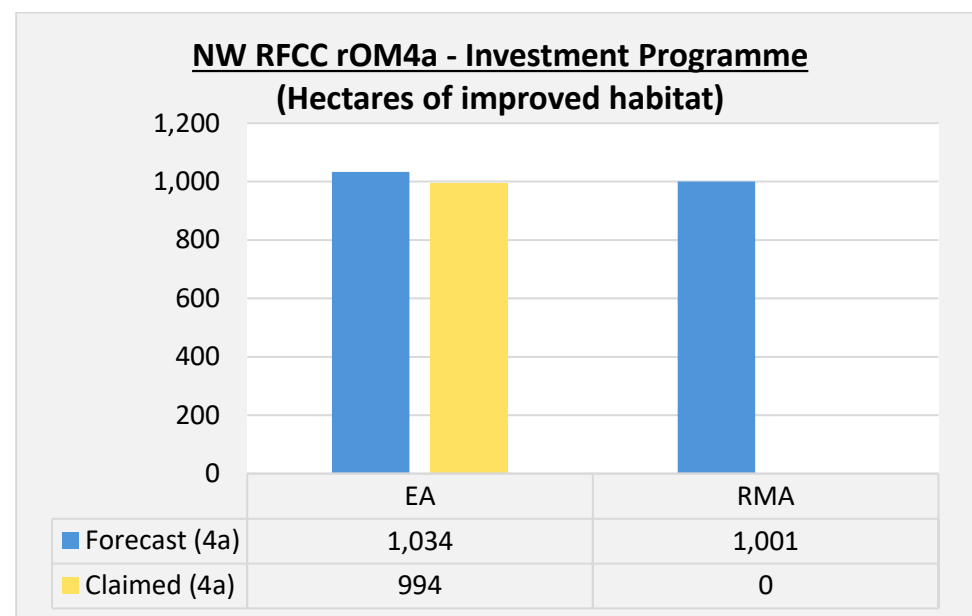
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- Targets were initially set based on the original bid. A review at the start of the year identified several projects delivering additional properties being delivered through the debris screens programme (debris screen programmes, and several smaller Local Authority led projects).
Please refer to Appendix D for the detailed list of properties better protected in FY 2025–26.

NORTH WEST ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOME MEASURES (ROM4A & ROM4B) 2025/26

There isn't a target for environmental outcomes 4a and 4b, however we are required to record the delivery and claim the benefits. Definition of Outcome Measure 4a and 4b can be found in appendix A.



Environmental outcomes - Contributing projects in 2025/26

Row Labels	Partnership	RMA Type	rOM:4A Forecast (Ha)	rOM:4A Claimed (Ha)	rOM:4B Forecast (km)	rOM:4B Claimed (km)
Cumbria River Restoration Package	Cumbria	EA	1,029	989	57	37
Liverpool Road, Gt Sankey Surface Water Management Project	Cheshire	RMA	0	0	14	0

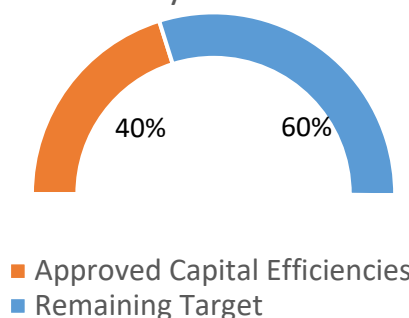
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Preston and South Ribble	Lancashire	EA	5	5	0	0
River Winster (Local Levy funded)	Cumbria	RMA	1,001	0	2	0
Grand Total			2,035	994	73	37

NORTH WEST CAPITAL EFFICIENCIES – OVERALL PROGRAMME

NW Overall Programme Capital Efficiency Countdown



Over the five-year programme (2021–22 to Q1 2025–26), the North West has achieved £16.7 million in efficiencies against a target of £41.3 million (10% of GiA spent), resulting in a shortfall of £24.6 million (40% below target). Both the EA and oRMA have not met their efficiency targets, with realised efficiencies significantly below the 10% target for total GiA spend.

Implications of not meeting this could mean that funding may be reduced if the targets have not been achieved Nationally.

Please refer to Appendix E for the list of efficiency projects claimed up to Q1 of FY 2025–26.

As of end Q1 25/26. Efficiencies Reporting is once per quarter					
Area	5 Year Total GiA Spend £	5 Year Programme Target (10% all GiA spend)	5 Year Programme Realised Efficiencies	Variance (Target vs Realised) £	Variance (Target vs Realised) %
Cumbria and Lancashire	£278,775,719	£27,877,572	£10,063,322	-£17,814,250	36%
Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Cheshire	£133,756,430	£13,375,643	£6,621,790	-£6,753,853	50%
Total	£412,532,149	£41,253,215	£16,685,113	-£24,568,102	40%

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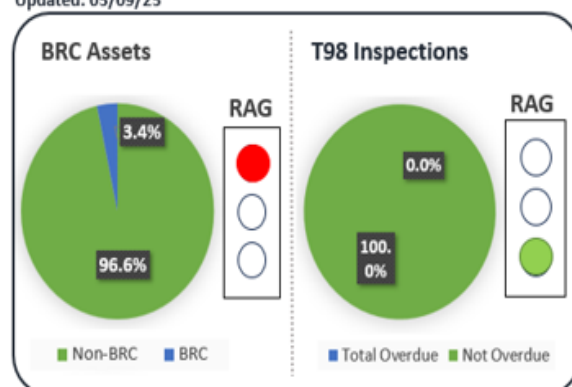
Authority	5 Year Total GiA Spend £	5 Year Programme Target (10% all GiA spend)	5 Year Programme Realised Efficiencies	Variance (Target vs Realised) £	Variance (Target vs Realised) %
EA	£334,710,881	£33,471,088	£13,519,000	-£19,952,088	40%
RMA	£77,821,268	£7,782,127	£3,166,113	-£4,616,014	41%
Total	£412,532,149	£41,253,215	£16,685,113	-£24,568,102	40%

Below Required Condition Assets – current position

Cumbria and Lancashire

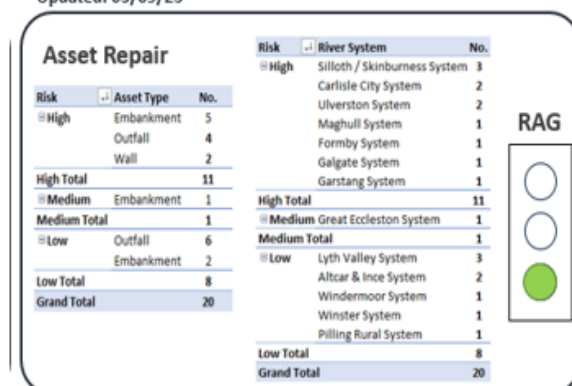
25/26 BRC Assets & T98 Inspections

Updated: 05/09/25



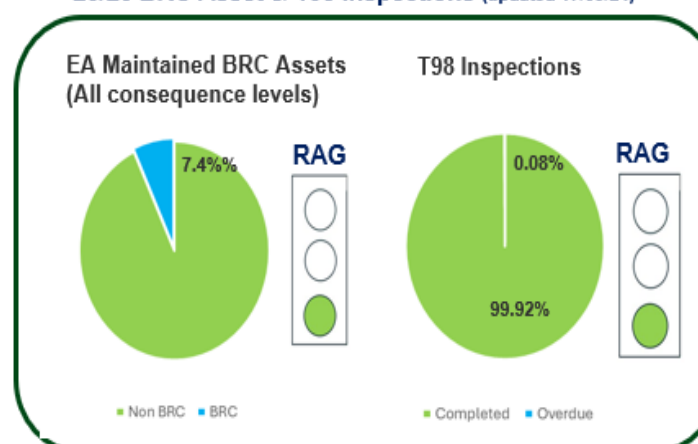
25/26 Asset Repair by System & Type

Updated: 05/09/25



Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire

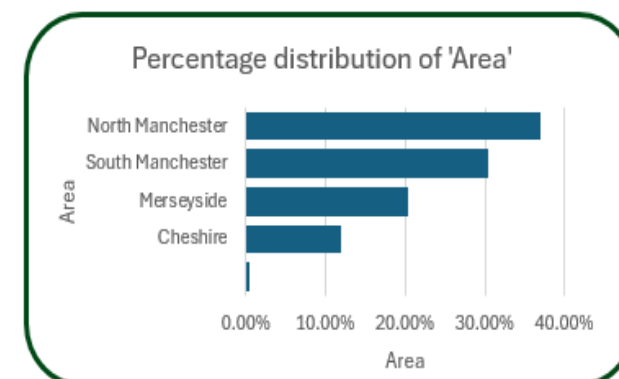
25/26 BRC Asset & T98 Inspections (updated 17/09/24)



BRC RAG green based on High Consequence systems achieving target status of 93.4%

25/26 Asset Repair by Type All Consequence Levels (updated 17/09/24)

Maintainer	High	Medium	Low	Total
Environment Agency	144	11	11	166
Channel	4		1	5
Defence	114	5	5	124
Structure	26	6	5	37
Third Party	143	79	17	239
Channel	100	52	12	164
Defence	24	22	3	49
Structure	19	5	2	26
Total	287	90	28	405



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- See appendix A for definition of Below Required Condition (BRC) assets and T98 Asset Inspections
-

2025-2026 Resource Maintenance Allocation and Spend to Date

	Budget (£)	End of Yr Forecast (£)	Spend to date (£)
CLA – Resource Maintenance	£7,000,000	£7,000,000	£2,283,192
Asset Projects	-	-	-
Flood Basin Compensation	£500,000	£500,000	£25,842
Croston Basin Legal Fees	£50,000	£50,000	£0
Principal Depot Costs	£180,000	£180,000	£3,361
Glasson Dock Maintenance Contributions	£50,000	£50,000	£0 (Invoice expected Feb 2026)
Lane End Amenity Area Maintenance Contribution	£5,600	£5,600	£5,250
MEICA Commercial Support	£363,000	£363,000	£0
GMC Resource Maintenance	£5,577,304	£5,577,304	£1,690,083
Asset Projects	-	-	-
Natural Resources Wales Contribution	£230,000	£230,000	£0 (invoiced at end of year)
Canal & River Trust Contribution	£12,000	£0	£0
Principal Depot Costs	£174,000	£0	£0
Decommissioning	£220,00	£0	£0
Commercial Support (inc MEICA)	£99,000	£99,000	£4,000
Bedford Pumping Station, Leigh, De-silt	£0	£406,000	£204,000 (End Aug)

The North-West Resource forecast is on track to land on budget at year end. There is no over programme this financial year and the expectation is that Area delivery teams will not exceed their budgets.

The FBASG are asked to:

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- Note the progress in delivering the 2025-26 Investment and Resource Maintenance programmes.
- Note the pressure on RDEL projects and potential impacts on the Local Levy programme.



INVESTMENT PROGRAMME REFRESH BID AND LOCAL CHOICES FOR 2026/27

The outcome of the Spending Review 2025 (SR25) was announced in June 2025 and set the funding envelope for department budgets (Defra total) through to 2028/29 for resource (RDEL) and 2029/30 for capital (CDEL). The Defra Group planning process for 2026/27 is due to commence in autumn 2025 and will set the Environment Agency Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management activities (CDEL and RDEL). As a result, there remains some uncertainty about the exact budget the EA will receive for 2026/27.

Funding bids submitted as part of this year's annual refresh have far exceeded available budgets. This is in part due to new projects seeking funding and existing projects seeing costs increase.

This year the allocations for 2026/27 will be the first year of a 3-year FCRM investment programme (2026-2029). Therefore, it is proposed the Local Choices discussion is delayed until an extraordinary meeting in late November. This will allow enough time to engage with key stakeholders, analyse the indicative allocation and meet with delivery partners before consenting the programme in January.

The final bid summary for 2026-27 - covering Phase 1 and broken down by partnership - is shown in the table below.

More detail of the final phase 1 bid can be found in Appendix F. The Annual Investment programme refresh cycle is included for your reference.

Partnership	EA/LA	No. of Projects Phase 1	TPE 26-27 Phase 1 (£)	Expected rOM Phase 1
Cumbria	EA	9	25,274,111	64
	LA	18	14,949,309	333
	Total	27	40,223,420	397
Lancashire	EA	22	42,665,617	182
	LA	10	58,974,880	8,950
	Total	32	101,640,497	9,132

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CLA Cross Partnership	EA	3	11,320,187	791
	Total	3	11,320,187	791
Partnership	EA/LA	No. of Projects Phase 1	TPE 26-27 Phase 1 (£)	Expected rOM Phase 1
Merseyside	EA	0	0	0
	LA	5	2,978,000	1,837
	Total	5	2,978,000	1,837
Greater Manchester	EA	6	31,920,808	1,640
	LA	4	1,260,000	31
	Total	10	33,180,808	1,671
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	EA	1	2,761,000	0
	LA	5	624,370	45
	Total	6	3,385,370	45
GMMC Cross-Partnership	EA	3	13,977,400	50
	Total	3	13,977,400	50
Total North West	EA	44	127,919,123	2,727
	LA	42	78,786,559	11,196
	Total	86	206,705,682	13,923

The FBASG are asked to:

- Note the submitted investment programme phase 1 funding bid (submitted on 31 July 2025)
- Note the proposal to hold an additional meeting in November to endorse Local Choices

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NW RFCC LOCAL LEVY PROGRAMME FOR 2024-25, 2025-26 & 2026-27

Local Levy income and allocation summary (£ million)	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27 (indicative)
Cash balance at start of year	11.213	10.337	6.282
Local Levy income	4.469	4.681	4.681*
Interest earned	0.489	0.400	0.200*
Total available balance	16.171	15.418	11.163
Total Actuals/Forecast	5.835	9.137	6.974
Remaining cash balance at year end	10.337	6.282	4.188

* Interest and income for future next year are yet to be confirmed.

