

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

FRIDAY 23 JANUARY 2026, 10AM – 1PM

Virtual Meeting via MS Teams

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 on 24 October 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.	Recent flooding incidents (Information Item A) To share reports on, and to discuss flood incidents across the North West in the last quarter.	For information and discussion
10:20	4.	A Reflection on 10 years since Storms Desmond and Eva (December 2015) <i>Presented by Nick Pearson, EA FCRM Manager, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire and Richard Knight, EA FCRM Manager, Cumbria</i>	For information and discussion
10:40	5.	Report from the RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group (Papers + Information Item C) To discuss and consider the recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group. <i>Introduced by Terri McMillan, RFCC F&BASG Chair, Adam Walsh, EA FCRM Programme Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L) and Sally Whiting, EA RFCC Senior Advisor, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC)</i>	For information and discussion and approval
11:00	6.	Investment and Resource Maintenance Programme 2026/27 – for consent (papers) <i>Introduced by Adam Walsh, EA FCRM Programme Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)</i>	For information and discussion and approval
11:15		BREAK	
11:25	7.	(RFCC Business Plan) Asset Data Sharing and Mapping – Update on exploring project recommendations <i>Presented by Jill Holden, Greater Manchester Partnership Co-ordinator and Sarah Wardle, Merseyside Partnership Co-ordinator</i>	For information and discussion
11:45	8.	NaFRA2 Update <i>Presented by Marina Powell Currie, EA Senior FCRM Advisor (C&L)</i>	For information and discussion
12:10	9.	United Utilities Update (Information item D) <i>Presented by Amy Cooper, RFCC Member – Water and Sewerage Industry</i>	For information and discussion
12:45	10.	Coastal Update (Information item B) <i>Presented by Carl Green, NW and North Wales Coastal Group Chair and Susannah Bleakley, EA RFCC Member – Coastal Issues</i>	For information and discussion
12:55	11.	Any Other Business	
13:00		CLOSE	

INFORMATION PAPERS

Info Item A	Flood Incidents Report	NW RFCC specific
Info item B	Update from the North West and North Wales Coastal Group	NW RFCC specific
Info item C	Papers from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting	NW RFCC specific

Info item D	Quarterly Update from United Utilities	NW RFCC specific
Info item E	National FCRM Update Paper	National EA
Info item F	Project Aurora Update	National EA

Future RFCC meetings

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

10 April 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
 26 June 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
 9 October 2026 (Virtual Meeting)
 8 January 2027 (Virtual Meeting)

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 24 October 2025

Held at Halliwell Jones Stadium, Warrington

Attendees:

Members

Adrian Lythgo, Chairman
Councillor Giles Archibald, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Jane Hugo, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Alan Quinn, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Philip Cusack, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Elizabeth Grey, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Mark Goldsmith, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Sam Naylor, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Terri McMillan, EA Appointed Member – Business and Assurance
Chris Findley, EA Appointed Member – Development and Sustainable Investment
Carolyn Otley, EA Appointed Member – Communities
Amy Cooper, EA Appointed Member - Water and Sewerage Industry
Carl Green, Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group

Environment Agency Officers:

Ian Crewe, Area Director, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC)
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)
Sally Whiting, Senior FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Andy Tester, FCRM Programming Manager, GMMC
Rachel Harmer, RFCC Secretariat
Gary Hilton, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor, GMMC

Local Authority Observers (Councillors and Officers):

Jason Harte, Westmorland and Furness Council
Ali Harker, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Nick Rae, Cumberland Council
Clare Nolan-Barnes, Blackpool Council
Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Jill Holden, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Jim Turton, Warrington Borough Council
Matt Winnard, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Paul Wisse, Sefton Council
Guy Metcalfe, Cheshire East Council
Dan Matthews, Cheshire East Council
Sharma Jencitis, United Utilities (UU)

Presenters:

Katie Eckford, NW RFCC Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator
Tom Doyle, Senior Engineer, Arup

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

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

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

- Paul Wisse representing the Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on behalf of Councillor Daniel Barrington.
- Clare Nolan-Barnes representing Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on behalf of Councillor James Shorrock.
- Councillor Giles Archibald may need to leave the meeting early and if so has nominated Jason Harte to represent the Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on his behalf.

Adrian conveyed apologies from: Councillor James Shorrock (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Daniel Barrington (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Kate Morley (RFCC EA Appointed Member – Conservation); Susannah Bleakley (RFCC EA Appointed Member – Coastal Issues), Carol Holt, EA Area Director (Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)) Fiona Duke, EA Area Flood Risk Manager (Lancashire) and Adam Walsh, EA FCRM Programming Manager (C&L).

Adrian advised no declarations of interest had been received.

Terri McMillan and Councillor Sam Naylor were both welcomed to their first RFCC meeting. Each RFCC Member introduced themselves for the benefit of those in the room. Tom Doyle, here to co-present the Asset Data Sharing and Mapping Project was also given a warm welcome.

Adrian highlighted his quarterly Chair's report shared with Members on 29 September and advised there have been a few national developments since then. Members noted there is no quarterly flood incidents report this time due to there being no significant flooding to report, although operationally teams across the Environment Agency (EA) and Local Authorities (LAs) have been very busy. He noted that even when there have been no reports of internal flooding it does not mean there hasn't been, it just means that our teams have not been made aware.

He highlighted the recent Flood Action Week, covered in activities and press coverage both regionally and nationally. There has been a large focus on Property Flood Resilience (PFR) with the launch of a national paper by Professor Peter Bomfield, called Flood Ready 2025, and a regional launch around Property Flood Resilience (PFR) at Lancaster University and a visit of the Flood Mobile supported by Flood Mary.

He touched on recommendations made recently by the Environmental Audit Committee around increasing Government spending on flood risk management and taking an even more strategic and integrated approach to flood resilience. Adrian highlighted the information Papers and particularly the quarterly report from United Utilities (UU) which includes an

update on their now statutory Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) and updates on their work in the five sub regions.

Members also noted the information paper on the outcome of the work by the Lynster Farmers Group on the River Winster Rehabilitation Project in Westmorland and Furness, partly funded by the RFCC. A brief presentation will be provided later in the meeting.

25 (32) Minutes of the RFCC meeting held on 11 July and matters arising

The minutes of the 11 July RFCC meeting were proposed by Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and seconded by Councillor Alan Quinn.

No comments or questions were raised.

The minutes of the 11 July 2025 RFCC meeting were approved by the Committee.

25 (33) Government response to the consultation on reforming our approach to floods funding

Following the extensive Investment Reform consultation in June and July this year, the final flood funding policy was published on 14th October. Nick Pearson provided Members with a summary overview of the Government's response.

Members noted:

- Investment is being targeted where it's needed using flood risk data such as NaFRA2 along with local insights, therefore using a consistent form of data to inform investment decisions.
- The aim to simplify the process and speed up the project lifecycle.
- The switch towards investing more in natural flood management, flood resilience and refurbishment of existing assets, with less funding for more traditional defence type projects.
- That the policy will be reviewed in three years' time.

Members noted the three parts of the revised funding policy:

- Funding eligibility
- Prioritisation by value for money
- Strategic objectives

Changes to the investment programme metrics was also summarised.

Adrian commented that the new policy contains many changes the Committee will broadly welcome and will be pleased to see a new, more flexible approach coming in, which will simplify the system alongside ongoing very significant funding investment in flood defences.

With more projects being eligible for more funding, he highlighted that there will now be more competition for investment. The funding allocation for 2026/27 will be the largest the North West has ever had but there will continue to be challenges with some projects unfunded. Members recognised the changes in policy won't by themselves immediately address all the

flood risk there is and welcomed the national capital money going to refurbish assets across all Risk Management Authorities (RMAs), provided that they have been maintained properly to date.

Adrian advised the final question in the consultation was about the extent to which local Committees could have more influence through local choices, something supported by all committees nationally. The outcome is that currently Committees don't have any more explicit influence than they had under the previous policy and there are now a number of things which are now nationally driven. Defra themselves have highlighted that there's more local choice, as less Local Levy will be devoted to supporting national capital investments.

Carolyn Otley commented that £300 Million for Natural Flood Management (NFM) sounds good but when considered within the wider context it begins to look slightly less ambitious. The allocation for deprived communities is similar.

Councillor Giles Archibald enquired about partnership funding, who the partners will be that we will need to raise funding from and who will be approaching businesses about this issue. Adrian Lythgo advised the largest partner in this space is United Utilities (UU). Beyond that it is clear this funding needs to be non-government funding. He advised the RFCC's approach to this has always been bottom up and the best way to source partnership funding is through local teams and through existing local relationships with support from councillors. Adrian added that if there is anything the Committee can do in a strategic sense to support that activity, then to come back with suggestions.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin welcomed the changes but raised her concern about how this funding policy will sit alongside devolution and believes there is still much central control, however people still need to be able to get on with the work. She also raised concern about the £3 Million and 90% rules with regard to coastal schemes and questioned how expensive coastal schemes are going to be delivered. Carl Green shared her concerns.

Adrian advised the call for evidence part of the consultation is longer term and as yet there has been no guidance from Government on their thinking about future changes and how RFCCs might work in a different way with elected Mayors and the Mayoral Combined Authorities. He added that the existing NW RFCC arrangements have been developed explicitly to work with sub regional FCERM partnerships including mayoral arrangements where they exist in the north west.

Members noted the changes the new funding policy will bring in and acknowledged the need to continue to work together and press the issues with regard to implementation and how it will work in practice.

There were no further comments or questions.

As new Chair of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group, Terri McMillan reflected that the Subgroup meeting on 9 October had been interesting and many items had been discussed.

Andy Tester presented on the investment programme, first advising Members 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. He 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 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.

A brief overview of the investment programme for the current 2025/26 year was provided, covering the forecast for properties to be better protected against the North West target. Members noted 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 covered the funding that has been allocated (including FCRM GiA (Grant in Aid) and Local Levy) and latest spend forecasts, which shows 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 the North West have struggled to reach our targets year on year. This year we have seen an increase over previous years and so whilst it has been a slow start, we are starting to make some ground and there are some live submissions which are making their way through the process.

Members were advised of risks to the programme including:

- National RDEL overspend may impact local flexibility.
- Efficiency savings remain significantly below target (40% shortfall), potentially risking future funding.
- Delay to Local Choices may impact scheme progression and affect delivery confidence.

Resource Maintenance Programme 2025/26

The spend forecasts for both C&L and GMMC are in line with budgets and with no over-programming permitted.

Both North West EA Areas have a 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 having a very high 97.7% target. They are currently achieving 96.6% of assets at the right condition, but there is a lot of reconditioning work required right now and the assets are challenging and complex to fix. For GMMC area, 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. It was noted that both areas are actively working to meet their targets and opportunities and challenges for both areas were shared.

Andy Tester described the annual capital programme refresh cycle for all RMAs advising that the national process is currently a few weeks behind where it would normally be, but which is expected to complete to schedule.

Members received key headlines relating to this year's Local Choices which will be the subject for the additional meeting on 28 November:

- Funding bids submitted as part of this year's annual refresh have far exceeded available budgets.
- This year's allocation for 2026/27 is the first allocation of a 3-year programme
- The indicative allocation received was on 1 October 2025

The national criteria for Local Choices, which significantly limits the degree of choice for the RFCC, was also provided.

Andy reported that 90 schemes had submitted funding bids, with 49 receiving an indicative allocation and 41 with no GiA funding in 2026/27.

The total North West bid was for £221 Million and the indicative allocation received was £155 Million - £66 Million less. Andy advised that it is important to note that the North West received the highest allocation of all RFCCs across the country. It is the large number of schemes in construction which are taking up much of the allocation.

Andy Tester highlighted the additional RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group meeting scheduled for 28 November to consider and approve Local Choices, advising that conversations have already commenced and will be in progress until 14 November to inform the meeting.

Adrian Lythgo asked Members to formally delegate full decision-making powers to the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group for Local Choices at the 28 November meeting. This was approved and there were 13 votes in support of this.

There were no further comments or questions.

Local Levy Programme

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.

Members 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.

Resolved: The North West RFCC:

(2025/26 investment programme)

- Noted the formal name change from 'capital programme' to 'investment programme' and the additional management and 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).
- Noted the progress on delivering the 2025/26 investment programmes.
- Noted the pressure on RDEL projects and potential impacts on the Local Levy programme.

(Investment Programme Refresh/Local Choices)

- Noted the details of the submitted Phase 1 funding bid (submitted on 31 July 2025)
- Formally delegated full decision-making powers to the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group for Local Choices at the 28 November meeting.

(Local Levy Programme)

- Noted the update in delivering the 2025/26 Local Levy programme

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.

She touched on information in the report on the Amber rated projects where issues are being resolved.

She reported two completed projects for this last quarter: Planning and Development Evidence Gathering (ID10) and Asset Data Sharing and Mapping Project (ID4/13).

Sally provided an overview of a reprofiling of the Local Levy funding across years for the Wyre NFM Project.

There was one new Local Levy request for this meeting round - £150K for funding development of peatland restoration across the North West, which had been considered and recommended by the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup. Sally summarised this work, which will help to maximise existing opportunities and help to maintain and upscale the

ongoing peat restoration programme across the North West. This will be a £50K allocation to support the peatland restoration programmes in each of Cumbria, Lancashire, and GMMC, working with the established peat partnerships.

Vote: Approved: There were 13 Members in support of this £150K Local Levy funding request.

Resolved: The North West RFCC:

- Noted the Business Plan update report including the issue relating to projects ID5/5a/6/7.
- Noted the funding reprofiling for the Wyre NFM project (ID2.1)
- Formally recognised the completion of projects:
 - Asset data sharing and mapping (ID4/13)
 - Planning and development – Evidence gathering (ID10)
- Approved the investment of £150K of Local Levy in 2026/27 for the Peatland Restoration Funding Development Project.

Members were reminded 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 a supporting meeting paper, along with an overview of the feedback from the consultation. Sally Whiting provided a summary of the North West Property Resilience Project methodology of criteria category and proposed weighting calculations.

There were 13 votes of approval of the use of the 4 prioritisation criteria and the proposed weighting.

There were 13 votes of approval that the 2012 funding rule (which prevents funding of measures for properties built after 2012) should not apply to this funding pot.

Resolved: The North West RFCC

- Supported the use of the proposed 4 prioritisation criteria and the proposed weighting.
- Confirmed that the 2012 funding rule should not apply to this funding pot.

RFCC Quick Wins Funding Review

Sally Whiting provided an overview of the Quick Wins funding review, which had been 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.

Members received several 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, secondly, for this to be a formal three-year funding commitment (£2.4 Million over the next three years). 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 developed but also allows greater flexibility for the partnerships to manage their Quick Wins programmes in line with project investment need, and removes issues 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.

On the allocation of funding across the partnerships, Sally confirmed that previously the funding has always been equally split across the partnerships. A range of different allocation criteria (e.g. population, flood risk, number of LLFAs) have been considered and modelled as part of the review which would result in a different allocation to each partnership. The degree of difference in allocation between the partnerships was a specific consideration (given that data and criteria don't always accurately reflect challenges in addressing flood risk on the ground).

Two options for the partnership allocation methodology were proposed:

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

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 reported that the recommendation from the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup was to support the recommended proposals from the review, and to support Option 1 on the partnership allocation options.

She also reported the final recommendation from the Subgroup that the final decision on increasing the Quick Win funding should be taken to the additional Local Choices meeting on 28 November.

Resolved: The RFCC:

- Supported a Quick Wins (Local Levy) funding allocation equivalent to £800K per year
- Agreed for this to be formally recognised as a 3-year allocation (from 2026/27 - 2028/29)
- For the funding to be shared equally across the five partnerships (Option 1)
- Approved that these recommendations be taken to the additional meeting on 28 November for consideration as part of the wider Local Choices exercise.

There were no further comments or questions.

Adrian Lythgo reminded Members this is the annual formal Local Levy vote where LLFA RFCC Members are asked to consider and vote on the rate of Local Levy funding for the following year (2026/27). This vote takes place in October every year, to provide Local Authority Finance Directors time to feed this into budget preparations for the 2026/27 financial year.

Adrian reminded Members of the wide uses that the Levy is put to and summarised its key uses including contributions to flood risk schemes as part of partnership funding, the funding of revenue resources to allow important work to be done, including Business Plan projects, and it provides our programme of work with flexibility and momentum, which we would not have otherwise. He advised he is always aware that Local Authorities are making a conscious decision to support flood risk investment in their local areas and there is a large opportunity cost to Local Authorities as this forms part of their Council Tax threshold.

Adrian advised of the nominated substitutes by LLFA Members' unable to attend today's meeting and asked for Members to confirm they were happy with the nominations to take place in the voting procedures:

- Paul Wisse nominated by Cllr Daniel Barrington of the Merseyside Strategic Partnership Group
- Clare Nolan-Barnes nominated by Cllr James Shorrock of the Lancashire Strategic Partnership Group

Members confirmed they were happy to support these nominations.

He advised from discussions with Members in advance of this meeting that there are different views in each of the sub regional partnerships about how they would like to proceed for next year and he gave LLFA Members the opportunity to make any comments.

Councillor Giles Archibald commented that all councils are facing severe financial constraints, but recognised a disaster will happen unless we act decisively on all aspects of the environment. He advised with a predicted 40% increase in rainfall and more than that in terms of river flows, there will be severe consequences if we're not doing enough. He advised the Cumbria Partnership are willing to go up to a 4% increase in Local Levy contributions.

Councillor Alan Quinn noted many schemes will get 90% of their funding requirements, but the rest will fall to partnership funding and Local Levy contributions. He advised the situation in the North West will only get worse. He advised that all councils are under pressure with austerity/ He reported that the Greater Manchester Partnership supports a 5% increase in Local Levy contributions.

Councillor Jane Hugo advised there had been some difficult discussions regarding this and Lancashire are only able to support up to 2.7% increase in Local Levy contributions.

Councillor Elizabeth Grey advised the Merseyside Partnership were able to support a 3% increase in Local Levy contributions.

Councillor Mark Goldsmith of the Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership advised they wish to see no increase in Local Levy contributions for next year.

Adrian advised voting procedures will commence with a vote on a 5% increase and then work down from that.

A 5% increase in Local Levy funding was supported by all three members of the Greater Manchester Partnership only. Seven LLFA Members voted against this.

A 4% increase in Local Levy funding was supported by all three members of the Greater Manchester Partnership and Councillor Giles Archibald from Cumbria. Six LLFA Members voted against this.

Adrian then asked if anyone would like to propose a 3% increase. Councillor Elizabeth Grey formally proposed a 3% increase, which was seconded by Councillor Giles Archibald. Six Members in total supported this, Councillor Jane Hugo and Clare Nolan-Barnes abstained from voting and Councillor Mark Goldsmith and Councillor Sam Naylor voted against 3%

By majority the Committee voted that the Local Levy for 2026/27 should be increased by 3%.

On behalf of the Committee Adrian thanked the LLFAs for this support as he is very aware of the opportunity cost of the investment and extreme pressures in every council, but some even more than others.

Resolved: The Committee:

- Agreed a 3% increase to the Local Levy for 2026/27
- In accordance with section 23(3) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 it was agreed that the sum of £4.821 Million be met from the levy in 2026/27 and that the Environment Agency issue a levy under section 17 of that Act on those County and Unitary Councils shown below, whose areas are situated in whole or in part in the area of the Environment Agency's North West Flood and Coastal Risk Management Region for the financial year 2026/27. The levies made on those councils shall be paid by them in four equal payments on 1 May 2026, 1 July 2026, 1 October 2026 and 1 January 2027.

County Councils:

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

Unitary Authorities:

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

There were no further comments or questions.

25 (36) RFCC Business Plan – Project Findings

Planning and Development Evidence Gathering (ID10)

Adrian advised one of the ambitions in the RFCC Business Plan is achieving climate resilient planning, development and infrastructure, and one of the strategic aims that we've set for ourselves is to build increasingly strong links between LLFAs and local planning authorities (LPAs), who have a key role to play in ensuring that new developments remain resilient to climate change, and future flood risk is taken account of in planning decisions. He highlighted we already know that there are challenges of resource and capacity and skills within LPAs and we wanted to understand the degree to which that was a real constraining factor within the system.

Sally Whiting advised through David Shaw (former RFCC Member and former professor in geography and planning at Liverpool University), we enlisted the work of students to carry out evidence gathering projects as part of a Planning in Practice module (Year 4) of their Planning Masters degree.

Members were advised the North West wide project was a 2-year initiative. The projects carried out in 2022/23 were:

- Project 1 - How local planning authorities deal with flood risk management issues in decision-making
- Project 2 - Understanding the important factors taken into account when a local planning authority seemed to disregard the advice of the Environment Agency
- Project 3 - The role of planning consultants in minimising flood risk in major new developments

The commission for the 2023/24 projects was to evaluate the extent to which planning conditions are used to address various flooding concerns and the mechanisms by which such conditions are effectively discharged. Five project groups each focussed on one of the sub-regional partnership areas.

Members received a brief summary of the findings of each of the projects along with the students' recommendations of what could help moving forwards.

Members noted in general there is wide support for the implementation of Schedule 3, which is still awaiting the Government's final decision, along with the note that this will need adequate resources and training.

Overall, Chris advised the system is working pretty well but there are improvements that can be made and lots of change going ahead in the Planning field. He advised protection around flood risk is hugely important and we need to keep an eye on this moving forwards.

Councillor Giles Archibald enquired about contaminated flooding and described this as a huge issue in Cumbria. Chris advised that this issue had not been part of the project.

Councillor Alan Quinn raised an issue with developers either entirely missing or installing incorrect connections to the sewer network during building works.

Councillor Philip Cusack enquired about the implementation of Schedule 3 in Wales. Sally Whiting advised there is evidence and lessons learned from its implementation in Wales and there is a clear contrast around the robustness in Wales against what we have in England, of which the details can be made available.

Councillor Mark Goldsmith raised a concern about the lack of strength of local plan guidelines within his council area allowing developers to appeal against requirements. He recognised the concerns of residents about new development and flood risk and asked about how they can strengthen the basis for decision making.

Adrian Lythgo stated that this was a factor that the RFCC had considered after some work in Lancashire, concluding that if Schedule 3 were to be implemented, this would change things considerably, but as it hasn't been, we are limited to operating within the current arrangements and what local plans can achieve.

Chris Findley remarked to recognise the role that local planning authorities can play in taking account of flood risk and ensuring that new development is appropriate and protected, citing an example from Salford where he used to work. A lot of it is down to the detail of local planning, not just about the general policies.

Adrian Lythgo also recognised another factor around how whole catchments and floodplains are planned, recognising a role for regional system planners and some of the other things that the government is starting to consult on with respect to the future of water industry regulation.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin asked whether this relates to fluvial flood risk and surface water flood risk and what we do with this piece of work next to ensure that the outcomes have a legacy. Chris advised fluvial flood risk and surface water flood risk both need to be taken account of in the planning system. He advised a lot is happening in the planning system right now and new national SuDS standards have just come in and advised that it may be beneficial to wait and take a look at this in a year's time to see if and how these measures are being implemented.

Adrian Lythgo advised that we may look to see if there is more good practice to facilitate in this space.

Asset Data Sharing and Mapping Project (ID4/13)

Jill Holden and Tom Doyle provided an overview of the project for Members.

The project, looking at taking a collaborative approach to asset management and maintenance has been a joint initiative by Greater Manchester and Merseyside partnerships, funded through the NW RFCC Business Plan. It aimed to identify solutions to overcome the barriers and challenges in managing asset registers, building strategic relationships between asset owners to better share and map asset data, enabling more collaborative and sustainable maintenance and management of the assets into the future.

Members noted a number of challenges and complexities in collectively managing the assets that form a drainage system including:

- Complexities around drainage asset ownership presents a major obstacle in ensuring the proper stewardship of assets.
- Maintenance regimes and resources required to manage these assets are often underfunded and can be significant in their financial burden.
- Within Local Authorities maintenance funding is competing against other Local Authority priorities.

- A reluctance to take or discharge responsibilities where ownership is unclear.
- Where 3rd party ownership is known, RMAs are not always adequately resourced to pursue enforcement action where inadequate maintenance is contributing to a flood risk.

Tom Doyle described the different phases of the project, stakeholder engagement and summarised a number of data sharing challenges.

Members noted the costs and benefits of data improvements and desired outcomes along with details of collaboration opportunities.

Jill presented the key recommendations from the project including:

- Creating a Data Lead role - to drive data improvement and sharing between partners.
- Establishment of a data institution – develop a regional framework OR align with national framework (if progressed).
- Pilot Project – Undertake a small-scale pilot project to trial shared access to a common data platform.
- Joint procurement – Further explore opportunities for joint procurement of key services and activities identified.
- Disseminate findings of this work via the RFCC and appropriate forums.

Members noted a further update will be brought to a future meeting once further consideration of the scope of the potential pilot project has taken place.

Adrian thanked Jill and Tom for their update. There were no further comments or questions.

25 (37) ‘Landscape in a Changing Climate’ conference reflections

On behalf of the Cumbria Strategic Partnership, Ali Harker provided an overview of the 9 October ‘Landscape in a Changing Climate’ conference. This initiative was funded through the North West RFCC Business Plan and brought together with support from RFCC Members and the CiFR project to share learning about how the landscape is changing as a result of the changing climate.

During the day there were two event sessions including:

Session 1 – how the changing climate drives our thinking, where presentations were provided by United Utilities (UU), EA, Durham University and Network Rail.

Session 2 – Changing climate: shared challenges and shared solutions, where presentations were provided by Forestry England and Lancaster University.

These were followed by discussion groups to improve resilience focussing on a few selected locations in Cumbria, and on what role the RFCC could play in enabling and facilitating better collaboration.

Members noted the event had been well attended with 110 attendees representing 56 organisations, with a number of exhibitors also generating further conversations and debate.

In terms of outcomes, 98% of attendees cited the event worthwhile advising knowledge transfer and networking as some of the main benefits. Attendees noted there was real recognition that ‘The whole is greater than the sum of its parts’, and that collaboration is vital if

we are to respond to climate change impacts and harness the power within our natural landscape.

Ali advised the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs), the EA and the CiFR project will now work together to review the outputs from the workshops, alongside new information from the flood funding reform, to identify potential follow-on actions.

The event findings will be published on the Flood Hub and a link to this will be sent to all event attendees over the next couple of weeks. Outcomes and actions from the place-based workshops will be reviewed and worked through to see what can be progressed through partnership working.

Adrian thanked Ali for her presentation advising there has been real practical benefits of this event, which is why the Committee are hearing about it in terms of getting land managers together, including national landholders. He advised if land management is a significant part of the solution to addressing flood risk locally that having an event similar to this might be a good way of taking networking and collaboration forward.

There were no further comments or questions.

25 (38) Coastal Update

For the benefit of new Members, Katie Eckford provided an overview of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) and their key features, noting there are 22 individual policy units along the North West coastline.

SMPs, currently in their second generation, are 100-year plans to manage flood and erosion risks looking at how we protect land, people, nature and the economy. Members noted the SMP is not a legal requirement and does not dictate what must happen, but is a guide to help Local Authorities and communities plan ahead. It also supports long-term planning and investment decisions and aligns with the FCERM Strategy.

Since 2011, a significant amount of SMP work has been carried out and, in 2024, the SMP website was launched. This work is underpinned by a SMP action plan which includes different themed work of which managed realignment has the largest amount of actions.

SMP aspirations set the direction for the next phase of evolution which will focus on:

- managing complexity and uncertainty through evidence-based decision making, ensuring decision are grounded in robust data and analysis.
- mainstreaming nature-based solutions across policy units and epochs, integrating sustainable approaches into coastal management.
- embedding adaptive pathways and triggers, keeping plans flexible and responsive to changing conditions rather than tied to rigid timelines.

Members noted the ambition is to have the SMPs as living documents and acknowledged the importance of them being regularly updated.

Paul Wisse provided Members with an overview of the North West Strategic Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme, which supports the delivery of the SMP, the National FCERM Strategy and the Environment Act. He advised coastal monitoring involves the ongoing

collection of data in the coastal environment to understand system variability, is driven by the dynamic nature of coasts, which:

- Builds up of an evidence base to help us understand coastal processes
- Identifies the location and scale of risks
- Enables practitioners to make more informed decisions based on sound evidence.

Members noted there is over 700km of North West coastline which has many coastal protection assets and structures, of different types, ages and conditions, which are the responsibility of a variety of organisations and private owners. Paul described the value of monitoring data and that its value will increase with time as more information is added to it, making this one of the most valuable assets in the North West.

The presentation touched on future funding challenges and Members noted a number of delivered schemes including Anchorholme at Blackpool, Fairhaven to Church Scar at Fylde, Rossall at Wyre and the Morecambe Wave Reflection Wall.

To meet these coastal challenges collectively, Carl Green summarised the concept of a North West Centre of Coastal Excellence, not as a new institution, but as a way to better coordinate and amplify what we already have, by: pooling expertise across disciplines and organisations; sharing tools, data, and learning more effectively; and supporting delivery by aligning resources and building capacity. To ensure the Centre is practical, scalable and sustainable, a phased approach for the way forward is being explored and a pilot is planned, working alongside partners including Nature North and UU. Potential pilots include:

- Development of a Community Engagement Toolkit
- Training & Capacity Building
- Development of a pipeline of activities

Carl advised through Defra's Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP), bespoke funding for the Our Future Coast project has enabled us to pilot nature-based solutions such as dune restoration and saltmarsh creation, develop adaptive pathways and triggers for future decision-making, and test and trial innovative ways to engage communities. Members noted the Our Future Coast project is currently only funded until March 2027 and at present this will mark the end of the programme, leaving an uncertain legacy. Carl advised the role of the Coastal Centre of Excellence will continue the work started under Our Future Coast to deliver projects funded through to an investible proposition, as well as those supported by Grant-in-Aid and other standard funding routes.

Carl highlighted a number of questions for Members to consider:

- How best can we raise awareness of the SMP and the importance of the coast?
- How to incorporate asset data within EA reporting to the RFCC and nationally?
- How can we raise the opportunities and the risks to decision makers?
- How can we provide investment opportunities and have a central place where this can be shared?

Adrian Lythgo acknowledged coastal erosion and sea level rise as one of the biggest issues for our communities and highlighted this is also about river estuaries and the assets which are subject to that erosion even if they are further inland. The challenge is in getting the broader message out to decision makers about the significance of coastal assets and how much

investment and maintenance is required, whether that be traditional or natural.

Councillor Alan Quinn asked if any funding was obtained from the European Development Fund and Carl advised funding was obtained for some of the Blackpool promenade works and some funding for Cleveleys.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin commented on the graphical information which looked at the 1 metre sea level rise by 2100 and asked how far inland from the coast do you need to go to think about the risk to communities? Carl advised there is much uncertainty about this but any sea level rise will also impact draining surface water out as well as not letting in water from the sea.

Adrian advised this connects back to how we can help build the understanding and contribution to the impacts of coastal erosion and how far it goes. He thanked Carl, Katie and Paul for their update and highlighted the issues raised are not just coastal issues. Members were encouraged to forward any thoughts on Carl's questions through to Adrian or Carl outside of the meeting.

There were no further comments or questions.

25 (39) Any other business

Adrian advised that further to his opening remarks on recent flooding, he had been advised that there had been some small-scale internal flooding in Cumbria, which had occurred during the last three months, and he asked for the minutes to reflect this.

A brief presentation from Westmorland and Furness Council was provided on the successful completion of the works on the River Winster Rehabilitation Project.

No other matters were raised. Adrian thanked Members for their attendance and the meeting was closed.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group**
Draft minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2026

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 Bob Kelly	RFCC Member (substitute) – Cumbria Strategic FR P'ship
Cllr James Shorrock	RFCC Member – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Jane Hugo	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 Elizabeth Grey	RFCC Member - Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Mark Goldsmith	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic FR P'ship
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities
Susannah Bleakley	RFCC Member – Coastal Issues
Kate Morley	RFCC Member - Conservation
Chris Findley	RFCC Member – Planning and Development
Amy Cooper	RFCC Member – Water and Sewerage Industry
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, Cumbria & Lancs (C&L)
Andy Tester	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire (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
Andrew Harrison	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Matthew Waning	Officer Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership -
Lorah Cheyne	Co-ordinator - Lancashire Partnership
Sarah Wardle	Co-ordinator – Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Jacqueline Owen	Tameside Borough Council
Fran Comyn	Officer - Rochdale Borough Council
Jill Holden	Co-ordinator – Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer – Blackpool Council
Matthew Winnard	Co-ordinator - Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Guy Metcalfe	Officer – Cheshire East Highways
Katie Eckford	Officer – North West SMP Co-ordinator
Sarah Fontana	EA, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Co-ordinator
Ayush Sheth	EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Andy Collier	EA FCRM PSO Team Leader, C&L (part attendance)

Presenters:

Shannon Gunning	EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Adam Costello	EA FCRM Advisor, C&L
Amy Lomas	EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Nicola Crouch	EA, FCRM Advisor, C&L
Dermot Smith	EA FCRM Senior Advisor, GMMC
Dave Brown	EA FCRM Senior Advisor, GMMC

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Terri McMillan opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance.

Terri advised apologies had been received from Councillor Giles Archibald (Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Sam Naylor (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Aimee Brough (EA RFCC Member – Agriculture (Catchment Based Approaches)); Ian Crewe, EA Area Director (GMMC), and Carol Holt, EA Area Director (C&L).

We noted and accepted the correctly nominated substitute of Councillor Bob Kelly on behalf of Councillor Giles Archibald for the Cumbria Partnership.

Presenters Shannon Gunning, Adam Costello, Amy Lomas, Nicola Crouch, Dermot Smith and Dave Brown were welcomed.

2. Feedback from the RFCC Meeting on 24 October 2025 and the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting on 28 November 2025

Adrian Lythgo advised that the expected national paper to confirm the allocations that were agreed at the 28 November 2025 RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting is not yet available. Therefore the agenda item (5) to discuss this and make a recommendation to the 23 January RFCC meeting may not be able to take place, unless the paper is received during the meeting. If not received, the item will be taken directly to the 23 January RFCC meeting for discussion and decision.

Adrian reflected on the 28 November meeting discussion regarding the transition from the old funding policy to the new funding policy arrangements. This transition means that most of the schemes that will progress next year are already in construction. The allocation and programme have followed national rules and this has meant there hasn't been a lot of room for us to exercise our local choices. The local choice that we did exercise enables some schemes to keep going that otherwise would have stopped.

Adrian highlighted his recent update report which set out the transitional rules for the funding policy that have now been published by the Environment Agency (EA) and Defra. This provides some clarity on which schemes will continue to follow the old funding rules and which are going to be considered against the new rules. He advised this has been a fairly fast moving picture and the exact details of the new rules from April 2026 are still unclear. Any further clarity will be shared at the 23 January RFCC meeting.