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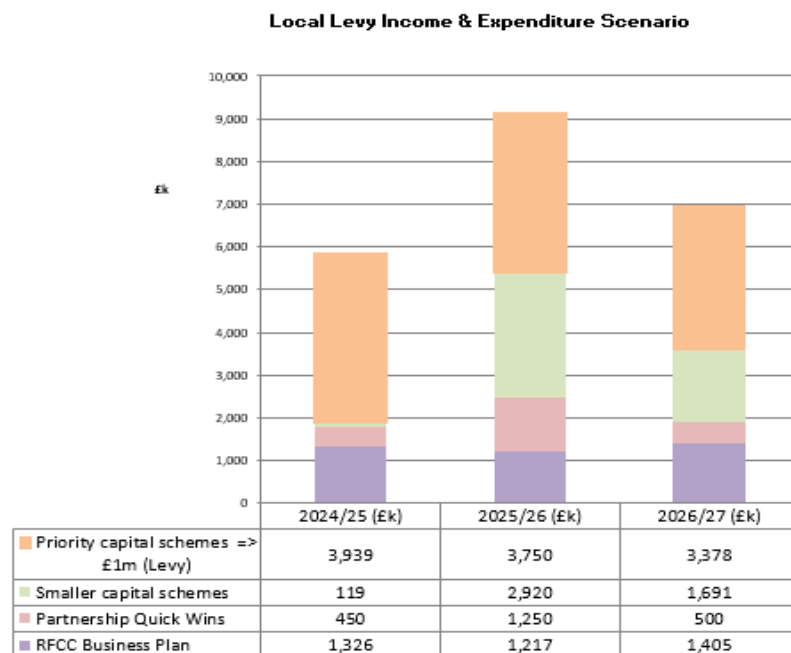
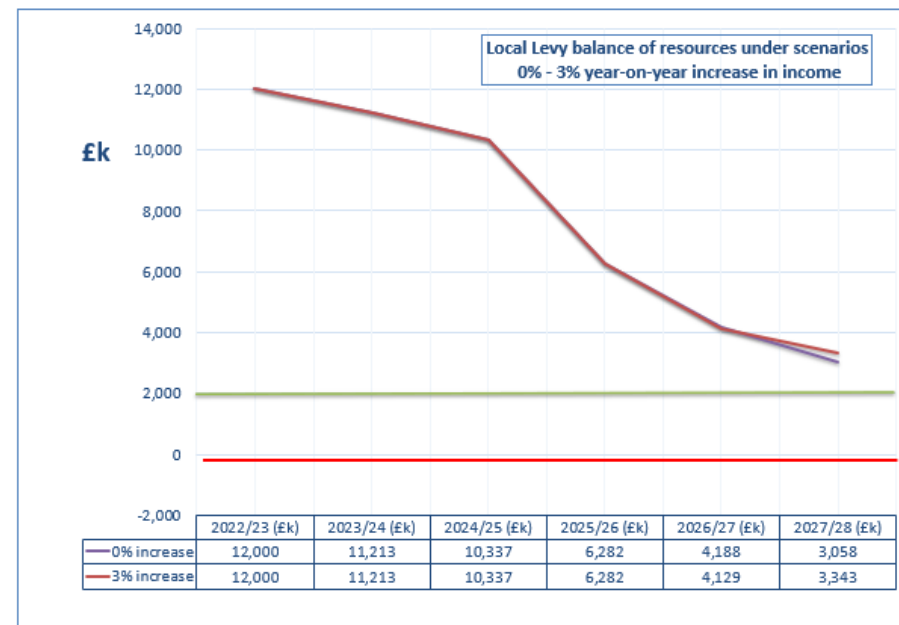


Chart above shows the level of Local Levy forecasts by activity classification per year.



The graph above shows the expected Local Levy balances at the end of each year based on the latest forecasts. This includes the new business plan levy request noted below.

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New requests for Local Levy support

- There were no requests for Local Levy supports for schemes this quarter.
- The Business Plan has submitted one new project proposal requesting Local Levy support. This is detailed in the next section of the report. The funding requested is included in the charts and figures on the previous page.

The FBASG are asked to:
• Note the progress on the 2025-26 Local Levy allocation, spend and forecasts.

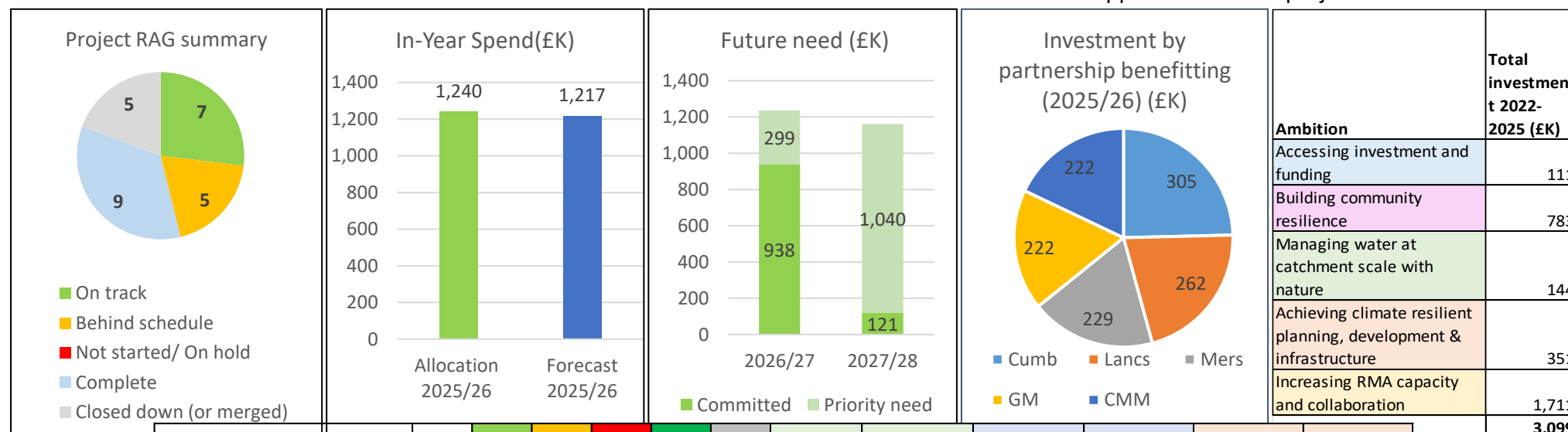
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NW RFCC BUSINESS PLAN

Dashboard

See Appendix H for full project level detail



Ambition	Projects	On track	Behind schedule	Not started/ On hold	Complete	Closed down (or merged)	Allocation 2025/26	Forecast 2025/26	Committed Local Levy need 2026/27	Additional indicative funding need 2026/27	Committed Local Levy need 2027/28	Additional indicative funding need 2027/28
Accessing investment and funding	5	1	0	0	1	3	45	52	55	0	58	0
Building community resilience	5	0	4	0	1	0	257	257	0	265	0	273
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	5	2	1	0	2	0	137	107	125	0	0	36.5
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	6	1	0	0	3	2	79	79	62	19	64	20
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	3	0	0	2	0	722	722	696	15	0	711
	26	7	5	0	9	5	1,240	1,217	938	299	121	1,040

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Issues/Risks: Building community resilience (Projects ID5/6/7)

- 3 projects are building community resilience to flooding, including the Flood Hub website and advisory support for communities. This work has been delivered in a collaborative partnership with Newground CIC for some years.
- We have been working on renewing contractual arrangements with Newground to follow from the last agreement which covered to the end of March 2025. This is requiring a different contractual approach to that previously used and is taking longer than anticipated, requiring consultation with Defra Commercial and Defra Legal, and approval from the EA at a national level.
- The intention now is to put in place a 12-month transitional arrangement with Newground. Since this is still subject to EA internal approvals it therefore represents a risk. Newground are currently continuing to work with us in the interim.
- There will be an open market procurement exercise to select the supplier from April 2026 (which could be Newground but will be subject to the open market process). We intend for GMCA to lead this procurement on behalf of the RFCC and all RMA partners.

Projects completed this quarter:

Planning and development – Evidence gathering (ID10)

- The RFCC has used Planning students from Liverpool University to do research projects to gather information about planning and flood risk across the North West, benefitting the students with real-life project experience and educating them about flood risk in planning. The project has come to a natural conclusion, and the link to the uni has been lost following a change in RFCC membership. Summary presentation to October RFCC meeting.

Asset data sharing and mapping (ID4/13)

- This project led by GM/Merseyside partnership, using Arup with involvement from the Open Data Institute, has concluded and outputs are available. The project has made some significant recommendations around data sharing between partners. The focus now is on exploring the feasibility and readiness for these with partners. Summary presentation to October RFCC meeting.

Project investment update: Wyre NFM Project (ID2.1)

- In 2022, the RFCC approved a 9-year (2022-2030) contribution to this innovative green financing project, with annual payments of up to £45K (i.e. **£405K**), in the early years paid pro rata based on the proportion of NFM measures installed. The contract also includes provision for inflationary increases in line with CPIH but which had not previously been factored into the allocation.
- RFCC payments for the first 4 years (inc 2025/26) total £101K. Based on realistic estimates of CPIH up to 2030, the estimated total RFCC contribution is estimated to be **£403K**. These changes therefore represent a reprofiling of, and not an increase to, the original allocation across years.

New project proposal: Peatland restoration funding development (See Appendix G).

- Following the peat restoration item at the July RFCC meeting, EA technical leads have developed a proposal for the RFCC to provide £150K of Local Levy investment in 2026/27 which will develop our peatland restoration programmes putting us in a better position to secure other funding.
- The funding will be used in different ways in the three different peat partnership areas but will represent a strategic proactive move by the RFCC to boost our peatland restoration. This short-term action will increase the scale and pace of delivery in the future, while we await the outcome of the national investment

The FBA Subgroup is asked to:

- Note the update report on implementation, including the issue relating to projects ID5, 6, and 7.
- Formally recognise the completion of projects ID10 and ID4/13.
- Note the funding reprofiling for the Wyre NFM project (ID2.1).
- Recommend for RFCC approval, the investment of £150K in 2026/27 for the peatland restoration funding development project.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	DEFINITION (ROMS, CDEL/RDEL, ETC.)
Appendix B	SUMMARY OF ALL IN-YEAR FUNDING SOURCES – BUDGET, FORECAST AND ACTUALS
Appendix C	NORTH WEST LOCAL LEVY– 2025-26
Appendix D	2025-26 PROPERTIES BETTER PROTECTED FORECAST AND TARGET DATA (FOR INFO ONLY)
Appendix E Appendix F	CAPITAL EFFICIENCIES CLAIMED – WHOLE PROGRAMME INVESTMENT PROGRAMME REFRESH 2026-27 PHASE 1 FINAL BID – PROJECT LIST & ANNUAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME REFRESH CYCLE
Appendix G	BUSINESS PLAN PROJECT PROPOSAL – PEATLAND RESTORATION FUNDING DEVELOPMENT
Appendix H	RFCC BUSINESS PLAN – PROJECT SUMMARIES

Appendix A	DEFINITIONS
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1) Environmental Outcomes – rOM4 (Reporting Outcome Measure)

- a) rOM 4A – Habitats created/ Habitats enhanced (ha) such as Intertidal Wetlands, Wet woodlands, Grassland, Ponds & lakes, Woodlands, Wetlands & wet grasslands, Heathland and Arable land
- b) rOM 4B – Rivers Enhanced (km) such as Length of comprehensive river restoration, Length of Partial restoration, Length affected by major single improvement.

2) CDEL / RDEL

- a) CDEL - Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit. Capital expenditure relates to the creation or significant improvement of assets.
- b) RDEL - Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit. Resource is anything that does the following i.e. routine maintenance, early project development (Pre-Gateway 1), investigations & studies, incident management

3) RAG definition for Outcome measure Properties Better Protected target

- a) Green $\geq 85\%$ of the target
- b) Amber $< 85\%$ and $\geq 75\%$
- c) Red $< 75\%$

4) T98 Asset Inspection

T98 is a national accreditation to undertake visual flood defence asset inspections. The accreditation was developed by the Environment Agency and the Flood Hazard Research Centre (FHRC) at Middlesex University.

The 1 to 5 score for condition grade is well used within UK FCRM organisations. The overall condition grade reflects the weighted average condition grade of the various elements making up the asset.

Assets are inspected regularly in a set frequency based on asset type and risk.

5) Below Required Condition Assets (BRC)

An asset where an inspection confirmed the condition is below a set target based on asset type and risk. These assets require intervention to bring it back to target condition.

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Appendix B	SUMMARY OF ALL IN-YEAR FUNDING SOURCES – BUDGET, FORECAST AND ACTUALS
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North West		BUDGET	Latest Forecast (mid-sept)	
		BUDGET(£k)	FORECAST	VARIANCE
GIA	EA	£97,696,709	£95,535,348	-£2,161,361
	RMA	£24,293,999	£28,560,093	£4,266,094
	TOTAL	£121,990,708	£124,095,441	£2,104,733
LOCAL LEVY	EA	£5,103,000	£5,096,000	-£7,000
	RMA	£3,411,000	£3,054,000	-£357,000
	TOTAL	£8,514,000	£8,150,000	-£364,000
PF	EA	£2,641,000	£2,112,197	-£528,803
	RMA	£939,500	£230,000	-£709,500
	TOTAL	£3,580,500	£2,342,197	-£1,238,303
TPE	EA	£105,440,709	£102,743,545	-£2,697,164
	RMA	£28,644,499	£31,844,093	£3,199,594
	TOTAL	£134,085,208	£134,587,638	£502,430

Partnership	Full Year Forecast	Spend/claimed to date	Variance	EA remaining to spend	LA remaining to claim
Greater Manchester	£23,078,972	£7,726,293	-£15,352,679	£14,404,679	£948,000
Merseyside	£2,829,261	£9,972	-£2,819,289	£1,289	£2,818,000
Cheshire	£2,463,551	£597,828	-£1,865,723	£1,277,630	£588,093
Cumbria	£31,247,658	£8,243,176	-£23,004,482	£21,215,982	£1,795,500
Lancashire	£47,437,511	£12,679,181	-£34,758,330	£14,275,118	£20,483,212
Cross-Partnership	£27,530,689	£5,990,876	-£21,539,813	£9,296,775	£0
Total	£134,587,642	£35,247,326	-£99,340,316	£60,471,473	£26,632,805

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Appendix C

NORTH WEST LOCAL LEVY 2025-26 – UPDATED PROGRAMME

Partnership	Scheme Name	RMA Type	2025/26 scenario (£k)	2025/26 Project Forecast (£k)
Cumbria	Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	EA	0	1,500
Cumbria	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	LA	250	250
Cumbria	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	EA	30	30
Cumbria	Millom	LA	500	500
Cumbria	River Winster Rehabilitation Project	LA	164	164
Cumbria	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	EA	10	10
Cumbria Total			954	2,454
Lancashire	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	EA	50	50
Lancashire	Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	LA	350	350
Lancashire	Blackpool Beach Nourishment	LA	350	350
Lancashire	Fleetwood & Copse Brook Scheme	EA	1,770	0
Lancashire	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	LA	250	250
Lancashire	PFR Thurnham	EA	255	255
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	0	400
Lancashire	Blackpool Manchester Square	LA	250	250
Lancashire Total			3,275	1,905
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	LA	250	250
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	90	120
Cheshire/Mid Mersey	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	EA	161	161
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			501	531
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	LA	250	250
Greater Manchester	Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	0	70
Greater Manchester	Poise Brook	EA	305	305
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	EA	1,500	1,500
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	EA	380	380