We noted the key decisions from the 24 October 2025 RFCC meeting, where the RFCC:

Investment programme 2026/27:

- **Formally delegated** full decision-making powers to the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup for Local Choices at the 28 November meeting.

RFCC Business Plan:

- **Formally recognised the completion** of Business Plan projects:
 - o Asset data sharing and mapping (ID4/13)
 - o Planning and development – Evidence gathering (ID10)
- **Approved** the investment of £150K of Local Levy in 2026/27 for the Peatland Restoration Funding Development Project.

PFR:

- **Supported** the use of the proposed 4 prioritisation criteria and the proposed weighting to PFR projects.
- **Confirmed** that the 2012 funding rule should not apply to this funding pot.

Quick Wins:

- **Supported** a Quick Wins (Local Levy) funding allocation equivalent to £800K per year
- **Supported** this being formally recognised as a 3-year allocation (from 2026/27 - 2028/29)
- **Supported** the funding being shared equally across the five partnerships (Option 1)
- **Agreed** that these recommendations be taken to the additional meeting on 28 November for consideration as part of the wider Local Choices exercise.

Local Levy

- **Agreed** a 3% increase to the Local Levy for 2026/27 (£4.821 Million)

We noted the key decisions from the 28 November 2025 RFCC F&BASG meeting, where the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup, with delegated authority from the RFCC:

2026/27 Investment and resource maintenance programmes - Local Choices:

- **Approved** the investment programme Local Choices for 2026/27
- **Approved** the resource maintenance indicative allocation

Local Levy programme:

- **Approved** the reprofiling of the £161K of Local Levy from 2025/26 into 2026/27 for the Sankey Brook Flood Risk Management scheme.

Quick Wins:

- **Approved** a Quick Wins (Local Levy) funding allocation equivalent to £800K per year
- **Approved** the formal recognition of this as a 3-year allocation (from 2026/27 - 2028/29)
- **Agreed** that the funding be shared equally across the five partnerships (Option 1)

There were no further comments or questions.

3. Investment Programme Update 2025/26

Adam Walsh provided an overview of the 5-year programme both nationally and regionally. We noted that the next programme covers a 3-year period commencing in April 2026, with a new funding policy and approach. EA officers hope to be able to provide more detailed information on the new policy at the April or July RFCC meeting.

NW RFCC Meeting – 23 January 2026 – Agenda Item 5

In terms of spend this year, the forecast shows a programme underspend of £7.2 Million against the Total Project Expenditure (TPE) allocation of £135.03 Million. This is £6.8 Million less than reported to the Committee in October. The paper outlines the key reasons for this reduction, but Adam reported anticipated forecast increases and opportunities in quarter 4 to bring the programme back near to allocation by year-end.

As mentioned at previous meetings, the EA are now required to split the GiA funding and forecast into Capital and Resource, both in terms of reporting but also ensuring alignment of spend with allocations. Adam reported we are forecasting to spend close to both of these capital and resource GiA allocations by year end.

We noted there is £47.5 Million of Environment Agency (EA) spend and £19.4 Million of Local Authority (LA) grant claims/spend remaining this year. This is roughly half of the total allocation, recognising that the reported figures reflect the actual spend position at November. The current spend position and LA grant claims are discussed regularly at local level so all project teams will be aware of the current position and outstanding spend and claims, along with the relevant deadlines.

With regard to properties better protected, the current forecast is showing that 6,756 properties will be better protected across the North West this year, against a target of 5,716. We noted this is a great achievement that has involved a lot of people over a number of years, so there should be collective pride for everyone on this call in contributing to this.

Adam acknowledged that investment in-year doesn't always deliver outcomes within the same year, with many schemes (e.g. Kendal, Blackpool Beach Nourishment and Littleborough) spending significant sums of money this year but where properties will be better protected in future years when the schemes are complete.

Adam referenced key changes in the properties better protected forecast from the October report including an increase of 1,690 from the GMMC Lower Risk Debris Screens Programme. There are also a number of projects with targets that have been reprofiled to future years, such as the Radcliffe & Redvales scheme and a number of LA schemes, but importantly those properties will benefit from the ongoing investment.

We noted both the EA and LAs are not achieving their efficiency targets and overall have achieved approximately half. There were limited submissions in Quarter 3, so we have only one quarter left to achieve this. The expectation is that all projects should aim to achieve 10% efficiencies, but we look at the largest spending projects to maximise efficiencies and support achieving this 10% target at programme level. Our current position of achieving around 5% efficiency savings roughly aligns with the national position.

We noted risks to the investment programme, which include the current GiA underspend and the challenge of making this up by year-end, the shortfall in efficiency savings against target, and the lack of funding for some projects next year, delaying their progress this year.

Resource Maintenance Programme 2025/26

Paul Bowden advised the resource maintenance programmes are progressing well and they expect that spend will be 100% of budget at year end.

For GMMC area we noted the spend profile is on target for year-end and at the end of November 63% of the budget has been spent. The end of year forecast is showing slightly over the initial target but is being managed to levels agreed with National.

We noted the large Bedford Brook desilt has been completed on budget. The slight forecast overspend is due to a considerable number of incident-related, complex tree works which have had to be delivered through external suppliers, not initially budgeted for. The EA do not have the skills or equipment in house to deliver this kind of work.

C&L Area are also on track to deliver to budget by the end of the financial year, with the year to date spend showing slightly under forecast, due mainly to the electricity forecast being profiled monthly rather than being weighted towards the end of the year when actual usage is at its highest. For context, Paul advised that the electricity spend forecast for C&L is £2 Million compared with £360k for GMMC Area.

Paul advised that the external contractor maintenance programme in C&L area is complete and for this quarter some additional works are being undertaken, including some difficult tree work clearance around assets in Carlisle and some works in Lytham.

Nikki Beale provided an overview of asset condition. She provided some background on nationally-set asset condition targets and how they have changed over time. In 2016 the target for high risk assets was for 98% to be at operational standard. Nikki advised that the national target has decreased over the past 10 years to 92%, which is reflective of deteriorating asset condition and an increased frequency of flood incidents, resulting in asset damage. This demonstrates the lack of required investment in the EA reconditioning and capital maintenance programme due to funding being tied up in larger schemes. Nikki advised that this decline in asset condition will probably continue for a number of years before it can be reversed.

In terms of funding availability, Nikki advised that the North West received approximately one third to one half of the reconditioning funding against what was bid for. The EA asset condition targets for C&L and GMMC Areas are 97.7% and 93.4 % respectively.

Nikki also provided information on the number and condition of third-party assets, advising that the EA receive no funding to repair third-party assets and need to rely on partners and landowners to undertake the refurbishment works themselves. The EA are unable to influence if and when owners undertake the repair works, presenting real challenges.

Paul highlighted opportunities and challenges going forwards.

We noted a Local Choices exercise will start this month ultimately leading to the publication of the EA resource maintenance programme on .gov by the end of March 2026. Paul advised this will involve some difficult prioritisation choices. Conversations around this with LAs and partners will continue to take place through the Strategic Partnership Groups.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin commented on the shortfall against the efficiency target, and the potential risk that this could affect future funding. She asked what such efficiencies might be, how reasonable they are and how feasible it is to deliver them in the light of other challenges including adverse weather.

Adam Walsh advised that details of what can count as claimable efficiencies had been advised previously, but that an item on this can be provided at a future meeting.

Adrian Lythgo advised that historically efficiencies have generally fallen into two types – either relating to procurement solutions (actual vs business case) – and secondly relating to engineering changes, where contractors or the client come up with a new way of delivering the scheme compared with the original business case. The national target has remained at 10% and is there to try and drive efficiencies, but it does become harder to do over time, with innovation becoming accepted practice over time.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin also asked about third-party assets where there is no funding available to bring those up to standard, and asked what powers the EA or other authorities have to require the work to be done.

Councillor Alan Quinn commented that if the assets are owned by the EA at some point they will be fixed, even if takes some time. However, with third-party assets, such as culverts owned by private landowners, there may be a need for the Committee to urge changes to the national legislation.

Councillor Philip Cusack commented on the number of assets in the North West and questioned how contemporary our condition assessment data is and whether or not the situation could actually be worse than we are currently aware of.

Paul Bowden provided an overview of the role of trained Asset Inspectors whose job is solely to inspect EA and third-party assets. These inspections are done visually and scored, 1-3 being in acceptable condition and 4-5 being below target. If an EA asset, this is put forward into the investment programme and funding is bid for. For third-party assets the EA has enforcement powers where it can go down a legal route to ensure the asset owner maintains the asset, but this route can be very challenging. There can be multiple owners for one below condition asset (e.g. a culvert under a terrace of houses) and the EA could incur huge legal costs. The possibility of LAs or the EA carrying out works on third party assets and then recharging this to the landowners was briefly discussed. While this seems positive in some ways this may often not be feasible or reasonable, depending on the landowner and their situation.

Adrian Lythgo referred to the question raised by Councillor Philip Cusack on whether the asset condition could be worse than is being reported. It was recognised that a full answer to Cllr Cusack's question had not been provided. Adrian advised that it would be possible to get more information on how the inspection programmes work but broadly advised that high risk assets are inspected more frequently than lower risk assets. With regard to the enforcement of third-party assets he suggested that it may be worth the Committee doing a piece of work on this as there are a range of partners with different but relevant enforcement powers e.g. LAs with respect to planning and completion, and the EA's enforcement powers with respect to asset condition.

The Subgroup noted the progress on delivering the 2025-26 investment and resource asset maintenance programmes.

There were no further comments or questions.

4. Local Levy Programme Update

Adam Walsh provided an updated overview of the Local Levy programme including balances, spend and forecasts for the current and upcoming years. We noted the top ten Local Levy spending schemes for 2025/26. Forecasts show that we expect to spend £7.586 Million or 93% of our allocation this year. The forecast has reduced by £880K since October mainly due to the re-profiling of two schemes as noted in the paper.

Adam reported that a review of investment needs for schemes in the indicative Local Levy programme had been ongoing since the last meeting. He reported that this had revealed a small discrepancy in the 2024/25 income, with the income and resulting balance now being £75K higher than previously reported. This correction to the programme report data has been made.

The review also found some historic Levy needs that were still profiled in future years for EA-led schemes which are no longer needed (e.g. due to alternative funding sources) or have been pushed back in time, in discussions with delivery leads. This adjustment has positively affected the Levy balance, which is now forecasting to remain above the £2 Million minimum working balance until 2028/29. Previously, it was reported that the balance would fall below this in 2027/28.

Adam confirmed that the forecast Levy balance graph provided includes all the Local Levy requests to be discussed today.

The Subgroup noted the update on the Local Levy programme.

Local Levy Funding Request - Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields NFM - £71,799K in 2026/27

Dermot Smith provided an overview of the area around Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram in Wigan which has suffered frequent flooding from both river and surface water. The most significant floods were in 2015 when 44 properties flooded, and on New Year's Day 2025 when 56 properties flooded. There have also been 3 other surface water floods in the last 14 months, which has caused internal flooding to several houses.

Wigan Council, GMCA, UU and the EA are actively working together on addressing flood risk issues and an action plan has been developed to look at surface water issues. The EA is also developing a flood risk management scheme to reduce river flood risk and a preferred option for this EA scheme will be selected in the spring, with construction planned for 2030. Dermot provided brief details and costs. The partners have been working closely with the local residents who are very anxious about more flooding and want to see some immediate action.

The Local Levy funding requested is to progress two elements of natural flood management (NFM) work in Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields in advance of the main project commencing. This will itself deliver a reduction in flood risk and demonstrate to the community that risk management authorities are taking action. Dermot clarified that delivery of these two NFM elements will not jeopardise delivery of the main EA scheme.

Dermot provided brief details on the wider funding picture, with a contribution from Wigan Council and funding for the long-term maintenance of the NFM assets coming from Landscape Recovery Scheme funding Wigan has secured for their wider Wigan Greenheart project.

The Subgroup voted in favour of recommending for RFCC approval the allocation of £71,799K of Local Levy funding in 2026/27 for Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields NFM.

There were 13 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrock, Cllr Hugo, Cllr Grey, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Amy Cooper and Kate Morley.

Adrian Lythgo highlighted that any questions or comments can be sent directly through to Dermot outside of the meeting.

There were no further comments or questions.

5. Investment and Resource Maintenance Programmes (GiA) 2026/27

As the national Allocations paper had not been received, this item was deferred to the 23 January 2026 RFCC meeting.

6. RFCC Business Plan

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 (£1.545 Million in 2026/27 and around £1.2 Million per year for the following two years, which is on a par with previous years). Sally reported a small underspend on the 2025/26 allocation due to a project rescoping delay and one Levy-funded role currently being vacant.

Sally reported issues or delays affecting Amber rated projects which are currently being actively addressed:

- The Flood Hub and community flood resilience work delivered in partnership with Newground CIC (4 projects: ID5/5a/6/7)**

New contractual arrangements are required from 2025/26 due to changes in procurement legislation. Arrangements for 2025/26 are almost finalised and full service delivery is expected to resume very soon. For 2026/27 and beyond, a procurement process is required to select the supplier, being led by GMCA, which will commence shortly.

- Unpave the Way (ID12)**

The delivery pace has currently slowed due to resource availability constraints including health leave, a change in personnel at UU and availability constraints of Leon Davis, the landscape designer. Other resources are being considered to support this project in the short term.

- NFM Pipeline (Cumbria) (ID22)**

The project scope and approach has been reviewed and a revised approach is planned. Financial and procurement/contractual mechanisms to allow project to proceed in the near future are currently being explored.

Sally then introduced two proposals for continued project investment:

The Flood Hub and community flood resilience work delivered in partnership with Newground CIC (4 projects: ID5/5a/6/7) – RFCC Business Plan theme – Building Community Resilience

Nicola Crouch highlighted the long-established relationship we have with Newground, who host, manage and maintain the North West Flood Hub website providing a highly respected and much used resource on flood risk and resilience for communities, Flood Action Groups, risk management authorities (RMAs), and other stakeholders, across the North West. Nicola highlighted the many benefits the work of Newground has provided to communities across the North West since 2016

Nicola advised an open market tender process is now required to select the supplier for this service and to maintain delivery at current levels. This process and the new contract will be led by GMCA early in 2026, ensuring compliance with procurement rules. We noted this investment represents strong value for money, enabling RMAs to reach far more communities than possible alone and supporting the RFCC's Business Plan ambition to build resilience.

The Subgroup were asked to consider and recommend for RFCC approval **£817.8K** of Local Levy funding over three years (2026–2029).

Adrian Lythgo highlighted that while being very well used and hugely valued by LAs and the EA, as yet there has not been the opportunity to test the value for money of the arrangement. He advised whilst it is the procurement rules that are forcing the approach now, he believed this is something we would want to do anyway as it will allow us to demonstrate the value for money associated with what is quite a significant amount of Local Levy spend.

Carolyn Otley gave her support for the Community Resilience work advising that she has found The Flood Hub to be a really useful support and she provided a link to it in the MS Teams chat function. She advised it is a great resource for Committee Members, particularly elected members, in terms of knowing where to signpost people to for information. She advised that although the funding for this looks quite a big ask for a website, there's much more to the work than that, and the website content is only so good because it's the same team doing face to face engagement with communities and keeping the website up to date. She advised this is a huge advantage over many other websites, by showing how responsive it can be and the quality of work coming from it. She encouraged others to support the continuation of funding for the project as we currently cannot go to the procurement process and test the market without the agreement for this funding to be in place.

Natural Flood Management (NFM) Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource (ID9A)

Dave Brown reported that over the last 4 years, through the Business Plan, £126k of Local Levy has been used to part (50%) fund a Natural Flood Manager (NFM) technical appraisal post at Mersey Forest. Mersey Forest fund the other 50% of the post. He advised the spend has been at £35k per year and will total £126k when it comes to an end in June 2026.

We heard the NFM resource successfully drew in £225k of capital funding from Defra's £25 Million NFM scheme, £35k from Trees for Climate, and £145k from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund. Dave provided a brief overview of some of the work taking place across the North West, which this post has helped to design and deliver.

Dave reminded Members of the recent reforms to FDGiA meaning more funding will be available to NFM projects but recognises that the current programme is very tight, there will be a delay in the switch to NFM funding, and without the necessary NFM appraisal skills, we won't be able to draw in the NFM funding as well as we should.

Dave concluded that £163K of Local Levy support is being requested for another 4 years of funding to 2030.

Adrian Lythgo commented to reinforce that the NFM appraisal resource is available to everyone in the North West, even though it is based in the Mersey Forest.

Councillor James Shorrock advised that NFM is a major concern and that they support the proposal but that the Lancashire Partnership is keen to see NFM work being carried out in their area as well. Dave Brown advised that he is already working with colleagues in Lancashire to explore opportunities and that the key is identifying potential locations to look at and carry out appraisals.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin referred back to the reported project delays and raised some concern especially about those under the Building Community Resilience theme, recognising that it is very difficult to demonstrate real outcomes from each of those cumulatively, which do make a huge difference. She expressed concern that she did not feel reassured in all cases that sufficient steps were being taken to get the projects back on track. She also made a further point to highlight her support for the NFM Technical Manager post.

Sally Whiting responded to report that there was significant work going into addressing the contractual and procurement issues with the Building Community Resilience projects, there has been positive progress recently, and we hope this will be resolved soon. On the Unpave the Way resources, we are exploring what capacity there currently might be within other Levy-funded roles who could provide support in the short term.