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Greater Manchester	Hindley Group	EA	275	275
Greater Manchester Total			2,710	2,780
Merseyside	Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral	LA	447	0
Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	LA	250	250
Merseyside Total			697	250
RFCC Business Plan	Wyre NFM Investment Readiness Project (ID2 Development of innovative green finance mechanisms)	EA	45	52
RFCC Business Plan	ID5 The Flood Hub	EA	119	119
RFCC Business Plan	ID6 Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	EA	10	10
RFCC Business Plan	ID7 Action campaign – Flood resilience	EA	128	128
RFCC Business Plan	ID9A NFM Technical Appraisal resource – Mersey Forest collaboration	EA	35	35
RFCC Business Plan	ID20 Land mgt and flooding engagement (event)	LA	12	12
RFCC Business Plan	ID22 NFM Pipeline (Cumbria)	EA	90	60
RFCC Business Plan	ID12 Unpave the Way	EA	79	79
RFCC Business Plan	ID15 Risk management authority capacity building programme	EA	15	15
RFCC Business Plan	ID16 Additional capacity (to support the RFCC, partnerships and RMAs) – EA hosted resources	EA	419	419
RFCC Business Plan	ID16 Additional capacity (to support the RFCC, partnerships and RMAs) – LA hosted resources	LA	263	263
RFCC Business Plan	ID17 NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - development	LA	25	25
RFCC Business Plan Total			1,240	1,217
Total Local Levy - North West			9,378	9,138

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

Allocation (£k)	2025-26	
	EA	LLFA
Greater Manchester	2,460	320
Merseyside	0	250
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	161	370
Cumbria	1,540	914
Lancashire	705	1,200
RFCC Business Plan	917	300

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Total	5,783	3,354
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Appendix D	PROPERTIES BETTER PROTECTED – TARGET, FORECASTS AND ACTUALS (FOR INFO ONLY) – FY 25/26
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Scheme Name	RMA	Partnership	2025/26 Forecast	2025/26 Target (for info only)	Actuals
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	EA	Cross Partnership	207	0	0
Maryport Harbour Gates	LA	Cumbria	26	26	0
Warwick Bridge PFR scheme	EA	Cumbria	16	16	0
Low Crosby	LA	Cumbria	15	20	0
Spittal Farm, Wigton	LA	Cumbria	9		9
Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	LA	Cumbria	0	15	0
Kirkland Road, Ennerdale Bridge	LA	Cumbria	0	21	0
Tebay Surface Water Alleviation	LA	Cumbria	0	16	0
River Annas, Bootle, Cumbria	LA	Cumbria	0	12	0
Etterby Terrace, Carlisle	LA	Cumbria	0	16	0
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	Cross Partnership	892	0	124
Liverpool Road, Gt Sankey Surface Water Management Project	LA	Cheshire	62	0	0
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	LA	Greater Manchester	47	0	0
Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	Greater Manchester	37	76	0
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	LA	Cheshire	26	0	0
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	LA	Cheshire	12	0	0
Lindow Primary School FAS	LA	Cheshire	4	0	0
Adder Hill Great Boughton	LA	Cheshire	3	0	0
Smithy Brow, Croft, Warrington	LA	Cheshire	2	0	0
Falcondale Road, Winwick, Warrington	LA	Cheshire	23	0	23
St Marys Close, Appleton	LA	Cheshire	5	0	5
Clifton Villas, Backford	LA	Cheshire	16	0	16
Carlow Close, Hale Village	LA	Cheshire	9	0	9
Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	EA	Greater Manchester	0	1460	0
West End Road, St Helens	LA	Cheshire	0	11	0

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Turf Hill	LA	Greater Manchester	0	21	0
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	LA	Merseyside	12	0	0
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	LA	Lancashire	3000	3000	1000
Preston and South Ribble	EA	Lancashire	707	707	0
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	LA	Lancashire	18	22	0
Darwen Central, Darwen	LA	Lancashire	0	59	0
Chester Close, Blackburn	LA	Lancashire	0	58	0
Pendle Level 2 Brierfield Surface Water Management Plan	LA	Lancashire	0	85	0
Whalley Surface Water Improvement Scheme	LA	Lancashire	0	35	0
Parbold Village Options appraisal and Scheme Delivery	LA	Lancashire	0	40	0
TOTAL			5148	5716	1186

Partnership	Number of schemes forecasting properties better protected in 2025-26	Total 2025-26 Forecast	Total 2025/26 Target (for info only)	Actuals
Greater Manchester	4	84	1557	0
Merseyside	1	12	0	0
Cheshire	11	162	11	53
Cumbria	9	66	142	9
Lancashire	8	3,725	4,006	1000
Cross-Partnership	2	1,099	0	124
Total	35	5,148	5,716	1186

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Appendix E	CAPITAL EFFICIENCIES CLAIMED – OVERALL PROGRAMME (FY 21-22 TILL Q1 JUNE 2025)
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Scheme	Area	RMA	Efficiency Value (FDGiA)
Alt Breach Repair and Maghull Review	CLA	EA	£80,133
Appleby Town Centre FRMS	CLA	EA	£60,497
Caton Road Lancaster Phase 3 FRMS	CLA	LA	£421,687
CLA Recovery and Reconditioning	CLA	EA	£171,591
Cockermouth Asset Reconditioning	CLA	EA	£120,036
Cutting the Carbon	CLA	EA	£15,624
Kendal FRMS	CLA	EA	£6,959,540
Low Crosby FRMS	CLA	EA	£620,879
Pegs Pool & Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	CLA	EA	£122,074
Preston & South Ribble FRMS	CLA	EA	£1,091,069
Recovery and Reconditioning	CLA	EA	£90,254
River Calder, Padiham	CLA	EA	£35,012
Skirting & Whangs Beck FRMS	CLA	EA	£169,495
Threlkeld Urgent Culvert Repair Works	CLA	EA	£105,432
BWEM Debris Screens	GMC	EA	£67,502
ENVFinchetts Gtr RECON 24-26	GMC	EA	£6,535
ENVPCMLEighEastBedfordBrookAMP	GMC	EA	£21,947
ENVRECON2324 Mersey Assets	GMC	EA	£30,688
Irwell Vale to Chatterton	GMC	EA	£8,564
Lower Risk Debris Screens GMMC Assesments	GMC	EA	£585,626
National Coastal Monitoring Programme (Northwest RCMP)	GMC	LA	£148,208
NW Low Risk Debris Screens	GMC	EA	£800
Penketh and Whittle FRMS	GMC	EA	£403,960
Radcliffe and Redvales	GMC	EA	£230,085
River Mersey (South Manchester Catchments) Strategy Project	GMC	EA	£304,062
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	GMC	EA	£2,069,387
Sankey Brook FRMS	GMC	EA	£178,874
West Kirby Flood Alleviation Scheme	GMC	LA	£2,565,553
Total			£16,685,113

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Appendix F	INVESTMENT PROGRAMME REFRESH 2026-27 PHASE 1 FINAL BID – PROJECT LIST
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Cumbria and Lancashire Area

Project ID	Project Name	Environment Agency Area	Lead Risk Management Authority - Name	Lead Risk Management Authority - Type	County	Gateway 2	Total Project Expenditure 2026-27	Total rOM's 2026-27
2020/21-001085	Blackpool Beach Nourishment Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	14/06/2023	22,430,000	1,012
2019/20-000071	Kendal Appraisal Package Kendal FRM Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	10/04/2019	21,968,268	0
2019/20-000123	Preston and South Ribble	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	18/02/2020	17,164,000	0
2019/20-000118	River Calder, Padiham	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	04/09/2019	15,380,000	0
2020/21-000718	Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	15/03/2022	15,000,000	915
2019/20-000096	Wyre Beach Management Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Wyre Borough Council	District	Lancashire	10/03/2020	14,133,116	6,878
2019/20-000111	Millom and Haverigg Flood Alleviation	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	03/07/2025	9,233,809	0
2022/23-011639	Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	29/04/2022	8,100,187	791
2020/21-006336	Anchorsholme Coast Protection Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	15/08/2024	5,500,000	0

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2019/20-000088	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	23/12/2019	3,051,617	0
2020/21-001427	Glasson Dock Gate	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	31/03/2026	2,900,000	0
2023/24-013186	CLA Pumping Station Refurbishments	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	18/09/2024	2,700,000	0
2023/24-012605	Newbiggin A5087 Coast Road Coastal Erosion	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/08/2025	2,700,000	0
2019/20-000067	Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	18/11/2021	1,472,466	64
2020/21-000989	Burrow Beck Conveyance Improvements	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	02/06/2023	1,429,500	17
2020/21-004673	Cumbria River Restoration Package	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	01/04/2021	1,287,000	0
2023/24-012751	Garstang Gate Repair	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	07/08/2023	1,240,000	0
2020/21-001103	Darwen Central , Darwen	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	01/09/2025	1,000,000	59
2023/24-013021	Parton FCERM	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	20/12/2025	675,000	67
2020/21-000906	Stanhope Road, Carlisle	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/12/2025	600,000	72
2020/21-000882	Silloth Groyne Replacement	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	29/08/2025	600,000	0
2025/26-014478	CLA Property Flood Resilience	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	02/03/2026	562,500	50

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2019/20-000075	Skirting Beck, Egremont	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	18/09/2017	520,000	0
2023/24-012586	Harraby Surface Water Investigation	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/12/2025	450,000	81
2019/20-000085	The Sluice, Back Drain	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	03/03/2026	371,000	100
2019/20-000074	South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	27/02/2026	300,000	0
2019/20-000042	Starr Hill Sand Dunes Environmental Works	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackpool Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	14/03/2013	283,764	0
2020/21-001104	Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	01/08/2025	233,000	28
2020/21-001106	Chester Close , Blackburn	Cumbria & Lancashire	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	08/09/2025	230,000	58
2020/21-010109	Corby Weir Fish Pass Project	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	24/10/2025	200,000	0
2020/21-000880	The Tannery, Burton in Kendal Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	190,000	11
2023/24-013203	Wyre Catchment Readiness Project	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	01/07/2024	125,000	15
2020/21-008104	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	10/01/2016	100,000	0
2020/21-001362	NFM - Trawden Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	02/08/2022	100,000	0
2020/21-008102	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Cumbria & Lancashire	Lancashire County Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Lancashire	10/01/2016	100,000	0
2023/24-012588	Wigton Road, Carlisle Surface Water Scheme	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/12/2025	83,000	9

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2023/24-012594	Renwick, Cumbria	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	70,000	22
2023/24-012584	Castle Carrock Surface Water Scheme 2	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	65,000	6
2019/20-000054	Cote Beck, Halton Flow Control	Cumbria & Lancashire	Lancaster City Council	District	Lancashire	31/03/2026	65,000	0
2023/24-012582	Grasslot Street Maryport	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	60,000	0
2020/21-001357	NFM Hodder and Ribble Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	31/03/2026	60,000	0
2025/26-014351	Cumwhinton Flood Alleviation	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	57,000	10
2019/20-000116	Fleetwood and Copse Brook	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	14/07/2023	50,000	0
2020/21-001359	NFM Alt Crossens Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	12/04/2024	50,000	0
2020/21-001348	NFM - Lune Natural Flood Management Delivery	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	08/04/2025	50,000	0
2023/24-013056	Grange Coastal Defences	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	01/10/2025	37,500	0
2020/21-005451	Crossens and Redbridge (Cutting the Carbon)	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	22/01/2021	30,000	0

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2020/21-001367	Pennine Peat Partnership Upland Peat Forest of Bowland - Linked to Pennine Peat Partnership	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	31/03/2026	30,000	0
2023/24-012592	Croglin Beck Culvert	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	31/03/2026	28,000	4
2024/25-014152	Jacks Key NFM	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	30/08/2024	27,000	0
2022/23-012316	CLA Landscape Maintenance - Rickerby	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	09/03/2023	16,781	0
2022/23-012314	CLA Landscape Maintenance - Carlisle Phase 1	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	09/03/2023	10,681	0
2019/20-000069	Carlisle Appraisal Package Low Crosby	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	01/12/2021	10,000	0
2023/24-012563	ENVCLA_Janson Pool 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	20/10/2023	10,000	0
2023/24-012559	ENVCLA_RiverMede 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	01/08/2023	10,000	0
2023/24-012561	ENVCLA_Wild Boar 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	17/07/2023	10,000	0
2023/24-012562	ENVCLA_Yoad Pool 23-24	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	21/07/2023	10,000	0
2022/23-012315	CLA Landscape Maintenance - Gosling Sike	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cumbria	09/03/2023	8,915	0
2020/21-010333	ENVCatterallBridgeReplacement	Cumbria & Lancashire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Lancashire	18/02/2022	5,000	0

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2020/21-000898	Kirkland Road, Ennerdale Bridge	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	18/08/2025		24
2020/21-000897	Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	Cumbria & Lancashire	Westmorland and Furness Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	30/12/2025		15
2023/24-012627	River Annas, Bootle, Cumbria	Cumbria & Lancashire	Cumberland Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cumbria	30/07/2025		12

Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire Area

Project ID	Project Name	Environment Agency Area	Lead Risk Management Authority - Name	Lead Risk Management Authority - Type	County	Gateway 2	Total Project Expenditure 2026-27	Total rOM's 2026-27
2019/20-000081	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	10/05/2018	18,196,808	733
2021/22-011450	Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	01/04/2022	13,000,000	
2023/24-013055	River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	11/03/2024	7,989,000	
2019/20-000097	Sankey Brook Flood Risk Management Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cheshire	25/10/2024	2,761,000	0
2019/20-000082	Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	12/10/2018	2,378,000	907

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2024/25-013710	ENV Didsbury FSR Drawdown	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	31/05/2024	2,000,000	0
2023/24-013430	Liverpool City Council - Ordinary Watercourse Culverts	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Liverpool City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	01/10/2025	2,000,000	1762
2020/21-006416	Salford Flood Alleviation Improvements	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	05/06/2014	1,000,000	
2025/26-014353	Property Flood Resilience GMMC EA	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	02/03/2026	945,000	50
2019/20-000091	The Pool, Southport	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	30/09/2024	703,000	55
2019/20-000056	Shaw, Cringle, Ley and Willow Brook	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Manchester City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	22/09/2025	525,000	10
2020/21-001179	Turf Hill	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	20/10/2025	415,000	21
2020/21-001358	Poise Brook - Offerton Green and Hazel Grove	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Greater Manchester	02/03/2026	357,000	0

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2022/23-011936	Haley Road South Burtonwood Surface Water Management Project	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Warrington Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	01/11/2025	270,000	25
2020/21-001328	Timperley Brook Surface Water Management	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	30/12/2025	220,000	0
2023/24-012756	St Helens Cemetery and Crematorium Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	St Helens Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	01/08/2025	145,000	0
2020/21-008115	Cheshire-Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	19/11/2021	100,000	0
2020/21-003280	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Liverpool City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	19/11/2021	100,000	0
2020/21-008116	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Manchester City Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Greater Manchester	31/12/2021	100,000	0
2020/21-001138	Sefton Strategic Surface Water Management Plan Delivery Programme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	01/04/2024	100,000	0
2020/21-000705	Whiston Lane Flood Alleviation Scheme	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Merseyside	30/03/2026	75,000	20

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2023/24-012682	Old Mill Place, Tattenhall	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	27/02/2026	69,370	10
2023/24-012705	The Paddocks, Whitegate	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Cheshire West and Chester Council	Lead Local Flood Authority	Cheshire	31/03/2025	40,000	10
2023/24-013365	ENVGMMC RECOVERY	Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Environment Agency	Environment Agency	Cross-Partnership	13/03/2024	32,400	0

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Annual Investment Programme Refresh Cycle

April: Planning for next financial year begins, agreed programmes and associated outcome targets shared with RFCCs for reference. Timetable for annual refresh announced to RMAs and EA Area teams, and associated guidance issued



May/June: EA Area teams and other RMAs review projects in the consented programme and advise on any changes required



July: Proposed project changes and the 'refreshed' programme is shared with RFCCs for endorsement RFCC Endorsement



August/September: EA National team prepare an indicative programme for the whole country showing which projects are eligible for funding

EA National team prepare an indicative programme for the whole country showing which projects are eligible for funding



October - indicative programme is shared with RFCCs for 'local choices' to ensure local priorities are addressed as far as possible within budgets available and national priorities. RFCCs may increase programmes with further contributions from third parties or Local Levy



November / December: EA National team collate and review all 'local choices' returns and prepare final allocation programme

Just for this year there would be an extraordinary meeting on November 28th 2025 for Local choices discussion.



January: RFCCs review and consent the implementation of their regional programmes of work for the following financial year



February: EA Board approves the final allocation of capital FCRM Grant-in-Aid



March: The final programme is published on gov.uk, and final preparations are made to deliver work in the new financial year

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Appendix G

BUSINESS PLAN PROJECT PROPOSAL – PEATLAND RESTORATION FUNDING DEVELOPMENT

Vision: To increase the scale and pace of peatland restoration and associated natural flood management (NFM) across the North-West.

Executive summary

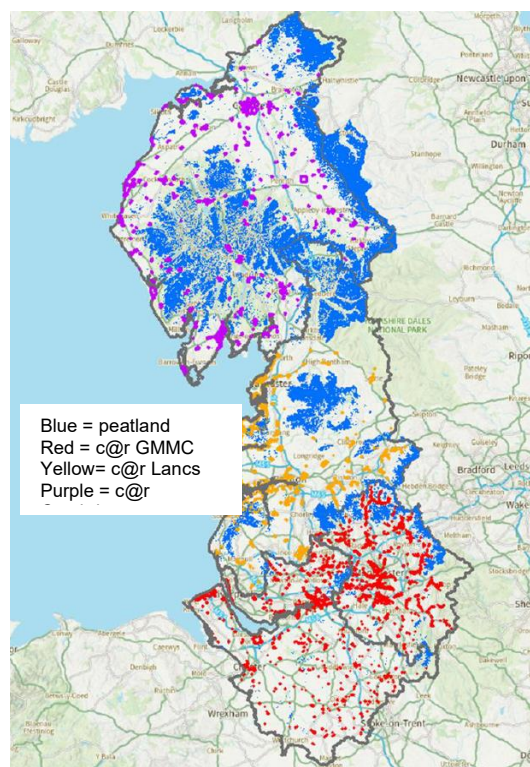
Following on from the peatland restoration presentation to the RFCC in July, this proposal requests £150k of Local Levy funding in 2026/27 to enable partners to deliver more in terms of peatland restoration, both in the short and longer terms. This small but significant amount of Local Levy will enable a larger programme to be developed and delivered. The funds will be spent as appropriate across the North-West. Given the support shown by the RFCC for progressing peatland restoration at greater pace, it is likely that this proposal will be followed with an additional proposal for Levy investment in subsequent years. However, the funding needed is unknown currently and will be dependent on the outcomes of the current national reforms of flood funding.

Background

Upland peat restoration offers significant benefits for downstream flood reduction. The peat map for the UK shows a significant area of peat in the upland areas of the North West. A significant number of the communities at flood risk lie in the valley bottoms downstream. There is good evidence of the degradation of these peat areas due to industrialisation.

Restoration is well underway and has been for many years via Cumbria Peat Partnership, Lancashire Peat Partnership, and Moors for the Future, and the umbrella of the Great North Bog.

Science and evidence from the academic sector are demonstrating the benefits of restored upland peatland to downstream communities at flood risk. Additional studies that have looked at specific NFM flood risk interventions, which include building larger stone dams in some of the more severely eroded gullies that are too large for conventional restoration, show further significant benefits for downstream flood reduction.



The estimated cost for restoring all the upland peat within the NW RFCC region is around £ 100 million. This proposal is for the RFCC to provide funding to maximise existing opportunities and help maintain and begin to upscale the ongoing peatland restoration programme, while the funding reforms become clear and those changes work their way into and through the investment programme. This is effectively the 'do minimum' option during a period of significant investment reform which will hopefully provide increased national funding for peatland restoration.

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Climate Change

According to the Government's climate change committee, there is now unequivocal evidence that climate change is making extreme weather in UK more likely and more extreme – including heatwaves, heavy rainfall, and wildfire-conducive conditions. The period from October 2022 to March 2024 was the wettest 18-months on record for England, and we have just had the hottest summer on record. The mid-emission scenario predictions for the upland areas are for river flow increases of 30 to 40% by the 2050s and 60 to 70% by the 2080s. These challenges present serious risks to people and the economy.

Funding problems

The communities at risk in and downstream of these upland areas often struggle to justify funding for conventional flood defence intervention solutions under the current funding system. This is because capital schemes can be expensive, and the isolated numbers of properties in individual communities do not lend themselves well to capital solutions. The proposed investment reforms could support NFM and peatland restoration measures, but we do not yet know what the final changes will be, there will continue to be high demand nationally for any funding, and we expect the changes to take at least a couple of years to embed, given the transition needed from the current funding policy. In the interim, partners, and we believe the RFCC, are keen to take positive action.

Multiple benefits

The multiple benefits around peat restoration are well documented. The Moors for the Future Partnership highlights that peatland restoration also provides benefits: for climate change mitigation by storing carbon and reducing emissions; for water quality improvement by filtering water on its way into reservoirs and rivers; for biodiversity, by creating healthy habitats for wildlife; and for fire prevention, as re-wetted peat is less prone to burning. Peatland restoration is an important element of the government's Green Future, 25-Year Environment Plan, to leave a legacy of environmental improvements.

Collaboration

No capital investment works in the current climate will be successful in isolation. We already have established working relationships with Great North Bog, United Utilities, Lancashire Peat Partnership, Cumbria Peat Partnership and Moors for the Future, the future needs of which have informed this proposal. Other partners within these mature partnerships bring in significant investment, including United Utilities. Esmee Fairburn are also a significant funder in Cumbria and Lancashire.

Supply Chain Delivery

Ensuring the continued availability and capacity within the delivery supply chain for peatland restoration continues to be challenging. They are reliant on funding from partners, but funding is often only for a few years and is always somewhat uncertain. This prevents the resource being developed to upscale delivery. Certainty in funding over sustained periods would help the supply chain upscale and grow sustainably.

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How much Local Levy funding is being requested?

A total of £150K of Local Levy funding is requested, in 2026/27. This will be shared equally and used differently based on specific circumstances and needs (see below), in the three sub-regional areas for peatland restoration.

Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire	Lancashire	Cumbria	Total
£50K	£50K	£50K	£150K

How funds will be used

Across the North West, the interventions needed that will help deliver that long-term pipeline are different for each area. This is because there are different levels of maturity in peatland partnerships and their restoration programmes.

In the Greater Manchester area, the restoration programme is relatively mature and well-developed having been ongoing for quite some time and with sustained water company investment.

In Lancashire, through a range of funding mechanisms including Nature for Climate, United Utilities and Esmee Fairburn, a programme of surveys and restoration work is already being planned for 2025/2026. However, to ensure the required flood risk benefits for communities, further assessment is needed to identify hydrology, location, intervention type and communities that could most benefit.

In Cumbria, 12,000 Ha of peatland have been surveyed since 2013. 5,000 Ha have undergone restoration. On the remaining 7,000 Ha, 19 restoration sites have been identified, 6 of these have funding and 13 require funding.

In Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) the £50k contribution requested will enable the Environment Agency to be a more active and influential partner within an existing wider water company and private finance-led peatland restoration and NFM programme. The funding contribution would enable us to influence and shape the programme (in terms of where peatland restoration takes place and when) and to deliver additional NFM benefits (beyond conventional peatland restoration) upstream of those communities at greatest risk.

In Lancashire the proposed £50K contribution will fund crucial mapping and modelling for peatland restoration upstream of communities at risk of flooding. This work is not covered by the other funding sources and will help the Lancashire Peat Partnership identify the best locations for restoring upstream peatlands. The data will enable partners to quickly prioritise sites, secure funding, and prepare projects for delivery, ensuring efforts have the greatest impact.

In Cumbria the funding would be used to survey, and draw-up restoration plans, to create a pipeline of peatland restoration sites that would then be able to apply for whatever funding became available and to work on landowner agreements on the already surveyed sites.

Summary

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Funding support from the RFCC to support peatland restoration right across the North West will better link the sub-regional peat partnerships and build a more strategic approach to its development, planning, funding and delivery. Learning and efficiencies will be shared across the North West. This limited funding proposal ask is the next step in helping sustain a future pipeline programme, that will create greater stability and security of funding, that will allow delivery partners to scale up and sustain themselves, to grow, expand and deliver further peat restoration. Climate change predictions show that we face an increasingly uncertain future with increased storminess, higher intensity rainfall events and periods of increased drought. We need restored upland peat moorland upstream of our communities at risk to help us buffer the projected climate change impacts and make us more resilient to those changes going forward.



NFM flood storage in some of the larger gullies (beyond the scale of traditional peatland restoration).

Salim Goudarzi, David Milledge, Joseph Holden, Martin Evans, Tim Allott, Adam Johnston, Emma Shuttleworth, Martin Kay, David Brown, Joe Rees, Donald Edokpa, Tom Spencer, 2024, Natural Flood Management Through Peatland Restoration: Catchment-Scale Modelling of Past and Future Scenarios in Glossop, UK, Water Resources Research. [link](#)

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Appendix H RFCC BUSINESS PLAN – PROJECT SUMMARIES

More details on all the projects and their outputs are available on the [RFCC SharePoint site](#).

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ACCESSING INVESTMENT AND FUNDING						
ID1	Investment mapping project	Complete	This project looked at the range of potential investment sources available for flood risk measures, primarily for LAs, collated them into a data tool, and explored options for making detailed information on these more accessible and easier to identify. Outputs have been shared, and recommendations are being explored for making the spatial data readily accessible and easy to use.	45	0	0
ID2.1	Wyre NFM Project (Investment in the dev't of innovative green finance mechs)	Green	Installation of NFM measures by the project has been ongoing and has been completed on target. Payments claimed to date have been pro rata in line with the % of NFM interventions installed (against the agreement total contribution of up to £45K per year). Inflationary (CPIH) increases have now been built into the future year's contributions, representing only a reprofiling rather than an increased allocation overall.	48	45	52
BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE						
ID5	The Flood Hub	Amber	Amber due to current issue with delay to establishing renewed contractual arrangements. Key analytics: - Consistently seeing around 25,000 page views per month, including in 2025 when it has been notably dry and warm. This represents significant growth in use of the site over the last 2 years. 431 websites now link to The Flood Hub as a trusted resource. - Popular pages: (1) 'Am I at risk?'; (Top 10) NFM, PFR, Planning & Dev't.	315	118.5	122

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
			7350 social media followers and 402 newsletter subscribers. Recent/current development work is ongoing and includes: - Broken link checks and other fixes, and improvements to access to glossary and flood recovery information. Update reviews of NFM and Community sections. Began work to update and redesign the Knowledge Hub. - Review and updated 'A Catchment Based Approach to Flood Risk Management' booklet. - Newground met with Flood Re to get clarity on Build Back Better policies and additional info has been added to the Flood Hub. - Promotion of the Flood Hub through Newground's wider network. '2024-25 Top Trumps' created and uploaded. - KS4 River Landscapes education package is in the final stages of proofing ready for upload (by end of Sept). FCRM Schemes pages: - Updates made on seven schemes including restructuring of the pages on Littleborough and creating an archive section for the scheme. - Schemes pages had 4,828 pageviews and 555 downloads in July and August.			
ID5A	The Flood Hub - National expansion	Amber	Amber due to current issue with delay to establishing renewed contractual arrangements. We are exploring a small-scale trial with Southwest RFCC to test how the site and the supporting management resource can be adapted and developed to allow more than just Northwest RFCC to use and benefit from the site. The aim is that this could lead to a sharing of the ongoing costs of	0	0	0

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
			maintaining and developing the site between RFCCs. No additional cost will be incurred by the Northwest RFCC. Southwest RFCC have approved the Local Levy funding for the trial. Current work is to put in place the necessary commercial arrangements and some initial collation/development of Southwest specific content.			
ID6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	Amber	Amber due to current issue with delay to establishing renewed contractual arrangements. 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 Newsround has been with coastal communities. Planning for engagement with coastal communities around potential adaptation remains in view of the Coastal Group and is a key strand of the Our Future Coast project.	30	10.3	10.6
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	Amber	Amber due to current issue with delay to establishing renewed contractual arrangements. Social media and focus weeks: 'Climate Change: Flooding and Coastal Change' focus week in July performed particularly well (most interactions of any campaign since Sept 2022). 'Learning Section' focus week also saw many interactions. - Current focus week campaign on storms is performing well with a Coastal Adaption focus week planned for later in Sept. Supporting communities and individuals: - Attended 7 partnership meeting and supported the EA on Crowton community flood drop-in, advising on flood recovery, insurance and	365	128	132