Sally then introduced a new project proposal for the Business Plan, the Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy. She highlighted that because this falls under the Business Plan ambition led by Cumbria (Managing water at catchment scale with nature), this proposal had been put to and fully supported by the Cumbria Strategic Partnership.

Dermot Smith then provided more details on the Upper Irwell strategy which is one small part of a much wider partnership approach to use existing tools and data in new ways, which will help target and value/justify specific NFM interventions. This work being carried out with Manchester University and multiple catchments partners and will play a key role in securing future national funding for NFM.

Through the Irwell Catchment Partnership and its Agriculture Working Group, there is an aim to expand farmer engagement, provide advice, and increase delivery of environmental improvements on farmland across all partner objectives and workstreams. Working collaboratively, the project will ensure that funding is used efficiently and effectively to deliver environmental benefits.

The project has broad applicability to other areas and catchments.

Dermot concluded that £100K of Local Levy funding is requested, £75K for 2026/27 and £25K for 2027/28, which will sit alongside funding from a range of other sources.

Kate Morley advised that the ability to share all the learning from this project with others and replicate it in other catchments and partnership areas is key. Dermot advised this has already been taken to the Cumbria Partnership, who were very interested. He advised a lot of the underlying data is nationally available data so that it is applicable in other areas.

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Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin expressed her strong support for the project, but also the point that Kate made about the availability of these tools more widely, including nationally. She asked whether this has been shared with Defra as sustainable farming payments appears to be in a state of flux. Dermot advised the EA are speaking to National EA NFM contacts who are in touch with Defra to see how we can better and more efficiently join up FDGiA funding and Environmental Land Management (ELM) funding for NFM measures.

Councillor Alan Quinn advised this is a great scheme. He also declared an interest as a Board Member of the Manchester City of Trees.

Carolyn Otley advised she is really supportive of this work, but flagged the bigger challenge in engaging with landowners which takes a lot of skill, and long term it's a real challenge when we're having to fund that work through small amounts of Local Levy funding on for short term durations. The current system makes it really hard to do this kind of development work, which is why this work is so important.

Finally, Sally Whiting reminded Members that the paper provided set out the full detail of the Local Levy programme for 2026/27. This is derived from the rolling indicative programme for a number of years ahead being updated and reprofiled as reported in previous meetings. It also includes the funding required for Business Plan projects. The programme for 2026/27 totals £7.421 Million and the detail is provided in full in Appendix K of the paper.

The Subgroup noted the Business Plan update, including the issues reported.

The Subgroup voted in favour of recommending to the RFCC the continued Local Levy funding for:

- Building Community Resilience (ID5/6/7) (£817.8K over the next three years)

There were 13 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrock, Cllr Hugo, Cllr Grey, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Amy Cooper and Kate Morley.

- NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource (ID9A) (£163K over the next four years)

There were 12 votes in support.

Votes in favour: Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrock, Cllr Hugo, Cllr Grey, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Amy Cooper and Kate Morley.

The Subgroup voted in favour of recommending to the RFCC:

- the investment of £100K for the Upper Irwell Integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy.

There were 13 votes in support.

Votes in favour: Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton-Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrock, Cllr Hugo, Cllr Grey, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Amy Cooper and Kate Morley.

The Subgroup voted in favour of recommending to the RFCC the approval of the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2026/27 including for all Business Plan Projects. This is a total Local Levy allocation of £7.421 Million.

There were 13 votes in support.

Votes in favour: Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrock, Cllr Hugo, Cllr Grey, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Amy Cooper and Kate Morley.

We recommend the RFCC:

- Approves, continued Local Levy funding for:
 - Building Community Resilience (ID5/6/7) (£817.8K over the next three years)
 - NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource (ID9A) (£163K over the next four years)
- Approves the investment of £100K for the Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy.
- Approves the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2026/27, including for Business Plan projects.

There were no further comments or questions.

7. North West Property Flood Resilience Funding – project allocation proposals

Adam Costello provided an overview of the history of the project. He advised that, following the approval of the prioritisation methodology at the October 2025 RFCC meeting, project applications were invited from October to November, projects had then been scored, and the PFR Pipeline and Assurance Subgroup met early in December to discuss and agree allocation recommendations, which are being presented today.

Adam presented a summary of the bids received per partnership along with their estimated cost.

Adam provided an overview of all 35 PFR bids received (both from EA and LAs), along with their scores, with those proposed to receive funding highlighted. Adam advised there are 7 projects that have been recommended to receive funding in 2026/27. Adam highlighted the range in the scores of projects submitted, recognising that the scoring will help colleagues to see where scores could be increased for future year's submission, for example further flood history investigations/ modelling or community engagement.

Amy Lomas provided an overview of the role and purpose of the PFR Pipeline and Assurance Subgroup, and described how the scoring had formed the basis of decision making, where necessary with additional conversations and factors helping prioritise certain projects over others within specific partnership areas. A key directive was to ensure as even a distribution of funding as possible across the five partnership areas.

Shannon Gunning provided an overview of next steps for the projects and the anticipated outline for the overall PFR programme for next year. Lessons and experiences will be shared. Updated guidance for the application process in 2027/28 will be provided. A commitment to a longer application window in future years was also made. There will be considerations of how the pot can support PFR under the new funding guidelines i.e. partially funding schemes to aid in unlocking GiA.

Councillor Bob Kelly enquired if there is any further clarification on the 2027/28 funding application dates and he was advised these are currently being worked on and will be announced soon so that Local Authorities can have that in mind when planning their work. Shannon acknowledged this recent application period had been tight, but it was just how it had to be with the time remaining in the year. Shannon advised that further information will be provided in the next few weeks along with updated guidance details.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin recognised this process has had to take place in a short timescale

and that a detailed set of allocations and weightings have been agreed, but questioned how the principle of an even spread of funding across the five partnerships sits alongside the number of applications submitted per partnership and funding needs indicated. She questioned whether this breaches the equity rule and highlighted that Greater Manchester authorities had submitted 20 bids and just two have been put forward for 2026/27 funding.

Shannon reiterated that a key principle of the approved funding from the RFCC had been to ensure there is a broadly even distribution of funding across the partnerships. She advised the Pipeline and Assurance Subgroup had up to two representatives from each partnership to ensure this. She advised in terms of the amount of bids that were put in by LAs, that was at the discretion of each of the LAs and it may just be due to the short timeframe for bids to be submitted that only small numbers of bids were received. The PFR leads and Subgroup are hopeful that next year there will be more bids across the board.

Adrian Lythgo advised he wished to make a broader point along similar lines with regard to Cllr Shilton Godwin's specific question that it was a stipulation of the RFCC and therefore a condition linked to the award of the PFR funding. He advised certainly for the early years that we have ensured as far as we can equal access of this funding to the five partnerships. Going forwards he advised that PFR could be one of the new policy areas similar to NFM where Grant-in-Aid (GiA) funding ought to be available. He recognised that we aren't starting from a position where all of the five partnerships have necessarily got the same ability to get funding out of the process. He referred to the RFCC-funded Project Advisor posts who assist LAs in traditional scheme approval. He remarked that in due course we may need to look at the focus of these posts and see how they might also be able to provide more support across the partnerships in terms of PFR and NFM as well. Currently we are quite dependent on a few experts in those fields. Adrian advised we will need to think through how we maintain that access and so that we can move to a position where it's less about ensuring equal access and more about the quality of the bids that come through.

Councillor James Shorrock advised it would be useful to have an engagement plan in place to help LAs get the support they need with community engagement. He also advised that review and feedback on the programme needs to be carried out on a regular basis, along with LA support and engagement, to help build a pipeline of projects over the coming year.

Susannah Bleakley highlighted her support for comments being made.

We noted in the MS Teams meeting chat function that Councillor Jane Hugo had to leave the meeting and she nominated Clare Nolan-Barnes to place any votes on her behalf, on behalf of the Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership. Terri McMillan acknowledged this request had been received.

The Subgroup voted in favour of endorsing the flexible use of the PFR Local Levy funding allocation across the three years.

There were 13 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton-Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrock, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Grey, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Amy Cooper and Kate Morley.

The Subgroup voted in favour of the proposed allocation of funding to the seven projects set out in the paper.

There were 13 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrock, Clare Nolan Barnes, Cllr Grey, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley, Amy Cooper and Kate Morley.

We recommend that the RFCC:

- Endorses the flexible use of the PFR Local Levy funding allocation across the three years
- Approves the proposed allocation of funding to the seven projects set out in the paper.

8. Minutes from the 10 October 2025 meeting and 28 November 2025 meeting

Members were asked to approve the draft minutes of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meetings held on 10 October 2025 and 28 November 2025.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin proposed and Councillor Alan Quinn seconded both sets of minutes, which were approved and taken as a true record of the meetings.

9. Any Other Business

Councillor Bob Kelly raised a question, which had been forwarded to him by Councillor Giles Archibald, and asked when there will be an update on work around peatland management. Sally Whiting advised as this work is carried out through the RFCC Business Plan she will contact the Peatland Restoration Leads in each of the three patches to seek an update.

There were no further items of business.

10. Date of the next meeting

The date of the next RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group meeting is 10 April 2026.

North West Investment Programme

2026/27 NW Indicative and Final GiA Funding Allocations Update for the NW RFCC

23 January 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This brief report provides a summary of the current North West position for the annual cycle of allocating Grant-in-Aid funding for Flood and Coastal Risk Management and to provide clarity to support the NW RFCC in their role of consenting implementation of the resource maintenance and investment programmes for 2026/27.

Headlines:

Between October 2025, when indicative allocations for the investment programme were received, up to receiving final allocations on 9 January 2026, the North West has been allocated £159.1m Grant in Aid. This allocation, both indicative and final, has remained constant.

The North West also received £1.22m in capital salary costs (EA only). With the inclusion of capital salaries, this total allocation increases to £160.3m. This is the allocation noted in Appendix A of the National final allocations paper.

For the resource maintenance programme, between the same dates noted above, there has been an increase in funding of £94,000, with a final allocation of £14.9m. This is the allocation noted in Appendix B of the National final allocations paper.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- To confirm the final Grant in Aid funding allocations for the North West (contained in the national final allocations paper) following the local choices endorsement of the investment and resource maintenance programmes by the Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group (FBASG) on 28 November 2025
- To provide a summary, and clarity, of the high-level allocation numbers (for both funding and properties) contained in the papers provided to the FBASG for the meetings held on the 28 November 2025 and 9 January 2026, and the subsequent issuing of the National final allocations paper on 9 January 2026.
- In providing clarity, this report provides a narrative to explain any differences between numbers provided to the FBASG and the final allocations paper

ACTIONS REQUESTED FROM THE NW RFCC

- Note the current North West FCRM grant-in-aid (GiA) investment and resource programme allocations for 2026/27
- Note the content of this report in supporting consent to the implementation of the North West programmes for 2026/27



Investment Programme 2026/27

Allocation

Date	Paper	Schemes (CM, DEF, PFR) + Enabling and Support Programme*	Additional Resource (RDEL)**	Capital Salaries	Total	Total with Capital Salaries Included	Reason for Differences between Report Dates
28 November 2025	NW Report to the FBASG	£157.90	£1.15	Not included	£159.05	£160.27	
09 January 2026	NW Report to the FBASG	£157.90	£1.15	Not included	£159.05	£160.27	No change to the total allocation when capital salaries are included.
09 January 2026	National Final Allocations Paper	£157.90	£1.15	£1.22	£160.27	£160.27	No change to the total allocation when capital salaries are included.

All figures are Grant-in-Aid Only (£m)

* The enabling and support programme includes, Bridges, Hydrometry & Telemetry, Modelling & Forecasting, REC, Studies, Strategies

** Additional resource funding for early scheme development

Summary:

The GiA final allocation for the investment programme received on 9 January 2026 aligns with the indicative allocation (excluding capital salaries) and local choices endorsed at the meeting of the FBASG on 28 November 2025. The capital salary costs for EA staff supporting, developing, and delivering schemes has been allocated by the national team. This is the only allocation that has not been discussed previously, and this takes the total investment programme GiA allocation to £160.3m. The £17.77m over-programme indicatively allocated by the national team to the NW in October for specific projects has been updated in the final allocations paper and formed part of the local choices return to National. The over-programme of £6.7m is more appropriate and follows an assessment of the risks associated with using the over-programme, touched on in the 28 November report to the FBASG (*Please Refer to Appendix A of National Paper*).

Investment Programme 2026/27

Properties Better Protected

Date	Paper	Properties Better Protected	Reason for Differences between Report Dates
28 November 2025	NW Report to the FBASG	10,534	
09 January 2026	NW Report to the FBASG	9,698	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Roch reduced by 733, forecast now in 27/28 • Radcliffe & Redvales 120 reduction in forecast (now 787) • Shaw, Cringle, Ley and Willow Brook, increased by 32 (now 42) • Wyre Catchment Readiness Project (was 15 now 0. Not appropriate to claim under current funding rules. Will be reviewing if these 15 properties can be claimed under new funding rules).
09 January 2026	National Final Allocations Paper	10,519	The current forecast of 9,698 noted above is the current position and incorporates latest forecast updates to the years in which properties will be better protected. The changes between the 28 November 2025 and the final allocations paper only included the reduction of 15 properties associated with the Wyre Catchment Readiness Project. This project was updated just prior to the local choices submission to national on 12 December 2025, with other forecasts updated after this date.

Summary:

The maximum properties better protected forecast for the investment programme noted in the national final allocations paper, received on 9 January 2026, differs from that in the NW reports for the FBASG meetings on 28 November 2025 and 9 January. We have seen a reduction in forecast and the reasons for this are outlined in the table above. The majority of this reduction is properties that were forecast to be better protected in 2026/27, will now be better protected in 2027/28.

Resource Maintenance Programme 2026/27

Allocation

Date	Paper	(RDEL) for Asset Maintenance	Reason for Differences between Dates
28 November 2025	NW Report to the FBASG	£14.82	
09 January 2026	NW Report to the FBASG	£14.82	No change
09 January 2026	National Final Allocations Paper	£14.91	Difference is an additional £94k. This is the NW allocation from the additional £5.5m available Nationally as noted in Section 6.1 of the National Final Allocations Paper.

All figures are Grant-in-Aid Only (£m)

Summary:

The GiA allocation for the resource maintenance programme received on 9 January 2026 is £94,000 higher than the indicative allocation endorsed at the meeting of the FBASG on 28 November 2025. This is the NW share of an additional £5.5m for maintenance available nationally. This takes the resource maintenance programme GiA allocation to £14.91m (*Please see Section 6.1 and Appendix B of the National Paper*).

NORTH WEST RFCC MEETING
23 JANUARY 2026
FLOOD AND COASTAL RISK MANAGEMENT
GRANT-IN-AID (GIA) ALLOCATIONS FOR 2026/27

Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

1. Note the current estimated FCRM grant-in-aid (GiA) capital and resource allocations for 2026/27
2. Provide their statutory consent to the implementation of the regional programmes for 2026/27.

Headline Messages

- This RFCC Committee meeting is an important final step in the process to allocate capital and resource funding for FCRM. RFCC consent is sought to allow the implementation of the regional programmes for 2026/27.
- Current forecasts indicate that the 52,000 properties better protected target across the 2-year investment period (2024-2026) will be met by 31 March 2026.
- The new FCRM Investment Programme starts on 01 April 2026, at the same time as the new funding policy being implemented.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This paper sets out the final stage of allocating Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) capital (CDEL) and resource (RDEL) grant-in-aid (GiA) for 2026/27. This is the first year of the new 3-year FCRM Investment Programme (2026-2029).

2.0 Current FCRM Investment Programme

Current Performance

2.1 As of November 2025, the FCRM Investment Programme is on track to spend to the 2025/26 budget of £811million, covering both capital (CDEL) (£732million) and resource (RDEL) (£79million) funding.

2.2 The target for the current FCRM Investment Programme (2024-2026) is 52,000 properties better protected from flood risk. Across 2024/25 and 2025/26 approximately 47,600 properties have been better protected (to end of December 2025).

2.3 Current forecasts indicate the 52,000 target will be met by 31 March 2026. Since the start of the five-year programme in April 2021, around 136,000 properties have been better protected.

Efficiencies

2.4 Projects have realised a total of £166million efficiencies so far in the current programme (April 2021 – October 2025). This is approximately 5% of FCRM GiA spend during this time period. There are no efficiency targets for the new investment programme, but we will need to realise efficiencies to support delivery of the Government's strategic objectives.

Investment Reform

2.5 Defra published their new [Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management \(FCERM\) funding policy](#) on Monday 14 October 2025.

2.6 The Environment Agency will publish initial guidance shortly, which will help the Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authorities (oRMAs) to apply the new policy before the start of the next investment programme. Updates to the FCERM Appraisal Guidance and further funding guidance will be published before April 2026 and continually improved throughout 2026.

2.7 To help prepare practitioners for the new guidance, the Environment Agency ran a [webinar](#) for oRMAs and environmental non-governmental organisations (eNGOs) on 04 December 2025.

2.8 More information and support including a briefing note and feedback form can be found on the new funding policy page of the [Supporting Flood & Coast SharePoint site](#). Future webinars and recordings will also be available on this page.

2.9 Funding under the new policy will be open to all oRMAs, and collectively will need RFCC support in identifying projects, such as asset refurbishment, which would be eligible for funding under these new rules.

3.0 Total FCRM GiA allocation – 2026/27

3.1 The capital FCRM GiA for 2026/27 is expected to be £910million and the resource FCRM GiA for 2026/27 is expected to be £576.5million. This resource figure includes all resource funded activities including asset maintenance. This is a total investment of over £1.4billion.