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
			PFR. Will be supporting multi-agency public drop-ins at Platt Bridge and Hindley to help communities flooded at New Year, and a community flood group meeting at Deysbrook in West Derby. • Made property visits to advise on PFR, on the back of contacts made at drop-in events. • Supporting residents in Stockport with developing a flood plan including on evacuation. • Responded to 27 enquiries from the public (63% in the Northwest) via The Flood Hub and provided advice. Common themes are checking flood risk when buying a new home, PFR, insurance, riparian ownership issues.			
ID8	Flood Poverty Project	Complete	Led by Rochdale Borough Council and the National Flood Forum, this project has provided better understanding of the factors affecting ‘flood poverty’ and their impact. It carried out a neighbourhood scale review and programme 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.	73.2	0	0
MANAGING WATER AT CATCHMENT SCALE WITH NATURE						
ID9	Whole catchment approach - GM IWMP Learning	Complete	An additional commission was given to the consultants (Jacobs) who supported 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.	16.6	0	0

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ID9A	NFM Technical Appraisal resource	Green	5-year collaborative agreement in place (to June 2026) with Mersey Forest to half-fund a technical appraisal resource for NFM (Rob Dyer), available to all Northwest partnerships/authorities. Project previously covered a partner contribution to Moors for the Future which concluded in 2022/23.	108.8	35	36.5
ID19	NFM project delivery	Complete	Forest Hills (£30K) was completed in 2022/23. Smithy Brook (£9K) project completed in August 23.	39	0	0
ID20	Land management engagement	Green	The Cumbria partnership in conjunction with the CiFR project have designed and will lead the ‘Landscape in a Changing Climate’ conference. The event will be held in Kendal on 9 October 2025.	0	12	0
ID22	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	Amber	This project will develop a pipeline programme of potential NFM 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 data gathering exercise on communities at risk is complete. As a result of recent developments with other projects, a change of approach/output is being considered to ensure that the outputs offer the maximum benefit in mainstreaming and securing funding for NFM. The project is therefore subject to some delay while this re-scoping is explored and concluded.	0	90	60
ID10	Evidence gathering – Climate resilience within planning & dev’t	Complete (Proposed)	2022/23 Liverpool University student projects successfully completed in January 2023 and recommendations considered by Steering Group to inform future work.	0	0	0

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
			A second round of projects was carried out in 2023/24 focussing on planning conditions and enforcement. These draft reports are still to be reviewed and summarised. Project has come to a natural conclusion and the RFCC has now lost its direct link into Liverpool University and this resource due to a change in RFCC membership.			
ID12	Action campaign – Unpave the Way	Green	This project aims to influence householder choices on the design and paving of front gardens, seeking to address the increase in impermeable driveways which contributes to surface water flooding. The 2025 work programme is focusing on developing a Householder SuDS Guide and working with LAs on how the planning process can discourage paving over with impermeable surfaces. UU are a key partner in the project and links to UU's rainwater management initiatives funded through the Advanced WINEP programme are being explored.	135	79	60
ID4/13	Data sharing and mapping of flood risk and drainage assets	Complete (Proposed)	Project was led jointly by Greater Manchester and Merseyside partnerships. Phase 1 (Audit of LLFA Asset Registers) complete and report produced. Phase 2 (Case studies and mapping of asset data sharing challenges) complete with report produced. Final report now complete and available on the SharePoint site. The project has made some potentially significant and substantial recommendations around better data sharing between partners, and the focus of work has now moved to exploring the feasibility of these between the partners. A summary presentation is planned for the October RFCC meeting.	197	0	0

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ID21	Highways SuDS Design Guide	Complete	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. Guide has now been published and is available on the RFCC SharePoint site.	20	0	0
ID14	LA capital project delivery challenges	Complete	Project complete as a specific Business Plan action. National EA initiatives and changes to process and forms have delivered improvements. Ongoing activity is now through the support of LA Capital Project Advisers and ID15 (Capacity Building Programme).	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 Advisors, 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. Wherever possible, opportunities to tap into national EA training budgets are taken so that no Local Levy is needed. No Levy funding has been required to support this project to date. A potential need for around £15K has been highlighted in 2025/26.	0	15	15
ID16	Additional capacity (to support the RFCC,	Green	Partnership Co-ordinators – all five roles filled and ongoing with funding approved to March 2027. LA Capital Project Advisers – all five roles filled and ongoing with funding approved to March 2027. Capital Programme Co-ordinator – role filled and ongoing to 2027.	1,697	682	694

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	Estimated investment need 2026/27 (£K)
	partnerships and RMAs)		Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator – role filled, ongoing and funding approved to March 2026 Partial contribution for RFCC Business Plan implementation management resource ongoing.			
ID17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - Develop business case	Green	A further programme of focussed engagement (survey, interviews, workshops) with potential interested parties to further scope and develop the proposal is now actively underway.	0	25	0
ID18	RFCC SharePoint site	Complete	Development of the site is substantially complete, and the site was launched to the RFCC community on 18 December 2024. The Investment Programme section of the site is still being developed, partly to reflect government investment reforms.	0	0	0

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING

10 OCTOBER 2025

QUICK WINS FUNDING REVIEW 2025

Recommendation: The RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup is asked to consider and endorse the recommendation that all local authorities and partnerships seek to develop a pipeline of potential Quick Win projects.

Background

Since 2015/16, the RFCC has made an annual allocation of Local Levy funding to each of its five sub-regional partnerships for small-scale, low-value projects. The partnerships determine how this funding is allocated to authorities and projects. Initially this was set at £50K per partnership. In 2020, following a local authority-led review of the guidance for the Quick Wins funding, this was increased to £100K per partnership per year. Then, due to a challenging GiA allocation for 2025/26, the RFCC increased the Quick Wins funding for the 2025/26 year only, to £250K per partnership.

This review has been carried out to review the successes, challenges and learning from Quick Wins in previous years, and to inform the RFCC's decision on the level of Quick Wins funding for 2026/27 and beyond.

Review process

The review process has gathered feedback from those involved in using Quick Wins funding and has involved representatives of all the partnerships through a review group.

The stages of the review and their supporting documentary evidence are as follows. The supporting documentation is available on the RFCC Sharepoint site by clicking on the links.

- [Terms of Reference](#) drafted, shared and agreed.
- [Review group](#) established.
- Feedback survey – live from 3-18 July. 11 results received. While a limited number, all partnerships were represented. A [summary](#) of the survey results was shared with the review group for discussion. A feedback call was held with an additional LA officer with good experience of using Quick Wins funding.
- [Record of all Quick Win projects delivered](#) to date collated and shared with the group.
- [Modelling of potential allocation criteria](#) carried out and results shared with the group.
- Survey feedback and proposals discussed during the three review group meetings. Consensus reached and final recommendations agreed.

There are three key proposals from the review relating to the following:

1. Total Quick Win funding allocation
2. Partnership allocations
3. Management and process

1. Total Quick Win funding allocation

Local authorities within the partnerships find the Quick Wins pot a highly valuable source of funding, enabling them to deliver small-scale solutions more quickly.

From the record of completed Quick Win projects collated through the review, we were able to present a summary of how much of the available funding each partnership has drawn down in recent years. This demonstrates there is demand and that capacity within local authorities is available to deliver projects.

Table 1 – Quick Win spend record (2021/22 – 2024/25)

Year	Alloc per pship (£K)	Total alloc (£K)	% of alloc spent	Quick Win funding spent (£K)					
				Total (All pships)	Cumbria	Lancs	Mers	GM	CMM
2021/22	50	250	95%	237	50	41	55	41	50
2022/23	100	500	64%	322	50	84	20	95	73
2023/24	100	500	76%	380	100	81	75	84	40
2024/25	100	500	90%	450	100	50	100	100	100

From the feedback, the previous £100K per year allocation is somewhat constrained in what it can achieve, particularly in those partnerships with many LLFAs, and given construction cost increases over recent years. The group are therefore keen to recommend an increase to the Quick Win funding. It is also recognised that the increased £1250K allocation for 2025/26 is considerably higher and can probably not be sustained and still leave sufficient space in the Local Levy programme for other types of project.

The review group has made the following recommendations to the RFCC Subgroup for consideration:

- That the total Quick Win funding allocation be **£800K per year**.
- That this is approved for **three years** from 2026/27 to 2028/29. This gives some certainty of funding supporting pipeline development while recognising that we are in the period of significant change and the funding provision needs to be able to evolve.

A Quick Win allocation of £800K would represent 17% of the current annual Levy income.

2. Partnership allocations

To date, the same amount of Quick Win funding has been made available to each of the five sub-regional partnerships.

All the partnerships have their own flood risk challenges. However, the partnerships vary considerably in their numbers of LLFAs, ranging from two in Cumbria to 10 in Greater Manchester. An even split of funding between a small number of authorities means a much simpler and more streamlined process. In partnerships with larger numbers of authorities, it is more of a challenge to allocate the funding to projects and authorities.

For this reason, the review has considered whether the funding allocation to partnerships should be made on the basis of criteria. A range of potential criteria (e.g. population, flood risk, number of LLFAs) were modelled to show what the resulting funding allocation would be. The results of this modelling are available [here](#).

The review group has put forward two options for the partnership allocation for the RFCC to determine. Depending on which option is selected, it could see partnerships receiving different Quick Win funding allocations. The review group wish to propose the principle **that no partnership should receive an allocation of less than £100K**, as previously.

Option 1 – Even split between partnerships
This recognises that while the partnership areas do vary in terms of flood risk, population etc, all partnerships have their own challenges. For example, rural areas might have fewer properties at risk but they are more dispersed, may have greater challenges with availability of contractors etc.
Option 2 – Half the allocation split evenly between partnerships and half based on surface water flood risk¹
This option provides a differential allocation of funding between partnerships which is more reflective of flood risk as well as the numbers of LAs within the partnerships while still providing a reasonably even distribution of funding across the partnerships. Flood risk from surface water was selected rather than from rivers and sea, as this best reflects the responsibilities of local authorities, who are the primary users of Quick Win funding.

Table 2 shows what the resulting partnership allocations would be from a total allocation of £800K, for Options 1 and 2.

Table 2 - Options for partnership allocations				
Partnership	Option 1 (Equal across partnerships) (£K)		Option 2 Half equally split between partnerships; half based on surface water flood risk (£K)	
	Per year	3-yr total	Per year	3-yr total
Cumbria	160	480	106	318
Lancashire	160	480	150	450
Merseyside	160	480	175	525
Greater Manchester	160	480	228	684
Cheshire Mid Mersey	160	480	141	423
TOTAL	800	2,400	800	2,400

3. Management and process

Grant forms and administration

The review has looked at the administration and grant claim process used to access Quick Win funding. There are limited ways that we can further streamline and improve this due to the need to go through the national grant claim process using the national forms. However, through the review group we have been able to share best practice between partnerships, including demonstrating how a single form can capture multiple Quick Win projects, significantly reducing the administration.

¹ The data used for the surface water flood risk element would be the numbers of properties at risk, based on the new Nafra2 dataset

Decision making

The review group discussed where the decision-making role sits in relation to how the funding is used. We are keen for the guidance to make the types of work fundable as open and flexible as possible. Exclusions will only be made where there are clear national funding rules.

It is the view of the group that the partnerships lead the decision-making on what the funding is spent on.

There is a level of assurance required by the Environment Agency, with all grant claims requiring Area Flood Risk Manager approval. However, with Quick Win projects, the EA always seek to make this assurance light-touch and proportionate and this will continue. If projects are proposed with higher value, it may be that a greater degree of assurance is needed.

Management of funding allocation

One frustration and limitation from the previous management approach was that the funding was an annual allocation that needed to be spent and claimed by year-end. If grant claims missed the year-end deadlines, the funding was taken out of the following year's allocation. It also made it more difficult for projects to straddle year-end, and could make the allocation of funding more difficult (for example, if projects totalled slightly more than £100K).

We have considered ways to improve this and are recommending that a **3-year allocation of Quick Win funding is made**, rather than a rolling 1-year allocation.

The partnerships would still be expected to aim to use more or less their annual allocation in each of the three years, but it makes managing the use and grant claims more straightforward across year-ends, and it provides the partnerships with some flexibility to spend slightly more in some years and slightly less in others, enabling it to better fit the need.

It is recommended that a **25% tolerance in annual spend** is provided to the partnerships to enable them to spend up to 25% more or 25% less than the indicative annual allocation in any one year (but within the overall 3-year allocation at the end of Year 3).

Project pipeline development

Throughout the review, a recurring consensus was the benefit of the local authorities and partnerships developing and maintaining a pipeline of potential projects. While this can still flex to allow new and urgent projects to be funded, having a more visible and shared pipeline provides a number of benefits. It:

- Ensures best use of 3-year allocation flexibility
- Provides information to inform the allocation of funding to individual LAs
- Enables more streamlined approval and claims process as multiple projects can be put on single FCERM7
- Makes projects better placed to proceed on time
- Enables the EA to provide up-front in-principle endorsement of projects

The final recommendation is that **all local authorities and partnerships seek to develop a pipeline** of potential Quick Win projects. This is not a formal 3-year up-front allocation but rather an evolving pipeline that each partnership holds and shares to support effective use of Quick Win funding.

Summary of recommendations

Total Quick Win funding allocation and management of funding

The RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup is asked to consider and recommend for RFCC approval, the following proposals:

- A total Quick Win funding allocation of £800K per year, for three years, which is approved as a three year allocation (2026/27 – 2028/29) of £2,400K.
- That the partnerships be provided a 25% tolerance in annual spend (within the total allocation)

Partnership allocation

The RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup is asked to consider, identify their preferred option for the partnership allocation between:

- Option 1 – Even split between partnerships
- Option 2 – Half the allocation split evenly between partnerships and half based on surface water flood risk

Pipeline

The RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup is asked to consider and endorse the recommendation that all local authorities and partnerships seek to develop a pipeline of potential Quick Win projects.

**RFCC FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB-GROUP MEETING
10 OCTOBER 2025
RFCC PROPERTY FLOOD RESILIENCE (PFR) UPDATE**

Background

In July 2025 the Northwest RFCC agreed to support Property Flood Resilience (PFR) projects across a three-year period.

The Local Levy allocation agreed was:

2026/27: **£675,000**

2027/28: **£900,000**

2028/29: **£1,125,000**

PFR Prioritisation:

To ensure fair and effective allocation of funding for PFR projects, a prioritisation process is being developed to assess and rank proposals. It is proposed that each project is scored against agreed criteria, resulting in an overall score that determines its ranking.

We acknowledge the tight timescales for developing this process, but this is essential to allow sufficient time for applications, assessments, and funding decisions ahead of the April 2026 start date.

The criteria were developed collaboratively by the Northwest PFR Hub Leads and Local Authorities. The consultation phase is now complete, and feedback is being reviewed to inform any necessary updates.

The proposed scoring criteria can be seen below:

Criterion 1	Highest Level of Flood Risk per benefiting properties
Criterion 2	Number of internal flooding events in the past 10 years experienced by the properties being put forward for PFR
Criterion 3	Has engagement already been had with the community members
Criterion 4	Level of deprivation of community

In addition to the scored criteria, supporting information will be collected via the application form. While not scored, this may still inform project selection.

The supporting information will include:

- Property numbers
- Partnership area
- Flooding mechanism
- Estimated flood depths
- Estimated scheme costs
- Is the community in a flood warning or flood alert area?
- Has the community benefited from PFR measures before?

- Has the community benefited from Grant in Aid funded flood risk measures before?
- Resource capacity to deliver project
- Year of delivery
- Intended delivery mechanism: EA PFR Framework, own suppliers

Feedback Summary

Thank you to all who contributed to the consultation. We received seven responses, with representation from each partnership. Below is a summary of the key feedback used for scoring.

Deprivation: Concerns were raised that some communities, though not officially classified as deprived, may still face financial barriers to investing in PFR. We acknowledge this feedback and will consider how the weighting of this criterion is applied. We continue to view deprivation as a meaningful indicator in the scoring of PFR projects.

Flood History: This criterion currently considers internal flood events over the past 10 years. Feedback suggested extending this to 15 years to align with the Flood and Water Management Act. This input will be considered as part of the review.

Level of Engagement: Concerns were raised about scoring based on prior engagement, given the challenge of engaging without confirmed funding. We will review the weighting of this criterion, however, community awareness of PFR as a potential option that they are open to remains important in year one due to the tight delivery timeline, as it can support smoother project implementation.

2012 Rule: Current policy excludes benefits for properties built after 2012 from partnership funding scores, to discourage development in flood-prone areas. Questions have been raised about whether this rule should apply to PFR funding. We ask the committee to consider its relevance for this funding stream.

Bidding Period: Feedback noted that a one-month window may be challenging for Local Authorities to prepare submissions. Due to the tight timeline for review ahead of the January committee meeting, this timeframe cannot be extended. This round will consider bids for year one and indicative proposals for years two and three. Further opportunities to apply for year two and three will follow.

Scoring: We received valuable feedback on the proposed weighting of the scoring categories. The PFR Hub Leads will be reviewing this input as part of the ongoing evaluation process.

The Northwest PFR Hub Leads will review all feedback and make any necessary adjustments to the proposed scoring criteria. Revised criteria will be presented at the Subgroup meeting on 10th October for agreement, after which the final version will be published on the SharePoint site currently in development.

Pipeline and Programme Assurance Group

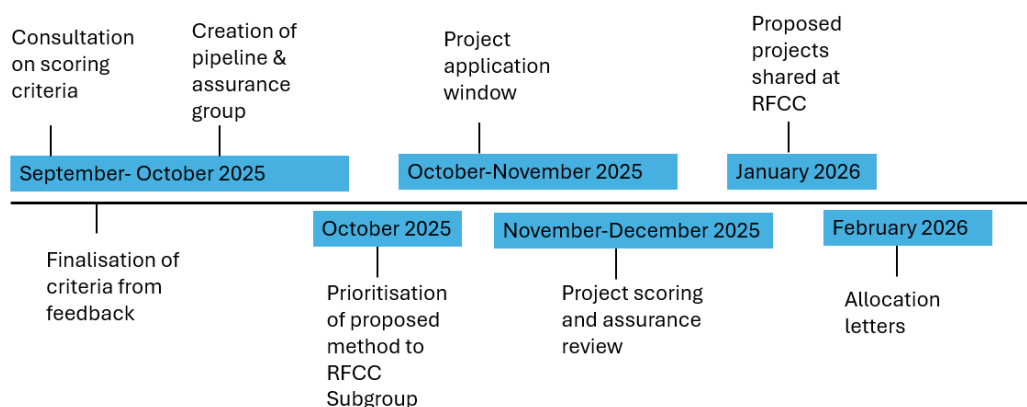
In addition to the prioritisation criteria, a **Programme and Pipeline Assurance Group** will be established to oversee the allocation of Local Levy funding. This group will ensure consistent application of processes and scoring and may support decisions where projects in the same partnership area receive identical scores.

A key role of the group is to review funding distribution across partnerships to maintain balance. A Terms of Reference will be developed to outline its role and governance. Membership is yet to be confirmed and there will be communication coming out via partnership coordinators to help identify the members.

Proposed governance representation includes:

- RFCC representative
- Environment Agency representative
- Local Authority representative

Timescales



The development timeline is outlined above. The proposed criteria for consultation have now been completed, with feedback reviewed and finalised in October alongside the formation of the Pipeline and Programme Assurance Group.

The project application window is expected to open between October and November. Once the project bidding period is set, dates will be shared with local authorities. We'll provide a document outlining the bidding process and project requirements, along with a Q&A session for any questions. Submitted bids will be assessed and scored in November and December, with outcomes presented to the Assurance Group.

In January, recommended projects will be shared with the RFCC. Following approval, funding allocation letters will be issued in February.

Sharing Information

A dedicated page will be created on the RFCC SharePoint site to host key PFR documents, including the PFR Pipeline, the Programme Assurance Group's Terms of Reference, and the prioritisation criteria.

The page will also provide guidance on the Environment Agency's PFR Framework to support RMAs seeking further information.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2025

NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT

RECOMMENDATION: The RFCC are asked to note the content of this report.
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The North West England Coast offers a variety of experiences, from lively resort towns to tranquil nature reserves and historic treasures. It is more than just a collection of infrastructure but a living thriving place made up of community, nature and driven by memories and emotional attachment. Capturing the essence of our coastal areas and providing the opportunities to allow our communities to be fully involved in the decision making required to create the places they inspire to live in. There are significant opportunities to work across council boundaries and to build the necessary understanding and trust. However, the impacts of climate change will pose challenges and difficult conversations across all communities and sectors. The Our Future Coast programme has made great progress in meeting these challenges, showing the way in community engagement, building trust and providing positive outcomes to problems that have long been avoided.

The coastal group await the outcome of the National Investment Programme following the DEFRA consultation which closed on 29 July 2025. The movement to asset condition improvement and a move to include infrastructure and welfare is welcomed. However there remains a concern that coastal and third party assets are not fully included in national databases and the fully funded grant rate of £3million does not recognise the additional costs associated with construction on the coast.

The Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (EFRA) have requested evidence on the [impacts of coastal erosion](#) and landslips to which the Coastal Group Network has provided a response. The evidence provided highlights the inevitable displacement, loss of homes and infrastructure, loss of social connection, and identity that coastal erosion causes and the lack of assistance or insurance availability. The response also emphasises that loss of environmental features, significant landscape, heritage and prime farmland are irreplaceable once lost to coastal erosion.

The work to develop the North West Centre of Coastal Excellence is moving forwards at pace. Members certainly recognise the need for greater collaboration

- Building skills and expertise, retaining and developing them in-house
- Place-based delivery for communities
- Using current resources in a more sustainable and efficient manner.
- To build a legacy on the Our Future Coast project learning and project pipeline.

Collaboration was a key theme taken by the North West at the Institution of Civil Engineers Coastal Conference in Bristol in September with papers from Coastal Group members on sharing expertise in delivering coastal defence schemes, working with communities and gaining a better understanding of the coast.

Coastal Centre of Excellence in the North West

The idea of establishing a North West Centre of Coastal Excellence (CoCE) remains in its exploratory phase, with no formal decisions made at this stage. The concept is being actively tested with stakeholders to assess its potential to support delivery of:

- The Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy (2020)
- The North West Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)
- Strategic, long-term actions to build resilience in coastal communities facing increasing flood and erosion risks

Recent engagement activity has included:

- An online survey, a workshop in July, and a series of stakeholder interviews throughout August and September
- A webinar for elected members and officers in early September, which demonstrated broad support in principle for exploring new approaches to coordination and resourcing
- Planning for a second in-person workshop on Wednesday 16th October at The Storey, Lancaster, open to both elected members and officers. This session will explore potential models, roles, and next steps in more detail.

Stakeholders have consistently expressed that “something needs to change” in how coastal management is coordinated across the North West. The exploratory phase is helping to build a shared understanding of current challenges and opportunities, and to shape thinking around what a future Centre could look like.

Further updates will be provided following the October workshop.

Coastal Group Activities

Shoreline Management Plan - SMP Refresh into Action (RIA)

Timeline: Live from 2025 through to the end of 2028.

Purpose: Deliver two key actions from the FCERM Strategy Roadmap:

- By Spring 2026: Coastal Groups will review SMP policies and actions to ensure they reflect adaptive approaches to managing current and future coastal change.
- Between Winter 2023 and Spring 2026: The Environment Agency and Coastal Groups will work with local planning authorities to ensure Local Plans account for updated NCERM and SMP Explorer, including designation of coastal change management areas.

Current Tasks

- Working with Coastal Group partners to prioritise locations for change
- Policy Change Prioritisation:
 - 34 policy units flagged for formal change
 - 53 policy units require further studies or additional information before changes can be confirmed
 - Next step: Partner support needed to rank complexity of outstanding units to help prioritise delivery
- Building proforma for management approach changes
- Linking with Habitat Compensation and Restoration Programme (HCRP) where relevant

Measure 11 – Epoch 1 Delivery Reporting

- Sharing knowledge and learning from Welsh Government SMP Epoch 1 reporting.
- Next Step: Scale up and apply approach to England for a full Coastal Group picture

SMP Steering Group

Katie Eckford, SMP Coordinator (Katie.Eckford@Sefton.gov.uk)

Susan Wilson, Natural England

Andy Shore, Environment Agency

Iain Blakeley, Environment Agency

Paul Wisse, Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme

Susannah Bleakley, RFCC Coastal rep

Our Future Coast

Our Future Coast will be losing the assistant programme manager at the end of October, a replacement advert will be available shortly. This loss is particularly unfortunate in light of the planning for an Our Future Coast conference in early March 2026.

Millom marshes report has been finalised with a list of nature based solutions options at the site. The programme team have been struggling procure farming advice to help deliver on the ground interventions from the report.

BESE grids to catch sediment to retain salt marsh have been deployed once again at Hest Bank, and will be deployed at Lytham w/b 13th October.

The team have presented Our Future Coast work and findings at the NOC conference in July, Salt Marsh Restoration conference and ICE in September.

Adaptation Pathways

Over recent months, we have continued to develop our approach to adaptation pathways as part of the Our Future Coast, aligning with Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) delivery while supporting longer-term, strategic thinking.

Adaptation pathway workshops have now been successfully completed at four sites: Hest Bank (Lancaster), Fylde Coast, Millom Marshes (Cumbria), and Formby (Sefton). These workshops followed a learning-by-doing approach, applied at the policy unit level, with the overarching aim of supporting long-term Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) delivery.

This work forms part of a wider process being established to enable a regular review of triggers, actions, and SMP policy direction every five years. It is closely aligned with the national policy change process, ensuring that local insights contribute meaningfully to broader strategic shifts.

Key Challenge:

- The next phase will focus on gaining adoption of the insights and tools developed, embedding them into both local practice and national frameworks.
- We are also exploring the potential creation of adaptation pathways for all policy units along the North West coast. This would help to keep the SMP alive as a dynamic plan, ensuring it remains relevant and responsive to changing environmental, social, and economic conditions. While the details of this process are yet to be defined, this approach would enable regular updates to ensure pathways remain fit for purpose over time.

Our Future Coast team

- Carl Green, Project Sponsor (carl.green@wyre.gov.uk)
- Ellie Brown, Programme Manager (ellie.brown@wyre.gov.uk)
- Amy Collier, Assistant Project Manager & Dissemination Lead (amy.collier@wyre.gov.uk)
- Weronika Sroka Nature Based Solution Lead (Contractor Blue Compass- weronika.sroka@wyre.gov.uk)
- Graham Lymbery, Monitoring Lead & Adaptation Pathways Co-Lead (lymbery.graham@gmail.com)
- Joseph Earl, Engagement Officer North & Engagement Co-lead (Morecambe Bay Partnership- Joseph@morecambebay.org.uk)
- Nicola Parkinson, Engagement Officer South & Engagement Co-lead (Lancashire Wildlife Trust- nparkinson@lancswt.org.uk)

I look forward to sharing the work of the coastal group with members at the RFCC meeting on the 24th October. The coastal group and Our Future Coast would like to wish Amy Collier the very best of luck in her new role and thank her for all her assistance in developing the Our Future Coast website and communication channels.

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

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee



October 2025 update from United Utilities

Recommendation: The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is asked to note the content of this report and provide any further comments

1. Introduction

United Utilities Water (Uuw) has agreed with the Chair to produce a quarterly report to better inform the Committee of any Uuw packages of work they may find relevant.

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

2. Flooding Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 21st June 2025 to the 6th October 2025. 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	4	0	0
Merseyside	0	13	0	6
GMCA	17	20	82	24
Lancashire	3	14	0	5
Cumbria	2	26	0	15

3. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

In July, the DWMP team launched our updated DWMP website that is hosted on the Uuw corporate website. Our new website is a vast improvement and provides more information on the current plan that is in development (via the 'DWMP 2028 button'), providing an overview of aspects such as how we will deliver the DWMP and who we intend to work with along the way. You can visit our website here:

[Drainage and wastewater management plan](#).

A brand new area on the website is our 'Resource Centre'; this area will be our central resource area whereby you can find out more about the DWMP in an interactive way. For example, within 'In the Know', you will find various articles covering key milestones such as the Defra guidance publication and future DWMP newsletters. We are currently developing learning modules which will be short, concise videos explaining the different stages of the DWMP – watch this space!

Additionally, you can also access our first ever DWMP that was published in May 2023 (via the 'DWMP 2023' button).