4.0 FCRM Investment Programme GiA allocation – 2026/27

4.1 Following the autumn round of RFCC Committee meetings and the submission of local choice returns, the Environment Agency's national Portfolio Management Office has prepared the final allocations for 2026/27.

4.2 Table 1 sets out the final indicative GiA allocation for 2026/27 against elements of the programme.

4.3 £845.6million (as shown in Appendix A) is allocated directly to RFCCs for schemes, enabling and support programmes and the additional resource funding for early project development. The remaining amount of the £1,048.4million shown in table 1 is cross-boundary or national investment which is not allocated to specific RFCCs. This is consistent with the approach taken in previous years.

4.4 We are investing £723.8million in new and replacement schemes. This is split 70% to Environment Agency led projects and 30% to other Risk Management Authority led

projects. This compares to 68% for EA and 32% oRMAs in 2025/26. Of this, the majority of the allocations are associated with projects that are in construction by April 2026.

High Level Allocation

4.5 Table 1: the below table shows the high-level allocations (representing our current best estimates of these figures and pending final approval) across different activities in the FCRM Investment Programme, for both capital (CDEL) and resource (RDEL) expenditure. For completeness, 2025/26 figures have been included.

Programme (total expenditure)	2025/26 (£m)	2026/27 (£m)	2026/27 (£m) CDEL	2026/27 (£m) RDEL
Programme to meet legal obligations associated with flood risk management works (including environmental and asset obligations) ¹	9.3	49.6	43.2	6.4
Small scale projects (enabling & support)	37.7	41.0	21.7	19.3
New and replacement schemes ²	659.2	723.8	698.8	25.0
Salary costs for staff supporting, developing, and delivering schemes	48.0	49.9	0.0	49.9
Recondition schemes for assets below target condition ²	56.0	32.6	5.4	27.2
Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	52.0	48.4	35.1	13.3
Natural Flood Management programme	10.8	15.1	10.5	4.6
National once and FCRM Portfolio (including Fleet, Depots, and IT invest to save)	68.7	63.0	35.0	28.0
2025/26 Additional local choices funding, and asset management transformation and funding for Area based teams	133.4	-	-	-
Assets Under Construction and accounting treatment switch from FCRM RDEL income	35.0	-	-	-
River Thames Scheme (RTS) and Thames Estuary Plan 2	-	25.0	16.4	8.6
TOTAL ALLOCATION (all)	1110.1	1048.4	866.1	182.3
BUDGET	1110.1	1048.4	866.1	182.3

¹ Includes an increase from 2025/26 as this figure had previously only comprised of the Environmental Statutory Allowance allocation.

² 2026/27 Includes funding for scheme development

- 4.6 As well as the £723.8million for new and replacement schemes, as agreed in Spending Review 2025, £25million has been currently allocated for the River Thames Scheme and Thames Estuary Phase 2 strategy development. Other Thames Estuary works are prioritised against other projects in the FCRM Investment Programme.
- 4.7 The local choice discussions and subsequent returns included a number of ‘hand backs’ against indicative allocations due to affordability challenges and the need to prioritise projects in or nearing construction phase. This is in part due to some spend being bought forward into 2025/26 and some project delays.
- 4.8 Because of this, the over-programme position has been reduced. The PMO will be working with local teams to build a 5-10% over-programme ahead of the start of the financial year. This provides an opportunity to strengthen investment.
- 4.9 The additional Resource development fund of approximately £12.1million that was issued to RFCCs for local choices has been allocated to support scheme development and asset refurbishment works. This investment will be screened in line with the new funding policy.

Properties Benefitting 2026/27

- 4.10 From April 2026, the key metric for the FCRM Investment Programme will be Properties Benefitting as set out in the Defra Funding Policy published on 14 October 2025. The indicative allocation for 2026/27 shows that a maximum of around 30,000 properties will be better protected (current programme metric). Work is underway to align to the new programme metric of Properties Benefitting which has a broader definition. Targets are yet to be agreed for the new Properties Benefitting metric for the first year of the FCERM Investment Programme 2026/27.

Partnership Funding 2026/27

- 4.11 The allocations are largely made up of projects in construction and therefore these projects have their partnership funding contributions secured already. Because of this, there is little risk around securing partnership funding for achieving the outcomes in 2026/27. As the longer-term programme is developed, the partnership funding needs will be reviewed for future years. Partnership funding need and opportunities will need to be assessed for those projects in development.

Carbon update

- 4.12 The FCRM Investment Programme 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.
- 4.13 This year for Environment Agency projects, the annual refresh enables any updated programme scenarios to calculate emissions and measure the results against the Environment Agency reduction target of 45% by 2030.
- 4.14 Using both cost and carbon measures in the annual refresh ensures the consented FCRM programme is optimised to deliver on future GiA and UK Net Zero carbon targets.

Key risks

4.15 Risks to the FCRM Investment Programme are managed through a single risk register that captures issues, risks, and emerging risks. The register covers:

- Current programme risks (ending March 2026)
- Transitional risks including Aurora transformation (as we move to a new programme with a revised funding policy, strategic direction, and key metrics)
- Future programme risks

4.16 These portfolio risks are owned by the Environment Agency's Delivery Portfolio Board (DPB). Risks across the portfolio and programmes will be monitored, mitigated, and escalated in line with a proposed new internal governance framework.

5.0 FCRM Investment Programme transition – forward look

5.1 Over the course of the 3-year Investment Programme (2026-2029), it is expected that there will be a transition from current projects in construction through to new projects. Projects will build on new funding rules and the National Investment Steer & Pipeline.

5.2 As shown by the graph in Appendix C, it is currently expected that these projects in construction will receive around £2billion over the next 3 years and £2.4billion over the next 10 years (green section). Projects that are currently in development and pre-Full Business Case are expected to receive around £350million of funding over the next 3 years and around £1.8billion over the next 10 years (blue section). New projects are expected to total £3billion to £4billion over the next 10 years (yellow section).

5.3 This model will be considered with the latest local choice information, and the 3-year view will be shared to provide longer term visibility.

6.0 FCRM GiA asset maintenance resource allocation for 2026/27

6.1 Current planning assumes an increase in resource funding for asset maintenance to £143.5 million in 2026/27, representing a £5.5 million uplift from 2025/26, this is to cover increases to people costs in Field Operations teams. This additional funding will ensure that all RFCCs maintain the same level of investment as in 2025/26, while also accommodating a limited programme of decommissioning works.

6.2 While asset maintenance funding is set to rise to £143.5 million, the allocation for asset reconditioning—which restores assets to a favourable condition—is expected to be £30 million. This marks a reduction from the £52 million available in 2025/26, largely due to a shift in accounting treatment of much of this work from capital investment to resource expenditure.

6.3 The £72million investment in 2025/26 enabled the initiation of a significant number of new asset recondition projects. Consequently, the 2026/27 funding will primarily be directed towards completing these projects. The lower level of funding, and more of this work being seen as resource, will reduce the number of assets that can be brought back to condition, although this will be partly mitigated by the new investment programme rules on asset refurbishment.

6.4 Discussions are currently underway within the Environment Agency to identify opportunities to maximise asset condition within the available resources.

7.0 Communications and engagement

- 7.1 Subject to the 2026/27 FCRM Investment Programme being consented by RFCC Committees in January, and EA Board approval on 11 February, the programme will be published on Gov.uk.
- 7.2 The EA will also write to oRMAs to confirm their allocations.
- 7.3 The Environment Agency will look to further enhance communications and engagement approaches across key stakeholders for the new Investment Programme.

8.0 Recommendations

The committee is asked to:

1. Note the current estimated FCRM grant-in-aid (GiA) capital and resource allocations for 2026/27
2. Provide their statutory consent to the implementation of the regional programmes for 2026/27.

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Paper sponsor: John Russon

Date: 07 January 2026

[Appendix A: FCRM GiA Investment Programme allocation by RFCC](#)

[Appendix B: FCRM GiA resource \(RDEL\) asset maintenance allocation by RFCC](#)

[Appendix C: Modelled 10-year spend profile showing transition from current programme projects to new \(based on indicative allocations and subject to change\)](#)

Appendix A: FCRM GiA Investment Programme allocation by RFCC

RFCC	GiA total allocation 2026/27 (£m) ¹	GiA allocation 2026/27 CDEL (£m)	GiA allocation 2026/27 ² RDEL (£m)	Forecast maximum properties better protected 2026/27 ³	Planned share of over-programme (£m)
Anglian Eastern	46.9	43.8	3.1	422	0.4
Anglian Great Ouse	15.3	9.1	6.2	136	1.3
Anglian Northern	106.3	96.6	9.7	4,911	3.4
North West	160.3	145.6	14.7	10,519	6.7
Northumbria	26.4	24.5	2.0	760	0.0
Severn and Wye	19.0	12.3	6.7	336	0.1
South West	51.9	46.8	5.1	973	0.5
Southern	86.7	78.2	8.5	8,474	3.5
Thames	71.1	56.8	14.3	1,169	6.7
Trent	66.9	63.5	3.3	688	0.0
Wessex	128.9	121.9	7.0	445	0.0
Yorkshire	66.0	55.9	10.0	2,017	5.4
Total	845.6	755.0	90.7	30,850	28.0

¹Schemes Programme (Capital Maintenance /Defence/Property Flood Resilience) plus Enabling and Support Programme* and resource funding for early project development

²Includes £12.26m resource (RDEL) funding for early project development

³Properties 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 Enabling and Support programme includes Bridges, Environmental Statutory Allowance (Standalone only included), Hydrometry and Telemetry, Modelling and Forecasting, Recondition, Studies, Strategies, and big strategic projects.

Appendix B: FCRM GiA resource (RDEL) asset maintenance allocation by RFCC

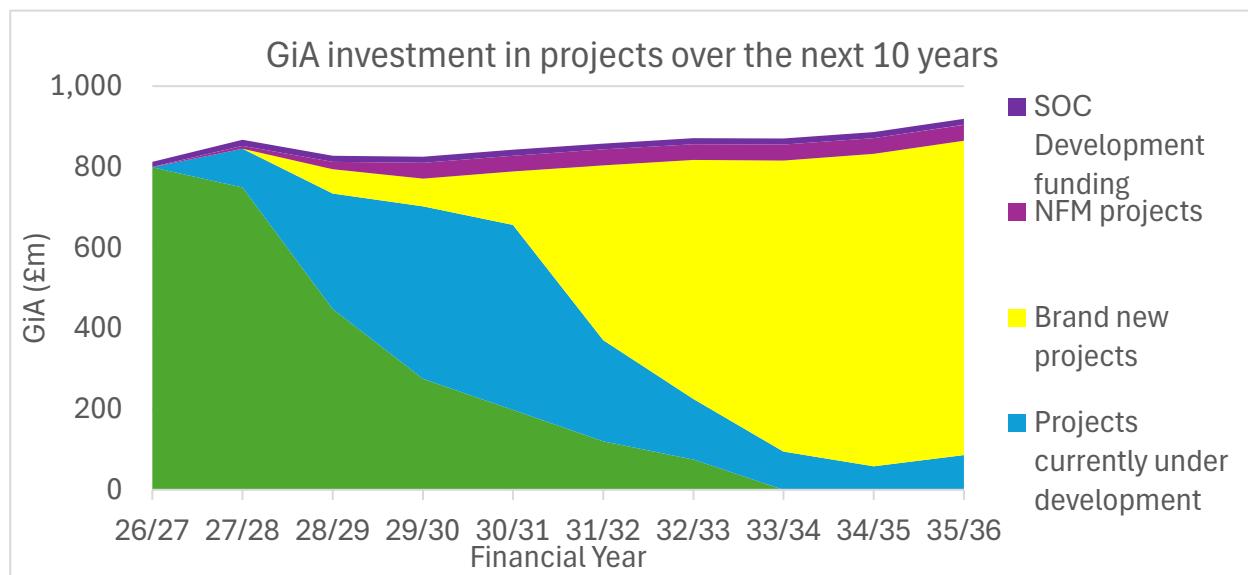
RFCC	Allocation 2026/27 (£m)
Anglian Eastern	9.5
Anglian Great Ouse	5.9
Anglian Northern	12.8
North West	14.9
Northumbria	3.3
Severn and Wye	4.5
South West	5.7
Southern	13.2
Thames	23.4
Trent	19.0
Wessex	11.9
Yorkshire	19.5
Total	143.5

Note: figures are rounded to nearest £0.1m and include routine maintenance, asset management projects, and decommissioning.

Appendix C: Modelled 10-year spend profile showing transition from current programme projects to new (based on indicative allocations and subject to change)

This chart shows a modelled view of how much we might invest in:

- projects in construction (achieved Full Business Case by April 2026) (old funding rules). (green)
- Projects currently in the programme between Strategic Outline Case and Full Business Case (Gateways 1-3 (in-development)) by April 2026 (new funding rules) - aligned with National Investment Steer. (blue)
- Brand new projects not yet started - development to be informed by National Investment Steer. (yellow)
- NFM projects (violet)
- SOC development funding (purple)



NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2026

QUARTERLY FLOOD INCIDENTS REPORT

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

This report summarises the numbers of properties reported as flooded during the last quarter.

The data provided by the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authorities covers the period 1 October to 31 December 2025.

The data provided by United Utilities covers the period 6 October 2025 to 6 January 2026. The properties flooded reported by UU is assumed to be residential.

Key to data tables

The data distinguishes between property which has been reported as flooded internally and properties reporting external flooding only. It also distinguishes between residential and commercial properties flooded internally, where this info has been provided.

Degree of flooding (interval or external only)	Type of property
Int – Internally flooded properties	Comm – Commercial
Ext – External only flooding to properties	Sch – School
Unkn - Unknown	(Otherwise Residential)

Note that these RFCC reports only aim to capture the approximate scale of flood incidents which are understood to be subject to further investigation and will not be interpreted as confirmed numbers.

Cumbria Strategic Partnership

With the onset of autumn, there was a clear shift in weather patterns, with Atlantic-dominated systems bringing increased rainfall across Cumbria and Lancashire. Several significant events were forecast throughout Q3, many characterised by low confidence in the meteorological outlook, which made response planning challenging. As a result, the EA escalated incident response rosters on numerous occasions.

INFORMATION ITEM A

The first event with notable impacts occurred in early October and was associated with Storm Amy. On 2–3 October, we issued widespread flood alerts and four flood warnings across Cumbria, although only one flooded residential property in Carlisle and one flooded commercial property in Hawkshead were reported.

A week later, high tides combined with storm surge prompted the issue of coastal flood alerts for both the north and south Cumbrian coasts. No property flooding was reported.

November and early December were marked by successive Atlantic weather fronts, bringing significant rainfall totals, particularly in Cumbria. EA incident teams were deployed repeatedly, with operational staff required to operate flood defences and mobilise pumps. Community Information Officers and colleagues from our Partnership and Strategic Overview teams were also deployed, working closely with Cumberland Council to gather intelligence on flooding mechanisms and affected properties. A substantial number of property flooding reports were received during this period.

The first major event occurred between 2 and 5 November. Widespread flood alerts were issued across Cumbria and Lancashire, along with 14 flood warnings in Cumbria. Reports were received of flooded highways and several internally and externally flooded properties, predominantly due to surface water in the north and west of Cumbria.

Storm Claudia brought further disruption on 12–13 November, resulting in the highest number of flood alerts and warnings issued for a single event in Q3. Numerous main rivers and ordinary watercourses overtopped. Significant travel disruption was reported, including the closure of the M6 between Junctions 41 and 42 for several hours. Multiple reports of property flooding from all sources were received across the north-west of the county, alongside reports of stranded vehicles. Heavy, localised downpours were the primary driver, with average rainfall totals of 50–60 mm over 24 hours with some isolated areas exceeding this.

At the beginning of December, an intense band of rain brought a further 50–60 mm of rainfall over 24 hours to western and southern Cumbria. Localised intense rainfall again resulted in widespread flood alerts and three flood warnings in Cumbria, along with several alerts in Lancashire. As the system tracked southwards, additional alerts and two flood warnings were issued in Lancashire later in the week. Several property flooding reports were received in Cumbria, though none were reported in Lancashire. Storm Bram then moved across the area, delivering substantial rainfall onto already saturated ground. This required the issue of further flood alerts across Cumbria and sustained attention on Keswick Campsite due to elevated lake levels.

Following Storm Bram, forecasts indicated a high likelihood of further significant rainfall over 13–14 December due to an atmospheric river-type phenomenon. The Met Office issued several amber weather warnings for wind and rain, with forecasts suggesting more than 300 mm of rainfall over 48 hours. In anticipation, the EA scaled up its response, operating flood defences, mobilising pumps, and staffing the incident room throughout the weekend. Widespread flood alerts and 11 flood warnings were issued across the county. Approximately 360 mm of rainfall was recorded at the Honister rain gauge over 48 hours, placing considerable pressure on existing defences. Fortunately, reports of property flooding were limited relative to the forecasted river levels.

INFORMATION ITEM A

In summary, this was a demanding quarter for the Environment Agency and its partners, particularly in the north and west of Cumbria. Unfortunately, we received reports of property flooding from all sources in Cumbria, and we continue to work with partners to keep communities informed and improve our understanding of flood mechanisms to support future investment.