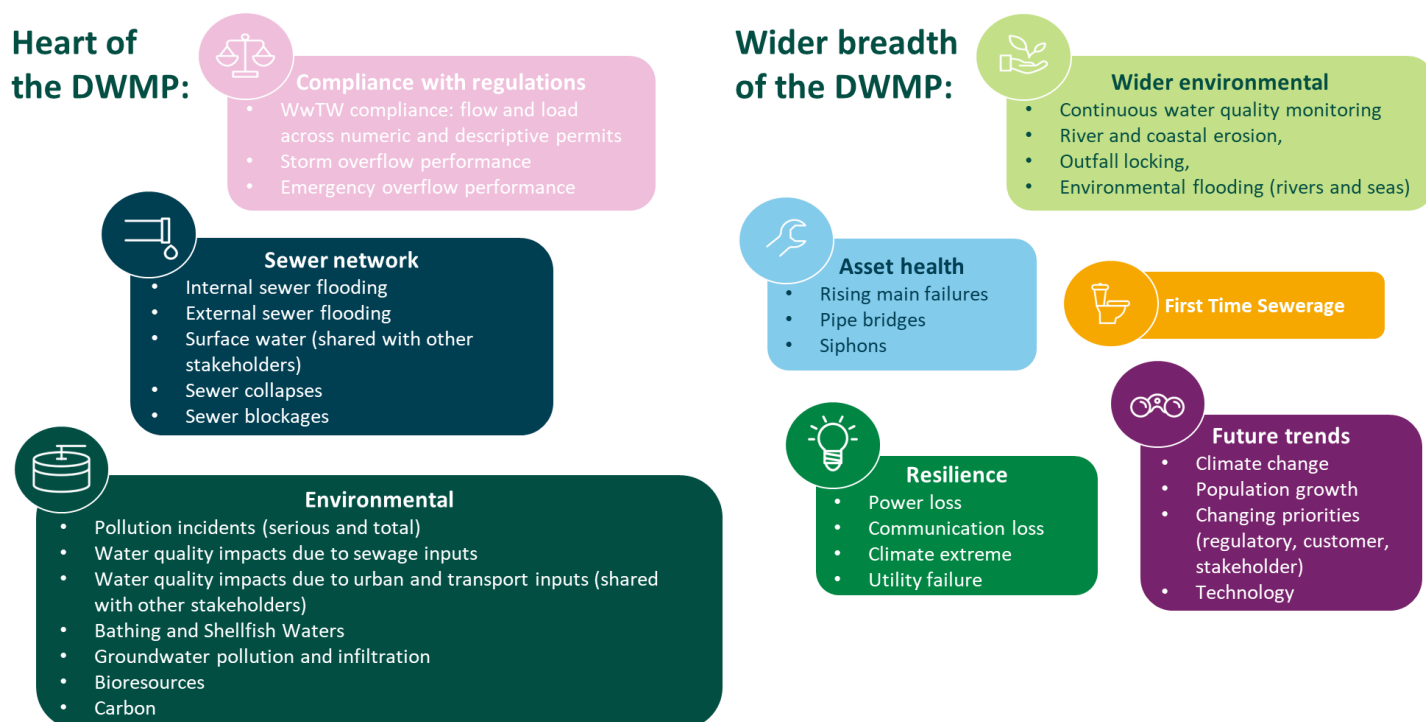
August also saw the publication of our first ever Annual Progress Report. This report provides a high-level overview of where we are up to in the development of the DWMP, and it summarises information at both a North West regional level and across the catchments for each of the wastewater drainage areas. The

report also provides an update on our AMP8 programme which will be delivered between now and March 2030.

You can read our Annual Progress report either on the DWMP28 area or via 'In the Know' ([DWMP Publication 2028](#) or [In the know | United Utilities - Corporate](#)).

With regards to wider DWMP activities, we are currently exploring the potential assessments that we will undertake to understand potential future risks and opportunities, across both U UW and other stakeholder assets. As the DWMP is a holistic plan, it will cover all elements of drainage and wastewater, as demonstrated in Figure 1 below. We will provide more information in due course once the assessments phase of the plan is underway.

Figure 1: An example of the potential assessments that the DWMP will undertake to understand potential areas of future risks and opportunities



4. Integrated Water Management

4.1 Cumbria

In early October, a Carlisle integrated water management workshop was held which brought together colleagues from five organisations: United Utilities, Environment Agency, Cumberland Council, Eden Rivers Trust and Network Rail. The aim of the workshop was to develop a common understanding of the opportunities and risks, build a collective view on future plans and identify priority areas and themes for future focus. Outputs from the workshop are currently being collated and will inform the development of a planned way forward for collaborative working towards the continued exploration of an integrated water management approach for Carlisle.

In addition, across Cumbria, we continue to focus on exploring future potential collaborative opportunities through engagement, mapping and planning activities and raising awareness of the Sustainable Water Fund.

4.2 Lancashire

Engagement continues with key organisations on refreshing, restructuring and reinvigorating the Turning Tides partnership with a place-based approach to further facilitate understanding of collective opportunities and challenges across the Wyre River catchment and Fylde coastline.

4.3 Greater Manchester

Since the previous report, the strategic summary report and action plan for Hindley IWMP activity have been finalised and published on the Wigan Council website [Flood investigations](#) in August. A community event was held in Platt Bridge on the 1st September by Mayor Andy Burnham and Josh Simons the local MP. All partners attended (UU, Wigan Council, Environment Agency and GMCA) with stalls for residents to visit and ask questions about the Hindley IWMP and action plan. An emergency response plan for temporary surface water pumping in the event of surface water flooding around Platt Bridge/Bickershaw area has been drafted between Wigan Council and United Utilities. On Saturday 20th September heavy rainfall across the region provided an opportunity to field test the plan, and Wigan Council and United Utilities are refining the plan further.

Since the previous report the Cunliffe independent review has concluded, and the GM IWMP was called out in the final report as a good example of sub-regional planning. United Utilities hosted the Ofwat Board on the 27th June and alongside the trilateral partners, provided insights and key messages on the Integrated Water Management Plan. The session resulted in great engagement across all organisations and highlighted the importance of 'place' in policy setting and decision making.

Over the summer the IWMP collaborative team has welcomed two full time analysts – Ben Brisbane on secondment into the GMCA from TfGM for two years, and James Proctor in United Utilities (permanent). This will grow the data/ digital capability within the collaborative team to support risk/ opportunity identification for water management across the county.

Collaborative monthly co-location days between the core collaborative IWMP team and the UU Rainwater Management Team have been established, alternating between UU and GMCA offices, to bring the two teams together for project updates, mapping out of processes, planning for the relaunch of the [Sustainable Water Fund](#), and linking up rainwater management with town centre regeneration and master planning activities (such as Denton) for better integration and opportunity spotting.

4.4 Merseyside

Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in March this year, another milestone has been reached with the approval of the Vision for Sustainable Water Management. Co-produced by UUW, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and Mersey Rivers Trust, the vision sets out four strategic objectives, around creating cleaner bodies of water, avoiding flooding, mitigating the impacts of sea level rise and maintaining reliable water supplies.

This Vision is a next step to an Integrated Water Management Plan, which will focus on 'key enablers' identified in the vision as necessary for its achievement.

Those key enablers are:

- **Investment:** Increasing available investment for water management

- **Resources and skills:** Well-resourced responsible authorities and partnerships, as well as having the knowledge and skills to transform the water system effectively
- **Policy:** Water management, including water resources, to be fully integrated when making key decisions
- **Data and evidence:** The gathering and sharing of data to guide and monitor activity
- **Engagement and communication:** Better engagement between authorities, businesses and residents
- **Spatial planning and growth:** Ensuring that implications for water management are considered as part of the regional and national growth agenda.

Stakeholders including the Combined Authority, the six Local Authorities, UUW, the Mersey Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency and Network Rail, have discussed the challenges posed by more frequent flooding events and worked together to produce this Vision for Sustainable Water Management.

4.5 Cheshire

Discussions continue across the county with regards to future Integrated Water Management. UUW and Cheshire East Council organised a knowledge share session with the Greater Manchester IWMP team during Q1 to help inform early IWMP thinking.

All three local authorities of Cheshire East, Warrington Borough and Cheshire West & Chester are combining to engage with UUW on the opportunities available via the UUW 'Sustainable Water Fund'.

5. Rainwater Management

As a recap on Rainwater Management; United Utilities has £50m climate resilience funding to deliver flood risk reduction in Kendal, Preston, Lancaster, St Helens, Glossop and Hazel Grove. We also have £231m funding through the advanced WINEP to reduce future storage requirements for storm overflows through removing rainwater from combined sewers across the NW. These must be delivered by 2030.

An update on current activities is listed below:

- £9m Sustainable Water Fund is open for all NW local authorities to bid for. Full details can be found online ([Sustainable Water Fund](#)).
- £400k is being provided towards the Liverpool Road, Warrington project with £490k being provided by EA grant-in-aid.
- Master plans for Rainwater Management projects in Oldham, Bolton and Preston awarded to specialist consultants. Lancaster, Kendal and St Helens, Glossop and Hazel Grove are either being written or in the process of pricing. Full stakeholder engagement plans will be constructed as part of these but contact rainwater@uuplc.co.uk if you would like to understand more.
- Feasibility has been completed for projects in Edgeworth, Hale and Denton with surveys commissioned to confirm initial options.
- Feasibility is coming towards the end for projects in Prestwich, Droylsden and Hale with survey planning in progress.
- Supporting property level projects have been completed across Prestwich, Hale, Droylsden and Edgeworth trialling incentives for property level interventions using methods such as community level incentives, one off discounts, free driveway prizes and alternative product types.

- A permeable driveway grant trial is being developed for the Prestwich area with further details to be announced shortly.
- Collaboration with the Environment Agency on projects such as Warrington, Northwich and Rochdale active and recent allocation of funding for Liverpool Road demonstrates how flexibility and agility in the programme can support co-funding outcomes for flood risk and storm overflows.
- 15 schools delivered in the summer across Manchester, Rochdale and Salford as part of ambitions to deliver over 200 Rainwater Management projects in schools. Strategies and rules around the wider programme to be announced shortly.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**24 OCTOBER 2025****RESERVOIR SAFETY REFORM (RSR) PROGRAMME UPDATE****Recommendations**

The RFCC committee is asked to:

- Acknowledge the update on the Reservoir Safety Reform (RSR) Programme.
- Participate in and encourage interested communities near reservoirs to take part in the upcoming consultation on proposed reforms.

1. Introduction

- We are delivering the Reservoir Safety Reform (RSR) Programme in response to the recommendations set out in the [Independent Reservoir Safety Review Report](#). This review followed the incident at Toddbrook reservoir in 2019.
- The report sets out the actions the Environment Agency, as the reservoir regulator, need to take to ensure the regulation of reservoirs is fit for the future. The programme is being delivered in a phased way over several years, by the Environment Agency, Defra, Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).
- Reservoirs play a vital role in safeguarding our water supply by storing water in the wetter part of the year ensuring continuity of supply when it is dry. Reservoirs are used for flood risk management, irrigation and recreation purposes, amongst others.
- A dam is the structure, usually an embankment or concrete wall, that holds water back creating the reservoir. Reservoir safety is about ensuring reservoirs, and their dams and associated structures, are constructed, operated and maintained in a safe manner.
- In England, reservoir safety legislation applies to 'large raised reservoirs' which can store more than 25,000 cubic meters (m³) of water above ground level.
- In Wales, this applies to reservoirs storing more than 10,000 m³ above ground level.
- As of June 2025, there are 2,146 regulated reservoirs in England. **Around 2.6 million people live downstream of a dam.**

- Reservoir owners include water companies, landowners, farmers, the Environment Agency and local authorities.

2. Aim and vision of the Reservoir Safety Reform (RSR) Programme

- Our vision is: 'A safety regime for reservoir dams in England and Wales which protects our communities, by making us ready for and resilient to climate change – today, tomorrow and the future'.
- The RSR Programme's aim is to deliver the reforms to reservoir management to secure public safety, both now and for future generations.
- We do this by engaging with stakeholders to help shape our approach and deliver reforms through:
 - Strengthening roles and responsibilities for reservoir owners, operators, engineers and the regulator
 - Improving safety practice and culture, through a programme of continuous development of skills, capacity and training across the reservoir community
 - Modernising legislation and safety management practice to ensure a robust, proportionate safety regime that is fit for the future

3. Consultation and reform timeline

- In **Autumn 2025**, there will be a written consultation setting out the proposals for major reforms to the reservoir safety regime and seek views from stakeholders, including owners, reservoir engineers and the public.
- In **Autumn 2026**, we will undertake further consultation, setting out the detail and proposals for bringing reservoir safety regulation into the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR).
- The Environment Agency will also, **in 2027**, consult on introducing a charging scheme to recover costs of our (revised) regulatory activities from reservoir owners.

4. Key reforms

The main changes proposed are:

- Expand what is regulated in England to include raised reservoirs holding 10,000m³ – 25,000m³, to assure the safety of smaller but still potentially hazardous structures.
- Introduce four levels of hazard classification and tailor requirements for safety management practices to these hazard classes for a more proportionate, approach than the current high risk/not high-risk system.
- Introduce a charging scheme in England (there is already a charging scheme in Wales), to enable government to recoup the EA's costs of reservoir regulation

from owners, bringing reservoir regulation in line with most other regulatory systems.

- Strengthen the responsibilities of reservoir regulators (the EA in England, NRW in Wales) including powers to review engineers' reports, to improve the quality and consistency of documentation and to use civil sanctions to deter offenders.
- Improve the supply of reservoir safety engineers, including by reforming the structure of engineer panels to support progression to senior roles.

5. Benefits of the proposed reforms:

- Reduce risk to life
- Reduce the risk of damages to property, infrastructure and the environment
- Reduce the risk of economic disruption
- Deliver fair and proportionate regulation of reservoir safety.

6. Stakeholder engagement

- We have undertaken some engagement activity already with key groups and stakeholders that helped us formalise these proposals.
- We will be organising more engagement and we are looking for RFCC members to help us with this by sharing their own views and encouraging participation from others.

7. Summary and recommendations

- The Reservoir Safety Reform Programme is aiming to deliver the reforms to reservoir management to secure public safety both now and for future generations and to modernise the reservoir safety regime.
- We ask for your support on these key reservoir safety reform proposals.
- We ask that you familiarise yourself with the proposals and publicise the consultation within your areas and encourage responses.

Paper by: Ian Hodge, Director of Standards Assets Management & Engineering (SAME)
September 2025

River Winster Rehabilitation Project

**Community-led innovation for flood resilience and
habitat recovery**

October 2025

Overview

The River Winster outflow, at the head of Morecambe Bay, had become heavily silted and constrained by damaged training walls, trapping water on farmland and degrading salt-marsh and riparian habitats. For over 25 years, local farmers and landowners faced repeated flooding with no effective maintenance route or funding mechanism.

In response, the Lynster Farmers Group (LFG), supported by Westmorland & Furness Council, Network Rail, and the Environment Agency, developed a collaborative project to restore flow, improve habitat, and trial an innovative maintenance method.

The Problem

- The river's outlet was blocked by sediment, preventing natural drainage to the Kent Estuary.
- Traditional dredging approaches were costly, environmentally intrusive, and rarely permitted.
- Local farmland, habitats, and infrastructure remained at risk from repeated tidal and surface-water flooding.

The Approach

LFG led the delivery of the first local trial of Water Injection Dredging (WID) in an estuarine environment — a low-carbon, habitat-friendly method that mobilises sediment into suspension for tidal export rather than physical removal. Complementary works rebuilt the Eastern Training Wall and installed brushwood groynes to guide flow and encourage self-scouring.

This approach combines flood risk reduction with soil and biodiversity benefits through regenerative land management and riparian restoration.