(LLFA key: W&F = Westmorland and Furness Council; C = Cumberland Council)

LLFA area	Flood event date	Community impacted	Number of properties reported as flooded							Wider impacts (e.g. on transport, infrastructure, environment)
			Sea	River	Ordinary Water-course	Surface water	Ground-water	Sewer Hydraulic (UU)*	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
C	3 Oct	Carlisle						5 Int 46 Ext	1 Int	Some surface water flooding to highways was reported but nothing that was reported to have caused major disruption.
W&F	3 Oct	Hawkshead		1 Int Comm						
		South Lakes – Tock How							1 Ext	
W&F	4 Oct	Ulverston – Old Hall Rd			1 Ext					Ordinary watercourse & drainage issues
W&F	4 Nov	South Lakes – Tock How							1 Ext	
		South Lakes – Levens		1 Ext						
W&F C	5 Nov 4/5 Nov	Coniston							1 Int	Flooding to highways was reported with some areas of Northwest Cumbria experiencing some fairly significant disruption
		Carlisle				1 Ext Comm				
		Carlisle				4 Ext				
		Cleator Moor				2 Ext				
		Workington				5 Ext				
		Frizington				1 Unkn				

INFORMATION ITEM A

LLFA area	Flood event date	Community impacted	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport, infrastructure, environment)	
			Sea	River	Ordinary Water-course	Surface water	Ground-water	Sewer Hydraulic (UU)*		
C	4/5 Nov	Gosforth				2 Ext				
		Holmrook		2 Unkn						
		Whitehaven				2 Int 4 Ext				
		Millom				1 Ext				
		Egremont			1 Int					
		Aspatria				1 Int				
W&F	11 Nov	Ulverston – Priory Road							1 Ext	
C	11 Nov	Carlisle		3 Int 1 Int Comm		4 Int 8 Ext 1 Int Comm 2 Unkn			Significant disruption to major transport routes was reported, with several stranded vehicles across the North and West of Cumbria.	
		Wigton		14 Int 1 Int Sch 2 Ext	5 Int 58 Ext	5 Int 1 Ext				
		Maryport			2 Int				A Section 19 Flood Investigation has been triggered for Wigton	
		Cockermouth			1 Int 1 Int Comm	7 Int 1 Int Comm	1 (Cellar)			

INFORMATION ITEM A

LLFA area	Flood event date	Community impacted	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport, infrastructure, environment)
			Sea	River	Ordinary Water-course	Surface water	Ground-water	Sewer Hydraulic (UU)*	
C	11 Nov								reported, with several stranded vehicles located across the North and West of Cumbria.
		Harrington		6 Int				5 Int	
		Gilcrux				1 Int			
		Great Broughton				1 Ext			
		Aspatria				1 Int			
		Workington		1 Int	2 Ext	6 Int 1 Int Comm 2 Ext			
		West Newton				1 Int			
W&F	13 Nov	Eden - Sockbridge			1 Int				
		Eden - Newbiggin					1 Int		
		Eden - Lazonby		5 Int (1 Comm)	2 Int				1 Ext
W&F	1-9 Dec	Ulverston		1 Int					Reports of surface water impacts to minor travel networks across the area and impacts to low lying land near to larger waterbodies.
C	1-9 Dec	Whitehaven				2 Int 1 Ext			

INFORMATION ITEM A

LLFA area	Flood event date	Community impacted	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport, infrastructure, environment)
			Sea	River	Ordinary Water-course	Surface water	Ground-water	Sewer Hydraulic (UU)*	
C	13-17 Dec	Egremont				3 Unkn			Major incident declared in Cumbria with flooding to roads and disruption to public transport particularly across the North and West of the county.
		Workington		2 Int	2 Int	1 Int 2 Ext	1 (Cellar)		
		St Bees				1 Ext	1 Int		
		Workington		2 Int	1 Int	1 Int 1 Ext			
	13-17 Dec	Carlisle				1 Ext Comm			
		Borrowdale				1 Int			
		Wigton				1 Ext Comm			
		Maryport					1 Int		
		Aspatria				1 Int			
		Cleator Moor				1 Int 1 Ext			
		Holmrook				1 Ext			
		Whitehaven				3 Unkn			
		Egremont				1 Unkn			
		Cleator		6 Int					
		Allonby		1 Int					
TOTALS			40 Int 3 Int Comm 1 Int Sch 3 Ext	15 Int 1 Int Comm 61 Ext	35 Int 3 Int Comm 37 Ext 3 Ext Comm	11 Int (or cellar)	5 Int 46 Ext	2 Int 4 Ext 1 Unkn	

INFORMATION ITEM A

LLFA area	Flood event date	Community impacted	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport, infrastructure, environment)
			Sea	River	Ordinary Water-course	Surface water	Ground-water	Sewer Hydraulic (UU)*	
			2 Unkn		11 Unkn				
TOTAL FROM ALL SOURCES			108 residential properties flooded internally (inc cellars) 7 commercial properties flooded internally 1 school flooded internally 151 residential properties flooded externally (gardens/drives etc) 3 commercial properties flooded externally 14 properties where extent of flooding unknown						

*Data provided by UU for slightly different time window (6 October 2025 – 6 January 2026).

Merseyside Strategic Partnership

In Q3 2025, Merseyside experienced a spell of prolonged heavy rainfall that led to short-term surface water flooding and disruption across the region. The most noticeable impacts were felt in Liverpool and Knowsley, where some key routes and local roads were temporarily affected. Overall, the flooding was limited to a single notable rainfall event and resulted in brief, localised impacts.

Nil return for properties flooded.

Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Partnership

INFORMATION ITEM A

Nil return from LLFAs/EA.

UU reported 2 properties flooded externally from sewer flooding.

Greater Manchester Strategic Partnership

Nil return from LLFAs/EA.

UU reported 7 properties flooded internally and 8 properties flooded externally from sewer flooding.

INFORMATION ITEM A

Lancashire Strategic Partnership

The last quarter of 2025 brought Lancashire a significant change in weather conditions, with heavy rainfall on multiple occasions.

For Lancashire County Council this resulted in 103 reports of flooding to property associated with surface water conditions. These were mostly external premises (gardens, driveways) and other non-habitable spaces (garages, basement/cellars), and many coincided with reports of nearby highway flooding and/or blocked gullies. None of the reports have yet triggered a formal investigation by the County Council in its role as lead local flood authority.

Blackburn with Darwen had considerable highway flooding / surface water runoff reported but there has been no internal flooding reported over last 3 months.

LLFA area	Flood event date	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
			Sea	River	Ordinary Water-course	Surface water	Sewer Hydraulic (UU)	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Lancashire County Council	Oct: 25 Nov: 36 Dec: 42	Burnley				6 Ext*	6 Int 13 Ext		
		Chorley				7 Ext*			
		Fylde				10 Ext*			
		Hyndburn				2 Ext*			
		Lancaster				9 Ext*			
		Pendle				9 Ext*			
		Preston				14 Ext*			
		Ribble Valley				2 Ext*			
		Rossendale				9 Ext*			
		South Ribble				17 Ext*			
		West Lancashire				10 Ext*			
		Wyre				8 Ext*			
TOTALS						103 Ext*	6 Int 13 Ext		
TOTAL FROM ALL SOURCES		6 properties flooded internally from sewer flooding 116 properties flooded externally*							

*Most incidents reported by Lancs County Council were external flooding and other non-habitable spaces. More specific data not provided.

United Utilities summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 6 October 2025 and 6 January 2026.

This is unverified data at this time, and so the numbers are likely to fluctuate until the regulatory data is signed off for UU's 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.

Period 6 October 2025 – 6 January 2026

Strategic Partnership	Internal Hydraulic (not Severe Weather)	External Hydraulic (not Severe weather)	Internal Hydraulic Severe Weather	External Hydraulic Severe Weather
Cheshire	0	2	0	0
Merseyside	0	0	0	0
Greater Manchester	7	8	0	0
Lancashire	6	13	0	0
Cumbria	5	46	0	2
TOTALS	18	69	0	2
			18 Int	
			71 Ext	

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

23 January 2026

NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT

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

The involvement of communities in the decision making, coastal management and development of the coast is key to successful implementation of resilience on the coast. These initiatives can improve the health of communities, improve prosperity or to improve the environment whilst reducing the risk of coastal erosion and flooding.

The difficulty remains in getting all those within the community a voice in order to produce a solution that benefits and is valued by the majority. Members of the coastal group and Our Future Coast have been working with communities to determine how best to develop collaborative working and move from a Decide-Announce-Defend DAD approach to an Engage-Deliberate-Decide EDD approach which has the potential to offer more successful outcomes. The deliberation is therefore what is required to ensure that communities are motivated and involved in the decision-making process.

The basis of community led collaboration and decision making at the heart of EDD requires Trust and Understanding which is a lengthy journey, often starting with small scale involvement and early conversations. This can then lead to shared understanding of the complexity of the current situation, envisaging the better future and planning the path between the two. The ultimate outcome being ready-made champions advocating for the eventual decision and actively participating in making it happen.

Clear evidence is required which is both relevant but also accepted to make decisions – this evidence may differ between the funding authority and local communities and certainly where local priorities and understanding differ from the national perspective tensions can arise. The support of elected members and the RFCC is crucial in finding a route between what is wanted and what resources are available to deliver them. Members are also critical in raising the opportunity and risks on the coast with their communities and decision makers and championing a better future for our coast through collaboration.

The last year has seen the development of National tools required to allow collective understanding and allocation of resource for better long term decision making including the SMP refresh, the release of the SMP Explorer, the National flood risk assessment NaFRA2 and the National coastal erosion risk map NCERM2. But these data sources are only truly relevant if they are understood and believed as *what people believe prevails the truth*. In particular how do we prioritise when limited resources are available and decisions particularly on land use either for agriculture or for environmental biodiversity and the safeguarding of people and property need to be made.

2025 has certainly moved the coastal sector forward in delivering the national strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management with significant progress and success delivering the Ambitions, Measures and Objectives:

- NCERM & NaFRA published,
- Investment in Innovation Programme (FCRIP & CTAP) underway,
- SMP Refresh completed and published through SMP Explorer,
- Natural Flood Management becoming mainstream and innovative solutions pioneered through OFC,
- Better links to Spatial Planning avoiding development in at risk areas,
- Coastal Asset condition captured through the Regional Monitoring Programme,
- Improved communication of risk through NaFRA and improvements to Flood Warning Service,
- Multi Agency Flood Plans improved with community involvement and working closely with Local Resilience Forums,
- Improvements to ongoing learning and career development,

In the North West coastal authorities have provided protection for people and properties to 3,000 households and secured approval for £20m investment in 2025/26 and £45.4m in 2026/27 for coastal schemes.

But we have challenges and opportunities ahead including:

- Sharing the best practice from FCRIP and CTAP to mainstream and to create a legacy for these innovation projects,
- Embedding adaptive approaches into projects, investments, and strategic plans,
- Ensuring the North West makes a case for the coast in future funding and local government reform.
- Overcoming the challenges around habitat creation and nature based solutions including affordability and complexity of BNG and licencing systems,
- Collaborative working to tackle holistic issues of water management with EA, highway authorities, water companies and infrastructure providers,
- Working with landowners and farmers to move forward opportunities to adapt to climate change to mitigate flood risk, deliver drought resilience benefits and realise habitat creation opportunities (potentially through Environmental Land Management Agreements),
- Maximising the Investment Programme to ensure it is targeted and efficient to maximise the benefit,
- Preparing local communities to be more resilient and adapt to climate change.

These are common issues across the UK and the north west and not defined by administrative boundaries. The North West Centre of Coastal Excellence is a mechanism for greater collaboration across these common issues, utilising shared resources to:

- Build the required skills and expertise, retaining and developing them in-house
- Deliver place-based outcomes for communities
- Use current resources in a more sustainable and efficient manner.
- Build a legacy on the Our Future Coast project learning and project pipeline.

Coastal Group Activities and Strategic Alignment with the RFCC Business Plan and the FCERM Strategy for England

This section summarises current Coastal Group activities and how they align with the RFCC Business Plan and the FCERM Strategy for England. It highlights how RFCC-supported work is enabling collaboration, strengthening evidence and supporting long-term adaptation to flood and coastal change.

SMP Refresh 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

Adaptive Pathways to deliver the SMP policies

RFCC Strategic Aim: Managing water at catchment scale with nature

FCERM Strategy Measures:

Climate resilient places

Measure 1.2.2: From 2020 the Environment Agency will work with other risk management authorities and local partners to develop adaptive pathways that enable local places to better plan for future flood and coastal change and adapt to future climate hazards.

Measure 1.2.3: By 2025 the Environment Agency will use the learning from adaptive pathways to develop a package of guidance, resources and tools to better integrate adaptation to future flooding and coastal change into projects, investments and strategic plans.

Coastal Group Activity: Adaptive Pathways for SMP Delivery

Goal: To develop a Shoreline Management Plan (SMP) delivery process that supports long-term adaptation, uses adaptive pathways and triggers, and responds to climate change uncertainty.

What we've done:

- Worked with RMAs across the region to understand practical barriers to implementing SMP policies.
- Co-developed a proportionate, repeatable SMP delivery process aligned with national policy and current practice.
- Identified training and delivery approaches to improve consistency across the North West.

What we will do:

- Document the SMP delivery guidance and training process and roll it out across the Northwest.
- Develop policy position papers highlighting barriers and potential national solutions.
- Share learning through coastal groups and professional networks in England and Wales.

This supports the FCERM Strategy by:

- Enabling earlier, better-informed decisions rather than reactive and expensive interventions.
- Supporting place-based, adaptive approaches rather than fixed, short-term schemes.

Shoreline Management Plan Refresh into Action Project (RIA)

RFCC Strategic Aim: Managing water at catchment scale with nature & Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure

FCERM Strategy Measures:

Climate resilient places

Measure 1.2.4: By 2025 coastal groups will review their shoreline management plans, update action plans and where appropriate change shoreline management policies to better reflect adaptive approaches to managing coastal change

Today's growth and infrastructure – resilient to tomorrow's climate

Measure 2.1.3: From 2020 the Environment Agency and coast protection authorities will advise planning authorities on how shoreline management plans can better inform planning policies for the coast, including designation of coastal change management areas.

Coastal Group Activity: Shoreline Management Plan Refresh into Action Project

Goal: To establish a clear evidence-led approach for translating SMP policy intent into delivery, ensuring SMPs remain adaptive, deliverable and integrated with the planning system.

This includes:

- A consistent process for reviewing and updating SMP policies and actions.
- Ensuring any policy change is supported by appropriate technical evidence and stakeholder engagement.
- Stronger alignment with national datasets and spatial planning tools, including Local Plans and CCMAs.

What we've done

- Worked collaboratively with Coastal Group partners to understand the complexity and interdependencies of potential SMP policy changes.
- Completed an initial review, identifying 34 SMP policy units requiring formal policy change which are all dependent on further technical evidence and engagement.

What we will do

- Agree and implement a formal SMP policy change process, endorsed by the Coastal Group and senior stakeholders.
- Prioritise and progress policy changes where evidence and engagement already exist.
- Continue targeted engagement with Local Planning Authorities to support integration of NCERM and SMP Explorer into Local Plans and CCMAs.

This supports the RFCC and FCERM Strategy by:

- Moving SMPs from static, long-term policy positions to practical, deliverable and adaptive plans by:
- Identifying policies that no longer reflect current climate evidence or future risk projections.
- Strengthening alignment between FCERM policy and spatial planning, ensuring SMPs remain credible, and up-to-date that actively support long-term adaptation.

SMP Epoch 1 Delivery Reporting

RFCC Strategic Aim: Managing water at catchment scale with nature & Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure

FCERM Strategy Measure:

Climate resilient places



Measure 1.2.4: By 2025 coastal groups will review their shoreline management plans, update action plans and where appropriate change shoreline management policies to better reflect adaptive approaches to managing coastal change

This work is not a statutory reporting requirement; it provides learning and assurance to support long-term planning and future SMP updates.

Coastal Group Activity: SMP Epoch 1 Delivery Reporting

Goal: To develop a transparent approach for understanding how Shoreline Management Plan policies have been implemented during Epoch 1 to support future decision-making and prioritisation.

What we've done

- Shared knowledge and learning from Welsh Government's SMP Epoch 1 reporting (Measure 11).
- Reviewed how the Welsh approach can be adapted to the North West.
- Begun collecting evidence on SMP policy implementation, highlighting progress, challenges and gaps.

What we will do

- Continue light-touch evidence gathering to develop a clear regional picture of SMP implementation.
- Use the evidence to identify:
 - Areas of Good practice
 - Barriers to policy implementation
 - Outstanding actions requiring further work or support
- Use learning to inform:
 - Future SMP refresh and update activity
 - Coastal Group prioritisation and support

This supports the RFCC and FCERM Strategy by:

Improving understanding of how long-term coastal management policies translate into practice, providing insight to support adaptive planning, future prioritisation and informed decision-making without introducing additional reporting burdens.

Infrastructure Mapping for the Fylde Peninsula

RFCC Strategic Aim: Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure

FCERM Strategy Measures:

Today's growth and infrastructure – resilient to tomorrow's climate



Measure 2.8.1: From 2021 the Environment Agency will provide expert advice, evidence and data on flooding and coastal change to help national infrastructure providers ensure their investments are resilient to flooding and coastal erosion.



Strategic objective 2.8: Between now and 2050 risk management authorities will work with national infrastructure providers to contribute to more flood and coastal resilient places.

Coastal Group Activity: Infrastructure mapping for the Fylde Peninsula

Goal: To improve understanding of the criticality, vulnerability and interdependencies of coastal infrastructure along the Fylde Peninsula, and to strengthen how SMP policy and coastal change evidence inform long-term infrastructure planning and investment.

What we've done

- Commissioned a cross-sector infrastructure mapping and resilience assessment, using open-source data and the CARVER+ methodology.
- Identified key infrastructure vulnerabilities, interdependencies and potential cascade failure risks.

What we will do

- Use the findings to support engagement with infrastructure providers on shared coastal risks and future change.
- Improve integration of SMP policy and coastal change evidence into infrastructure planning and investment decisions.
- Inform joint planning, funding bids and multi-agency resilience planning, with potential for replication in other priority coastal areas.

This supports the RFCC and FCERM Strategy by:

- Providing a shared, evidence-based understanding of coastal infrastructure risk.
- Enabling more effective engagement with infrastructure providers.
- Supporting the practical application of SMP policy in long-term infrastructure decision-making

Centre of Coastal Excellence

RFCC Strategic Aim: Building community resilience & Increasing risk management authority capacity and collaboration

FCERM Strategy Measures:

Future risk and investment

Measure B.2: By 2025 risk management authorities will encourage the development of the skills and capabilities they need to help secure new and innovative funding and financing for flood and coastal resilience

A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change

Measure 3.1.2: From 2021 risk management authorities will encourage the development of the engagement skills and capabilities they need to better support communities to manage and adapt to future flooding and coastal change

Coastal Group Activity: Centre of Coastal Excellence

Goal: To address shared coastal challenges that extend beyond administrative boundaries by establishing a North West Centre of Coastal Excellence as a mechanism for long-term collaboration, skill-building and more effective use of regional capacity.

It aims to:

- Build and retain specialist coastal skills and expertise.
- Support place-based outcomes for coastal communities.
- Make better use of existing resources.
- Build a lasting legacy from the Our Future Coast programme, including its learning and emerging project pipeline.

What we've done

- Delivered a programme of targeted engagement to test and develop the Centre of Coastal Excellence concept, including:
 - Regional workshops in July and October
 - Key stakeholder interviews (August–September)
 - An elected members webinar, with members also invited to attend the October workshop
- Used this engagement to explore:
 - A phased approach to development
 - Early pilot opportunities to demonstrate value
 - Identified a suite of potential pilot projects to act as early steps towards the Centre of Coastal Excellence.

What we will do

Use pilot delivery to:

- Demonstrate value and build confidence
- Explore the governance, resourcing and delivery models required to progress in a planned and intentional way.
- Inform decisions on the long-term structure and scope of the Centre of Coastal Excellence
- Build on Our Future Coast learning and partnerships to embed collaboration as a long-term approach rather than a time-limited project.

This supports the RFCC and FCERM Strategy by:

- Improving regional capability, strengthening collaboration across boundaries and making more effective use of limited public resources.
- Developing skills, engagement capability and delivery models that enable communities, partners and RMAs to plan for and adapt to long-term coastal change, using a phased, evidence-led approach.

Our Future Coast

RFCC Strategic Aims: Building community resilience, Increasing risk management authority capacity and collaboration, Managing water at catchment scale with nature

FCERM Strategy Measures:

Climate resilient places

Measure 1.1.2: From 2020 the Environment Agency will work with the government to lead the delivery of the resilience programme supporting 25 local places to take forward innovative actions that help to bolster resilience to flooding and coastal change

Measure 1.4.2: From 2021 risk management authorities will work with catchment partnerships, coastal groups, land managers and communities to mainstream the use of nature based solutions.

Measure 1.5.1: From 2020 risk management authorities and Natural England will work with farmers and land managers to encourage land use and land management practices that help contribute to greater resilience to both floods and droughts

Strategic objective 1.4: Between now and 2030 risk management authorities will use nature based solutions and improve the environment through their investments in flood and coastal resilience

A nation ready to respond and adapt to flooding and coastal change

Measure 3.1.2: From 2021 risk management authorities will encourage the development of the engagement skills and capabilities they need to better support communities to manage and adapt to future flooding and coastal change

Measure 3.4.1: By 2025 risk management authorities and other organisations will work with education providers to encourage opportunities for ongoing learning and career development in engineering and environmental sciences

Future risk and investment

Measure B.2: By 2025 risk management authorities will encourage the development of the skills and capabilities they need to help secure new and innovative funding and financing for flood and coastal resilience.

What we've done

- The OFC team have been busy over the last quarter. In November the team held a successful site leads workshop, gathering all our site leads together face to face. The main part of the day was a session to consider how to tie all the work which has been achieved, and our plans for next year, back to the aims and objectives set out at the beginning. We also had an interactive session playing Morecambe Area Gaming Environment (MAGE) and working through Morecambe Bay Partnership's Visioning consultation.
- Our midterm review conducted by independent facilitators has been completed, with some suggestions for how we work in the final year to maximise our legacy and impact, so that we can be the very best we can be.
- The Assistant Programme Managers role has had a grade uplift and will hopefully be out to advert in January as an Our Future Coast Project Officer.
- Our early careers team members took part in a training day to increase confidence whilst presenting, a great day was had by all, and visible results by the end of the day.
- The internship at Sunderland Point has come to an end, Charlotte Evans at Lancaster university has completed an excellent report on the coastal processes at Sunderland Point. We are also pleased to note that she has also begun a Master of Research with Lancaster, funded by OFC to examine the structures at Hest Bank.

- Unfortunately, the beneficial use of dredged material scheme at Fleetwood has been put on hold after the MMO licence consultation received numerous objections for a small test and trial. The limitations it would have been subjected to would have been too costly and made the scheme unviable.

Our Future Coast team

- Carl Green, Project Sponsor (carl.green@wyre.gov.uk)
- Ellie Brown, Programme Manager (ellie.brown@wyre.gov.uk)
- OFC Project Officer (Wyre Council) – advert to be out in January
- Weronika Sroka Nature Based Solution Lead (Contractor- weronika.sroka.consulting@gmail.com)
- 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)

The coastal group and members at the RFCC have a very interesting year ahead. Decisions made will help shape the direction of coastal communities and will bring into practice the lessons learnt through Our Future Coast Innovation programme. The challenges and the opportunities are significant to ensure the North West makes a case for the coast in future funding and local government reform and we work collaboratively together to deliver the challenge of Coastal Change and Flood Risk Management.

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

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group – Local Choices****Draft minutes of the Local Choices meeting****28 November 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 Giles Archibald	RFCC Member – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr James Shorrock	RFCC Member – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Jane Hugo	RFCC Member – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
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 P'ship
Cllr Elizabeth Grey	RFCC Member - Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Mark Goldsmith	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic FR P'ship
Cllr Sam Naylor	RFCC Member – Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic FR P'ship
Carolyn Otley	RFCC Member – Communities
Susannah Bleakley	RFCC Member – Coastal Issues
Amy Cooper	RFCC Member – Water and Sewerage Industry
Aimee Brough	RFCC Member – Agriculture (Catchment Based Approaches)
Chris Findley	RFCC Member – Planning and Development
Carl Green	Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group
Ian Crewe	Officer – EA Area Director, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC)
Richard Knight	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Cumbria
Fiona Duke	Officer – EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Lancashire
Nick Pearson	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Greater Manchester
Mary-Rose Muncaster	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Merseyside and Cheshire
Adam Walsh	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, C&L
Andy Tester	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, GMMC
Sally Whiting	Officer – EA Senior Advisor (RFCC)

Support Officers/Observers:

Ali Harker	Co-ordinator - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Jason Harte	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Andrew Harrison	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Matthew Waning	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Nick Rae	Officer – Cumberland Council
Karl Melville	Officer – Cumberland Council
Cllr Bob Kelly	Cumberland Council
John Davies	Officer - Lancashire County Council
Lorah Cheyne	Co-ordinator - Lancashire Partnership
Cllr Gerald Mirfin	Lancashire County Council
Fran Comyn	Officer - Rochdale Borough Council
Jill Holden	Co-ordinator – Greater Manchester Combined Authorities
Steve Walsh	Officer - Bolton Council

NW RFCC Meeting – 23 January 2026 – Information Item C
RFCC F&BSG Meeting – 9 January 2026 – Agenda Item 8

Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer – Blackpool Council
Guy Metcalfe	Officer – Cheshire East Highways
Katie Eckford	Officer – North West SMP Co-ordinator
Sarah Fontana	EA, FCRM Capital Programme Coordinator
Stuart Mault	EA, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor
Gary Hilton	EA FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor

1. Welcome and Apologies for Absence

Terri McMillan opened the meeting and welcomed all those in attendance.

Terri advised apologies had been received from Cllr Philip Cusack (Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Kate Morley (RFCC Member – Conservation); Jim Turton and Matt Winnard (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Paul Wisse (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership) and Rachel Harmer, RFCC Secretariat.

We noted and accepted the correctly nominated substitutes of:

- Cllr Jane Hamilton on behalf of Cllr Philip Cusack for the Greater Manchester Partnership.

2. North West RFCC Refresh Allocation 2026/27

This extraordinary meeting has been convened for the North West RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group to endorse the proposed Local Choices allocation and approve Local Levy requests for the 2026/27 investment programme. This follows the Government's commitment of £4.2 Billion for flood and coastal risk management (FCRM) between April 2026 and March 2029, as announced in Spending Review 2025.

Adrian Lythgo advised that at the 24 October RFCC meeting, the RFCC formally and properly agreed to delegate its functions to this Subgroup, both to consider and agree the Local Choices position and to consider the previous recommendation from this Subgroup around the use of Local Levy for Quick Wins funding.

Adrian advised that over the last two years, the process by which the Committee considers the allocation of money to schemes has been even more centralised in terms of process than had been the case previously. This has been the result of significant change - the new government, the six-year programme finishing a year early, and a new three-year programme starting a year earlier than planned, with lots of schemes in construction. In practice, this has meant even less local discretion and room for manoeuvre for the Committee for Local Choices within the rules. With the new funding policy, there's an extent to which that might be the case going forward as well, which is not for discussion today but will be returned to future RFCC meetings when the Committee is being asked to consent the programme and when approaches under the new funding policy from the government will become much clearer.

There were no questions or comments.

3. Local Choices Summary – Allocation for the North West

Andy Tester provided a short overview and reflections of the various stages of the refresh cycle this year. He advised that the process has presented new and different challenges in the last two years from what we have been used to in previous years. This year's cycle had two phases of submission – Phase 1 covering schemes that would be in construction before April 2026, and Phase 2 which covered schemes in development or pipeline. After just the Phase 1 submissions in July, for schemes in or about to be in construction, it was clear that the programme nationally was over-subscribed. This led to an unprecedented commission in September to review our Phase 1 submission to see what efficiencies or reprofiling changes could be made to reduce the demand on the funding nationally and allow more in-construction schemes to go ahead in 2026/27. The construction data criterion was also changed from schemes in construction by April 2026 to schemes in construction by September 2025. Through this process, the North West was able to identify £13 million of the investment ask in 2026/27 which could be reduced in order to help the national picture. It was this commission process which delayed the receipt of the indicative allocation into October and which has led to the need for this additional Local Choices meeting in November.

Andy then provided a summary of the indicative allocation for the North West in 2026/27 which is the highest indicative allocation of all RFCCs nationally, at approximately £158 Million FCERM GiA, supporting a strong capital programme. However, this allocation is below the circa £200 Million bid submitted in July 2025, now requiring difficult prioritisation decisions. Members noted that funding has been prioritised for schemes already in construction and those meeting statutory and safety obligations, alongside strategic resilience and asset maintenance. However, it is acknowledged that North West risk management authorities (RMAs) have schemes they wanted to progress into construction or develop into the pipeline into next year, which haven't received any allocation.

Andy reported that there are circa 42 North West schemes where bids were made for funding in July that haven't received any funding through the national allocation or Local Choices. There is a stronger appetite to progress schemes than we are able to deliver. This does not mean that those schemes are unaffordable and can't progress in the future - it just means that for the next 12 months they may have to stop or slow. They are able to bid for funding in future years and when the new funding reforms are implemented, these may present a few additional opportunities for those schemes to be picked up again. We can continue having the conversations on these schemes and moving them forward.

Councillor Giles Archibald asked if it was possible to distinguish natural flood management (NFM) projects from other schemes in the programme. Adrian Lythgo advised that under the current funding rules and project types there isn't such a distinction but under the new funding policy there will be a specific NFM allocation.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin enquired about the £13 Million that was released from the North West back to the national programme. She asked where this funding has gone and what was it about the schemes that have been given this funding that made them more deserving of the projects the North West wanted to put forward. Andy advised this will be covered in more detail later in the meeting but that the majority of the savings identified were from the Lancashire partnership. He also cited an example of a multi-year project doing some health and safety works in Greater Manchester, which he recalled as being in Didsbury, where it had been possible to reprofile the spend across years. In general, the review of the programme had identified schemes where there was low confidence in delivery, or schemes which were able to reprofile some of the GiA spend and bring in

either partnership funding contributions or additional resources, allowing the scheme to continue delivering but with less GiA funding in 2026/27.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Goldwin enquired further about the Greater Manchester scheme which had funding released, and asked whether the public will have been left at greater flood risk due to the scheme not being completed in its entirety. Andy Tester corrected his error that he was in fact referring to a Salford scheme and that the works to reduce the risk of flooding had completely finished with the adjoining pathway works still being completed.

Adrian Lythgo advised he wished to reiterate some of Andy's comments, as points he has made to national teams on behalf of the Committee. He reiterated the challenges presented by finishing the old programme a year early and starting a new programme with significant numbers of schemes in construction nationally, which had insufficient resource to continue. Whereas in other parts of the country there were either delivery issues or they were more in pipeline. He advised the EA nationally was trying to shift resource to the ones that were in construction everywhere and that's why there's been that slightly odd process this year. Due to the change in government, it's entirely legitimate for a new government to decide that they want to deliver a national programme in a different way, and they'll always be dislocation. Adrian advised what the Committee needs to focus on going forward is that some of these very unusual circumstances don't continue into the future as the new programme is established. He advised that is what he would like us to discuss in January.

Providing more detail for Cumbria and Lancashire Area, Adam Walsh advised a £154 Million bid was submitted and an indicative allocation of £115 Million was received, so some £39 Million less than was bid for. He advised that 95% of the allocation received is against the top 10 spending projects, which reflects the number of large projects currently in construction in the area. He provided an overview of the proposed Local Choices where it had been possible to reprofile spend on some projects to provide some funding for other schemes not receiving any allocation from the national allocation process. Adam also reported that there is £4 million of over-programme within the Cumbria and Lancashire programme that was allowing additional schemes to progress without formally receiving allocation at this stage.

Adam reported a recent development that, following a request for in-year opportunities to spend more GiA in 2025/26, it had been agreed with the National PMO (Programme Management Office) to accelerate £5 Million of spend on the Wyre Beach Management Scheme into this financial year. This allowed the reallocation of £5 million in 2026/27 allocation to other priority projects in Cumbria and Lancashire Area. This approval was received on 18th November 2025 and a list of those projects now benefitting from this £5 Million was provided.

For Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Area, Andy Tester advised the vast majority of funding was for the top two schemes, the River Roch in Littleborough and the Lower Risk Debris Screens. He advised within Local Choices, moderate changes have been made to the indicative allocation by reprofiling the spend on these two schemes which has enabled other area and sub regional priorities to be supported. He provided an overview of schemes that would be able to be supported and those that would not.

Andy Tester's connection dropped out briefly at this point so Adam Walsh advised on the provision for over-programming nationally which had seen the North West allocated circa £17.7 Million out of a possible £38 Million. This demonstrates that the National Programme Management Office

recognise the number of projects in the North West which are in construction but which there isn't enough funding to fully deliver them. The allocated over-programming will allow some of those projects to progress. However with this not being additional allocated funding but simply over programme (will only be affordable if other schemes with allocated funding underspend), there is still a risk if we are told we have to manage back to budget.

Adam Walsh advised that a SharePoint link was shared with Members earlier this week to a list of those circa 30 North West projects/schemes that even after Local Choices and reprofiling have not received any funding.

He also advised that in the past we have been able to move money from the main investment programme allocation (schemes, capital maintenance, property flood resilience) to the Support and Enabling Programme if required. However, there are now more constraints in place and this can no longer be done. For example work such as modelling and work carried out by Flood Resilience teams which we must be able to fund, we haven't been allowed to do through Local Choices. This has created additional challenges.

With regard to properties better protected from flooding, Andy Tester reported the North West's initial bid which was forecast to better protect just under 14,000 properties. Following the national allocation and proposed Local Choices, we are looking to better protect 10,500 properties from flooding. This is still a significant number. The reduction is due to the funding challenge and the reprofiling of schemes where they either have not received an allocation or only received a partial allocation. It was noted however that properties would still be better protected but in future years.

Councillor Alan Quinn enquired as to the completion date of the Radcliffe and Redvales scheme. Andy advised the scheme was due to be finished this year, but that the installation of the floodgates has been pushed into next year. He advised he will check this following the meeting and provide further details to Councillor Quinn via email.

Councillor Giles Archibald asked for clarification on the definition and measurement of properties better protected, as in some places there appears to be significant investment with no or few properties being better protected. Richard Knight advised that properties better protected can only be claimed once a whole scheme (or phase) is completely signed off. A scheme could be in construction over multiple years but the properties can only be claimed at the very end of the project.

Councillor Archibald acknowledged this but raised his concern that that this approach does not actually reflect the properties that are in the process of being protected because of activity that's currently taking place, data which it would be useful to see.

Richard Knight acknowledged this and suggested that it would be possible to incorporate information on properties due to be protected in future years, to provide a fuller picture.