Delivery and Partnership

- Lead partners: LFG (project management), Westmorland & Furness Council, Network Rail, and local contractors (L & W Wilson, CMS Innovation).
- Funding mix: £399,000 total — including £95k Council, £140k Network Rail, £40k LFG Ltd, and a Local Levy request of £164k.
- Timeline: Habitat preparation (2023) → Licensing (Feb 2025) → Construction (May–Jun 2025).
- Over 500 supervised rail crossings and 1,300 tonnes of material moved in 11 days under tight environmental and safety controls.

Outcomes and Benefits

- Restored river flow and estuarine connectivity, reducing the duration and extent of flooding.
- Improved soil structure and drainage on farmland, supporting sustainable food production.
- A proven model for farmer-led flood management, adaptable to other catchments in Cumbria and across the region.
- Tested, and implemented Water injection Dredging (WID), WID uses low-pressure water jets to lift and suspend fine sediment, allowing the tide and river flow to carry it away naturally rather than removing it mechanically.

Jason Harte

Westmorland and Furness Council

RFCCs | Environment Agency FCERM Update

September 2025

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Weather events

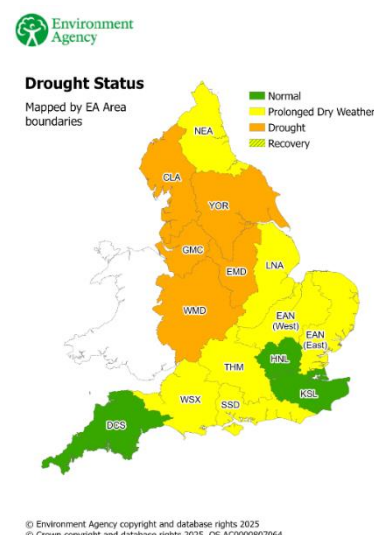
Prolonged dry weather

The first week of September 2025 was the wettest for England since the end of January 2025. However, this alone is not going to reverse the impact of 7 consecutive months of below average rainfall. With only 42% of the long-term averaged rainfall being received, August 2025 has been the driest in England since 2003 with the majority of rainfall attributed to the ex-tropical storm Erin.

Despite the heavy rainfall, there has been no change to the Environment Agency's drought status as of 8 September 2025. As highlighted by the map, our areas in drought (in orange) are Cumbria and Lancashire; Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire; Yorkshire; East Midlands; and West Midlands. Areas in prolonged dry weather (PDW) (in yellow) are North East; Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire; East Anglia; Thames; Wessex; and Solent and South Downs. Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly; Kent, South London and East Sussex; and Hertfordshire and North London remain in normal conditions (in green).

Reservoir storage levels fell by 2.5% during the first week of September to 57.5%. Stocks in the Pennines group and Yorkshire group now stand at 29.8% and 32.3% respectively, with 4 other reservoirs now below 40% full. Groundwater levels continue to recede across England, as we would expect at this time of year.

More details are available in our [Dry weather and drought in England: summary reports](#) and [water situation reports for England](#).



In response to the drought and dry weather, the Environment Agency continues to act by:

- operating our gold command structure for our national incident response
- coordinating closely with water companies to implement statutory drought plans, taking necessary action to safeguard public water supplies
- activating drought plans for those Environment Agency areas in drought and PDW status
- enhancing abstraction licence compliance checks and issuing hands off flow / level restrictions and warnings to some abstractors in areas experiencing low flows
- monitoring, preparing and responding to incidents caused by low river flows, particularly in those Environment Agency areas in drought status
- preparing dry weather advice to fishery operators to help protect their waters
- hosting regular national drought meetings

We have also increased the frequency of the National Drought Groups (NDG). The NDG brings together government and the main sectors to plan and manage strategic drought actions. The NDG last met on 15 September 2025.

We have published a blog on our preparedness to drought and the water resilience challenge on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

Looking ahead, the latest [Met Office 3-month outlook](#) published on 1 September 2025 for the period September – November 2025 predicts a higher than normal chance of a wet and windy autumn overall; an increased risk compared to normal stormy spells of weather, and a higher than normal chance of a warm autumn.

FCRM capital programme update

Withdrawal of maintenance

Withdrawal of maintenance applies to river and coastal assets that are currently maintained by the Environment Agency. It applies when we decide to permanently stop maintenance work at a particular location in situations:

- where our costs are greater than the benefits and it is uneconomic for us to continue these works
- where the priority of the maintenance work may be lower than that required to attract the funding needed to carry out the work now and in the foreseeable future

The option of withdrawing maintenance formally is not new and one of a suite of options. It is considered in low-risk areas where funding is limited, and there is no flood risk benefit to people and property. Whilst the watercourse would remain a main river, we would no longer use our permissive powers to carry out work.

We may continue to maintain and operate assets on the watercourse, such as sluice gates or gauging stations. We would also remove obstructions should they pose a flood risk to people and property.

We are currently reviewing our withdrawal of maintenance protocol to ensure it remains fit for purpose, including how we engage with affected landowners. The Wessex and Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Areas have led the way in putting this into practice.

It is important to recognise that the watercourses identified do not currently receive all or any funding through the annual allocation process. The decision to formally withdraw maintenance reflects this position not changing in the future as there are no people and houses at risk and maintenance is uneconomic.

No changes will be made to the allocation process for routine maintenance until the notice period (normally between 6 months – 2 years) has passed and all queries have been addressed.

Somerset: The withdrawal of maintenance in Somerset (led by Wessex Area) is now in the formal notice period with landowners – letters were sent out at the beginning of July 2025. During the 6 month notice period landowners can raise questions or queries with the area team. The relevant MPs have also been updated, and the item has been taken to their RFCC. There are no immediate plans to withdraw from maintenance for other locations, but this will be reviewed annually and will follow the same, evidence-based approach.

Lincolnshire & Northamptonshire: Currently in the internal planning phase to better understand which watercourses might require maintenance withdrawal. This is alongside ongoing conversations with the Internal Drainage Boards, including opportunities under the Public Sector Cooperation Agreement (PSCA) process. The area will also follow the above process, engaging with the RFCC before informing the relevant landowners. This is not expected immediately, with the potential for some this financial year but likely into next financial year.

Defra consultation on floods funding

Defra [consulted](#) on a new flood funding policy between 2 June and 29 July 2025.

The consultation gave an opportunity for partners, stakeholders and communities to have their say on how Government funds FCERM projects into the future.

The Environment Agency did not formally respond to the consultation because we worked closely with Defra colleagues to develop their funding policy proposals. We also supported the principles and options presented.

We are now supporting Defra as they finalise their policy. We expect an announcement in October 2025 which will include the final policy that will be used from April 2026.



Following the publication of the final policy, the Environment Agency will write more detailed guidance for risk management authorities on how to implement the government's funding policy. We will also ensure proactive communications and engagement to support applicants through the new funding process and the transition arrangements from the current to the new policy.

Flood services

New Flood Warning System

The current Flood Warning System (FWS) has been in use for over 20 years and will be retired by the end of 2025. A new, modern warning system has been developed to enhance efficiency, reliability, and user experience in line with climate resilience goals.

The new FWS has been tested by members of the public, organisations, partners and those Environment Agency employees responsible for issuing alerts and warnings. This has provided

valuable feedback on registration, alert delivery, usability and performance. Insights from the testing are shaping ongoing development and helping to refine the system. This will ensure the system is user-focused and effective at delivering critical alerts.

The new FWS is due to be launched in autumn 2025. Members of the public, organisations, and professional partners were provided with guidance documents, 'how-to' videos and dedicated support channels to help with the transition to the new system. In addition, over 1,000 Environment Agency staff will undergo certified training to ensure smooth adoption and effective use of the new system.

For further information please contact: NextWarningService@environment-agency.gov.uk

Working with FCERM stakeholders

Flood Resilience Taskforce

The [first part](#) of the fourth meeting of the latest Flood Resilience Taskforce took place virtually on 8 September 2025. Floods minister Emma Hardy MP chaired the meeting, which was attended by [Taskforce members](#) from across UK government, non-government and industry organisations at a local and national level. The Environment Agency was represented by Flood and Coastal Risk Management Executive Director Caroline Douglass.

The agenda included preparedness for possible flooding this winter, progress in the development of the soon to be launched new Flood Warning Service; progress made to deliver the current flood and coastal risk management investment programme, and plans to improve the insurance protection available to homeowners across the country.

The second part of the meeting took place in person on the 15 September 2025 in London. Julie Foley, FCRM Director of Strategy and Adaptation at the Environment Agency led a session alongside Professor Peter Bonfield on the property flood resilience review, talking about its progress and findings ahead of publication of the final report in the autumn.

Flood and Coast conference

The annual Flood and Coast conference convened by CIWEM, is scheduled to take place in 9-11 June 2026 at the Exhibition Centre, Liverpool. Dates are currently unconfirmed, however, are unlikely to be early June to avoid half term school holidays.

The FCRM events team are in discussion with the Exhibition Centre to review the layout and plans for the new venue, ensuring a smooth transition to the new venue.

The Rivers Trust, Association of SuDS Authorities (ASA) and the Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA) have been confirmed as Strategic Partners and conversations remain ongoing to review the Environment Agency's role as Strategic Partner for the 2026 conference.

The Environment Agency has provisionally confirmed a stand within the exhibition hall and work is underway to shape the plan of topics to showcase.

The annual Excellence Awards will take place on the second evening with plans to launch the awards categories for submission in November 2025.

Flood Action Week

Flood Action Week 2025 is planned for week commencing 13 October 2025 and will target communities at risk, with a particular focus on young people (18-24), and rural communities.

Our objectives for Flood Action Week include:

- Build trust and confidence in Environment Agency and government's actions to prepare for winter
- Raise public awareness of all sources of flood risk and the actions people can take to prepare for floods and protect their personal safety and property
- Encourage take up of flood preparation action by those in at-risk area

We will be working closely with national partners to align activities and to amplify messaging alongside a localised approach to communications to showcase local work at a community level.

A parliamentary reception is being held on 14 October 2025 to raise awareness of flooding and to strengthen relationships between MPs and the Environment Agency ahead of the winter.

Springpod – virtual FCRM work experience

Launched in June 2025, this is the Environment Agency's first Virtual Work Experience programme '[Environment Agency Opportunities – Your Environment, Your Career](#)'. It introduces young people (aged 13–18) to careers in Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM).

Developed in collaboration with Defra and Springpod, the programme offers 8 interactive modules featuring speaker sessions, quizzes, and tasks designed to build career confidence and environmental awareness.

Virtual work experience addresses barriers to traditional work experience—geography, cost, confidence, and access—by providing free, browser-based content accessible from any location.

This supports Ambition 3 of the FCRM Strategy Roadmap to 2026 (a nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change) and aligns with the 2025–2026 Business Plan by promoting education, skills, and inclusivity in environmental careers.



The content has been developed by educational specialists in the Environment Agency and is aligned to the statutory National Curriculum and t careers 'Gatsby benchmarks', ensuring content is pitched appropriately to the age of the audience. Participants receive a certificate of completion, boosting employability and visibility of the Environment Agency as an employer of choice.

The programme is freely available, and educators, parents, and advisors are encouraged to share widely to maximise reach and impact. Since the launch over 1,044 young people have signed up to the programme. Springpod will provide regular reports with EDI metrics and feedback.

For further information, please contact: STEM@environment-agency.gov.uk

RFCC chair appointment

Following the recent recruitment campaign, Defra is pleased to announce the appointments of:

- Paul Learoyd as the new Chair for the Anglian (Northern) RFCC
- Ian Collins as the new Chair for the Wessex RFCC
- Jocelyn Manners-Armstrong as the new Chair for the Yorkshire RFCC



Paul Learoyd has nearly 30 years of senior management experience in the environmental sector gained in the private and charity sector. He is currently Chair of the Humber Nature Partnership, a Director of Wildlife Fundraising (Central) Limited and is the Chief Executive of Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust.

Ian Collins is a strategic advisor and public service leader with over 20 years' experience in local government, specialising in resilience, environmental governance, and regulatory transformation. He currently works as a leadership and strategy consultant, supporting public bodies and charities on organisational development, compliance, and preparedness.

Jocelyn Manners-Armstrong is currently an independent member of West Yorkshire Combined Authority. She has over 24 years of experience in public sector roles, including in police, health and housing and a combined authority. Jocelyn has background in law as a corporate lawyer.

Events

EFRA Committee

On 9 September 2025, floods minister Emma Hardy MP appeared in front of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) committee, answering questions across her portfolio on water and flooding.



Minster Hardy was asked questions on maintaining and operating assets on watercourses, and specifically around withdrawal of maintenance notices in Somerset. The Minister offered to meet the local MP, the Internal Drainage Board and the Environment Agency to discuss the issue.

Philip Duffy and Alan Lovell will be appearing in front of the EFRA committee on 28 October 2025. The committee have announced their [future programme of work](#) for the next 12 months, which includes the theme of 'weather and climate resilience'.

FCERM publications and announcements

Flood and coastal erosion risk management report: 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 published

On 13 August 2025 the latest Flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) [report](#) was published. The Environment Agency use this report to summarise activities carried out by risk management authorities (RMAs) in England. Producing this report is a requirement of [Section 18 of the Flood and Water Management Act](#) 2010 (FWMA). This report is for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

Independent Water Commission: review of the water sector

On 21 July 2025, the Independent Water Commission published its [final report](#) following nearly 9 months of work and a comprehensive review of the water sector, including a call for evidence that gathered more than 50,000 views.

The Commission has concluded that a significant number of changes are needed to achieve this reset and has made 88 recommendations to government, including key proposals such as:

- Merging water functions across the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Drinking Water Inspectorate with Ofwat to create one single water regulator responsible for the entire water system.
- Ending operator self-monitoring and introducing Open Monitoring using digital tools for real-time, transparent data.
- Creating a statutory water ombudsman to give customers a free, fair way to resolve complaints.
- Adopting a catchment-based model for water planning, ensuring local voices are heard and pollution is tackled at the source.
- Introducing a new regulatory framework that supports responsible investment and offers fair returns to investors.

The Secretary of State has already announced that these recommendations by the Water Commission will be fast tracked. We then expect the Government to publish a full response to the Commission's findings, a transition plan, and a consultation on key proposals this autumn.

Flood scheme openings and updates

- [£15 million refurbishment on Boston's Grand Sluice begins](#)
- [Bridgwater school celebrates sustainable drainage project launch](#)
- [Update on Bradford-on-Avon flood alleviation scheme](#)
- [Environment Agency completes £75m Canvey Island flood scheme in Essex](#)

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Environment Agency

National FCRM Business and Stakeholder Management Team

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September 2025