Adrian Lythgo recognised that this point is well made in terms of external communications and he understands why this has been highlighted. He advised what Andy is seeking to do is to show the properties that will be claimed directly in relation to the one year of money that the RFCC is being asked to approve today (for 2026/27). He agreed that there will be a look to provide this detail going forwards.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin agreed with Giles' comment and highlighted the difficulty in clarifying what the impact of our decisions are.

Andy Tester moved on to provide an overview of the Support and Enabling programme which sits outside of the Local Choices process. He reported that against the North West's initial bid of circa £21 Million, we have been allocated £9 Million. He provided the breakdown of this to Asset reconditioning, Bridges, Hydrometry, Modelling and forecasting, and Strategies. He also explained that there was no North West allocation for Flood Resilience as this was becoming more centralised and the allocation had been retained at a national level. He reflected that this was still a strong and significant allocation but was less than bid for.

Referring again to the over-programme, Andy advised of a change this year away from over-programming being managed at local area level to having a nationally managed over-programme. National over-programming of £37.69 Million has been built into the programme with the North West being allocated 47% of this which is £17.7 Million. We noted this is a significant amount of potential additional funding towards our schemes and is due to schemes that are either in construction or due to get into construction between now and April 2026 and the recognition that those schemes will need additional support. The national management of the over-programme means that we can only spend against the schemes recognised as being part of the national over-programme, and cannot bring in additional schemes for support. Details of the projects forming the approved over-programme were shared.

While the level of over-programme allowance is positive, Andy advised that this over-programme does however come at risk as we could have to manage that back towards allocated budget within our area programmes. If we were to spend £17 Million and then in-year we had to manage back, we would have to find that funding resource elsewhere, which would be a big challenge.

Andy Tester then provided details of some additional resource funding that had been allocated nationally. This was in recognition of the Phase Two element that we bid for and due to the programme being oversubscribed with schemes in construction, which presented a challenge for other schemes and pipeline development work. There has been additional resource funding made available of £12.2 Million nationally, of which the North West received £1.15 Million (9.4% of the National allocation). This sits within the RDEL (Resource Department Expenditure Limits) element. A list of the schemes that we are now able to support was provided.

Councillor Giles Archibald referred to the additional resource funding and while making it clear he had no objection to it, asked who was making the decisions on the allocation of this funding to projects.

Andy responded that these allocations have been made as a result of conversations with all partners and key stakeholders, which have included conversations on specific schemes including delivery timescales and confidence.

Councillor Giles Archibald asked if councillors were made aware or had any role in making these decisions.

In response to Giles, Adrian Lythgo referred again to the quite limited discretion available to RFCCs as to what they can change and advised that allocations on capital funding and on RDEL are made

nationally and then within certain type rules the RFCC may have some discretion to change what those decisions are. In terms of the RDEL list, there will be a relatively small number of schemes where the resource part of capital spend can take a scheme forward, so this RDEL opportunity won't technically be available to every single scheme. The ones where it might technically apply are worked out by local EA colleagues, in conjunction largely with Local Authority officers, who then may involve councillors in that conversation. The extent to which councillors are involved in that process is a matter for individual local authorities and the way that they work, but this is very much in the context of Local Choices and the limited extent to which the Committee can vary what comes through from the national allocations process. He acknowledged this is a high-level answer to questions raised, but it all stems from the original legislation and it's really to have the broader conversation with respect to the programme going forward. The decisions being asked of the Subgroup today are within the existing legislation and rules.

Councillor Giles Archibald added that he did not want to disrupt good programmes being put in place but was keen to ensure good transparency around the decision making. He indicated this is something he would like to revisit to better understand.

Referring again to the allocation of the additional resource funding (RDEL) to projects, Fiona Duke advised that EA Operations Delivery Managers have a list of assets that require the highest level of attention. Sluice Back Drain has been in the programme for about 3 years and has quite significant bank slips on the River Douglas. She advised the Altmouth Pumping Station Bridge Repair is due to crumbling concrete, so this is to make access to that pumping station safe. Bretherton Outfall is where there was a broken tidal flap which needs to be replaced and Fine Janes Decommissioning is more of a long-term plan to hand the responsibility for that back to the landowners once the pumps in that pumping station have been refurbished. She advised these are things that have been in the pipeline and wanted to be in the programme for quite a long time and because this opportunity has arisen, EA Operations Delivery Managers decided these were the highest priority assets that need attention in Cumbria and Lancashire Area.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin remarked about feeling a certain level of discomfort with what was being presented as there was a lot that was not clear to her. She referred back to information presented by Andy on funding for Flood Resilience no longer being a matter for local decision and now being done nationally. She was unclear on this particularly questioning that everything we are doing is about flood resilience. She was unclear about this change and questioned what some of the implications might be.

Andy reiterated that the Support and Enabling programmes are allocated nationally and sit outside the scope of Local Choices. Terri McMillan asked if Andy could liaise with Councillor Shilton Godwin via email outside of the meeting to address her concerns.

Finally, Andy shared the indicative allocation the Environment Agency in the North West had received for its resource asset maintenance programme. The refresh cycle for this part of the investment programme runs about a month behind the Local Choices cycle for schemes. Members noted that the national resource maintenance budget remains the same as 2025/26 at £138 Million and that the North West has seen a slight increase in budget, which is still being worked through.

Following the RFCC's formal delegation of its powers to the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup for this meeting, the following items were resolved:

– The RFCC approved the FCERM investment programme Local Choices for the North West RFCC for 2026/27

There were 14 votes of support.

- The RFCC approved the resource maintenance indicative allocation.

There were 13 votes of support.

There were no further comments or questions.

4. Local Levy

Andy Tester provided an overview of the key Local Levy programme figures for 2025/26 and looking ahead to 2026/27. He advised that the Local Levy balance at the end of 2025/26 is forecast to be around £5.8 Million. He reported that an amendment had been made to this data and graph since the papers for the meeting were shared, as it now reflects the 3% increase in Levy income for 2026/27 voted for by the RFCC in October. As we move through 2026/27, balances are forecast to reduce to £3.195 Million, and then further by 2027/28 to around the £2 Million minimum working balance level, depending on the Levy rate supported for 2027/28. He emphasised how the 3% increase in the Levy had helped to bolster the Levy programme.

Andy advised that the Levy balance scenario graph presented does include the proposed uplift of the Quick Wins funding to £800K per year for the next three years.

He also reported a reprofiling change on the Sankey Brook scheme which sees £161K of Local Levy moved from 2025/26 to 2026/27, now providing a total of £302K of Local Levy for this scheme in 2026/27. Andy reported that by doing this, the scheme can utilise an underspend of FCERM GiA in the current year to meet its minimum funding need and doesn't impact the Local Levy minimum balance threshold.

Partnership Quick Wins Funding

Sally Whiting provided an overview of the Quick Wins funding portion of Local Levy funding, introduced in 2015 so that each of the five sub regional partnerships had its own pot of money to use for small scale interventions to reduce flood risk within their partnerships.

For a number of years, up until the current year, Quick Wins funding was an allocation of £100K per partnership per year, so a total of £500K, although it was recognised that this was feeling very stretched particularly in the partnerships with larger numbers of authorities. Through Local Choices last year, increased Quick Wins funding of £250k was allocated to each partnership for the 2025/26 financial year.

Earlier this year, a review of the Quick Wins funding was carried out with a review group involving input from all of the partnerships. The review recommendations were reported to the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup in October, which included a vote to increase the Quick Wins funding. It was agreed that recommendation should be brought back to this meeting for consideration as part of the Local Choices process.

Sally set out the recommendations following consideration by the Subgroup at the October meeting:

- For a total Quick Win allocation of £800k per year
- For this to be a formal three-year funding commitment (£2.4 Million over the next three years), providing greater flexibility across years and to match demand. 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, with a proposed tolerance of up to 25% more or less, and there should not be any back-end loading of the spend across the three years. There is.
 - That the allocation of funding across the partnerships should follow Option 1 - Even distribution between the partnerships.
(Option 2 which did not receive majority support from the Subgroup was for half the allocation shared evenly between partnerships and half based on surface water flood risk.)

Adrian Lythgo reminded us that these recommendations were being brought to this Local Choices discussion today as there was the possibility that there might be proposals for large scale use of the Levy to support individual schemes as part of Local Choices, which would have needed to be considered alongside the Quick Wins recommendations from the Subgroup.

He clarified that the only other Local Levy proposal today is the reprofiling of the funding on the Sankey Brook scheme which is already an allocation and is clearly affordable.

Following the RFCC's formal delegation of its powers to the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup for this meeting the following items were resolved:

- The RFCC noted the Local Levy balance for 2025/26.
- The RFCC approved a Quick Wins (Local Levy) funding allocation of £800K per year.
There were 13 votes of support.
- The RFCC approved this as a three-year allocation of Quick Win funding between 2026/27-2028/29 (£2.4 million in total).
There were 13 votes of support.
- The RFCC approved that the Quick Wins funding should be split equally across the five sub regional partnerships (Option 1).
There were 12 votes of support.

There was 1 vote in support of Option 2 (half the allocation split evenly between partnerships and half based on surface water flood risk)

- The RFCC supported the reprofiling of the £161K of Local Levy from 2025/26 into 2026/27 for the Sankey Brook Flood Risk Management scheme.
There were 13 votes of support.

Councillor Alan Quinn took a moment to highlight the benefits of the raising of Local Levy funding, whilst acknowledging the funding challenges of all Local Authorities. He advised by coming together we can raise funding and be able to support schemes that may otherwise be unaffordable.

There were no further comments or questions.

5. Any Other Business

Councillor Giles Archibald referred back to the October 'Landscape in a Changing Climate' conference, run by the Cumbria Strategic Partnership, and the conclusions from it, and asked how these should now be taken forwards. Adrian Lythgo advised that the conclusions should first be considered by the conference subgroup on what any next steps should be.

Sally Whiting advised she will speak to Dave Kennedy and other key individuals involved in the event to discuss the way forward and to think about any potential next steps that could be taken forward through the RFCC Business Plan or which might be addressed by the Committee more generally. She advised more thought needs to be given to considering wider changes around land management and what the best thing to do at the right time is. Councillor Archibald asked that we come back to this at a future meeting and Adrian confirmed that any specific proposals would need to come back to the Committee.

Carolyn Otley asked whether we should set ourselves a target for NFM, advising she is aware the national allocation is for at least £300 Million to be spent on NFM over the next few years, which is only 3% rising to 4% of the total FCERM budget. She advised we have much scope to try and push that in the North West, but would like to know whether we think we could set ourselves a higher target and whether the mechanisms to implement that exist. She noted that we've seen an increasing centralisation of the decision making around the last couple of years' budgets and she highlighted there are implications of that for the North West that aren't necessarily visible to the Committee. One of which she is aware of is that all the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP) projects are being asked to make significant cuts to next year's budget to free up allocation for some of the things we are approving at this Committee. She remarked that it seems a little bit short-sighted to be cutting back on innovation work at a point when we really need to innovate our way out of climate change.

Richard Knight advised he is in agreement in terms of setting ourselves NFM targets, which may be in excess of the national target, but recognised that it will be important for us to understand how the allocation and split for NFM is going to be managed. Some projects will be standalone NFM projects and easily classified but some existing schemes on the programme are delivering NFM alongside other measures. He gave the example of the Kendal Flood Risk Management Scheme that won't be showing as delivering NFM with the way the programme will be split into the future, yet quite a percentage of the scheme is NFM delivery. He also highlighted it won't show where Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) benefits are being delivered. Members noted the Preston scheme is going through phases of getting quite sizeable amounts of BNG signed off, so there's probably more in our programme than just is reflected by the split for standalone NFM. We will need to come back to this, including the specific NFM element, in future conversations on the new funding rules. Some of that conversation will be around how far this Committee wants to go and how much of a priority do we want to give to NFM and landscape management. He advised we need to understand what tools are available that either help or hinder us in that respect and it might be that we need to feedback to

Adrian and say actually the tool that National is using to make some of these decisions isn't helping with how we want to develop our programme moving forward.

Councillor Jane Hugo gave her thanks to EA colleagues for all the additional work that they've had to get involved in over the last 12 months to sort all the funding out for the North West RFCC. She advised that she is aware this has been a big task and advised that it is very much appreciated.

Councillor Alan Quinn made reference to an article in The Guardian regarding a flood risk management scheme in Pickering in Yorkshire. He advised of the two solutions to reduce flood risk in the area, a hard engineered scheme of £20 Million and a £2 Million NFM scheme. The NFM scheme was opted for. He also referred back to the presentation at the July RFCC meeting on peatland restoration where significant change can be achieved in 10 years, as opposed to a hard engineered scheme that could take five to six years to complete. He supported the scoping of NFM schemes which can be much more cost effective and hold more water.

Adrian Lythgo added some final remarks recognising it has been clear from some of the questions in today's meeting, and certainly from some of the new Members, that there is a level of discomfort in the extent to which information is presented and then decisions are taken and he suggested that it will be worth doing an overview of how the current process works in January. He advised that to a degree it is academic, as the new policy and programmes are about to change. Currently the Committee do have an influence on shaping the pipeline of projects that go forward, but once the projects are submitted to the national team, the national rules and allocation from the EA Board determine which projects will go forward and only when they've done that do we get limited discretion to vary those projects to get a better mix of projects into the programme. He summarised that in the decisions that have been made today, the Committee has agreed to keep slightly more projects moving than the national allocation dictated so that we're better addressing the broader risk as the Committee understands it.

Adrian advised that the new system is going to drive investment based on flood risk data that comes out of the NaFRA2 risk tool, therefore increasing centralisation. He advised what the Committee needs to do and the steer that he needs from the Committee is to have a discussion about their degree of comfort with that increasing centralisation and how and what messages the Committee might wish to feedback to the centre about those changes. Adrian advised this is a discussion he would like to have when the final confirmation of how the new funding policy is going to work has been received. He noted all he can highlight at the moment are some risks and dangers in terms of what might happen, but when the specific proposals are understood, Members will need to have that conversation so that feedback can be provided by Adrian on Members' behalf.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin thanked Adrian for his remarks highlighting she has found some of the detail discussed today quite unpalatable, advising she is speaking as a Member who represents an area which is devolved. She remarked that it had bothered her that votes have had to be made, which have meant that less is happening in this area than would have been and questioned what the implications are for wider plans for the future of people in this part of the world. She advised that a future discussion on this would be welcome. She also noted her interest in comments raised by Carolyn Otley, specifically on decisions that are less visible to RFCCs, and on the wider benefits of carbon sequestration and biodiversity.

There were no further comments or questions and the meeting was closed.

DRAFT

AGENDA ITEMS 3, 4, 5 & 6

North West Investment Programme

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

9 January 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive update on the delivery and performance of the North West Investment, Resource Maintenance and Local Levy Programmes for 2025–26, and the local choices investment programme for 2026-27, endorsed at the additional RFCC FBASG meeting on 28 November.

Key Headlines:

- The investment programme forecast is currently showing an underspend but we anticipate further forecast increases and opportunities in Q4 to bring the programme back to allocation by year-end.
- Forecasts show 6,756 properties will be better protected this year (exceeding the target), maintaining a green RAG status. The environmental outcomes (rOM4a/b) forecast are close to completion.
- The resource maintenance programme is progressing well and forecasting to deliver to budget by year-end.

Financial Performance:

- Total Project Expenditure (TPE) forecast is showing a programme underspend of £7.2m against the TPE allocation of £135.03m. We anticipate further forecast increases and opportunities in Q4.
- FCERM GiA forecast shows a programme underspend of £4.3m, which is 3.5% below our North West allocation
- Latest local levy forecasts show we are spending 93% of the allocation for this year.

Risks & Pressures:

- Currently forecasting below the investment programme allocation and we are aiming to increase mainly CDEL spend closer to allocation by year end, which may be challenging in the last quarter
- Efficiency savings remain significantly below target (49% shortfall), risking future funding.
- Not all projects received the funding they requested for next year, and this will delay some schemes from progressing.

Strategic Planning:

- Local choices for the 2026-27 investment and resource maintenance programmes were endorsed at the extraordinary meeting of the FBASG in November.
 - Approximately £158m FCERM GiA has been indicatively allocated to the investment programme better protecting 6,698 properties.
 - £17.82m has been indicatively allocated to the resource maintenance programme

RFCC Business Plan:

- 2026-27 Levy investment to support Business Plan projects is presented for approval, including continued investment in some key ongoing projects.
- A new £100k Local Levy investment is proposed for the Upper Irwell Integrated Water

Management and Nature-based Solutions Strategy.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- To provide an update on the progress of delivering the 2025-26 total investment programme.
- To provide a summary of the outcome of the indicative allocations for 2026-27, along with a detailed breakdown of projects that bid for funding, and the local choices endorsed at the extraordinary FBASG meeting on 28 November.

ACTIONS REQUESTED FROM FBASG

- Note the progress on delivering the 2025-26 investment programme and the resource maintenance programme.
- Note the progress on the 2025-26 Local Levy programme spend and forecasts.
- Recommend to the RFCC, consent of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant-in-Aid (FCERM GiA) allocation and the asset maintenance resource allocation for 2026-27.
- Note the proposal to provide details of the investment programme final allocation in January 2026.
- Consider and recommend for RFCC approval, a local levy allocation in 2026-27 for Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields NFM.
- Note the update on the RFCC Business Plan
- To recommend for RFCC approval continued Local Levy investment through the Business Plan in the 'Building Community Resilience' initiative.
- To recommend for RFCC approval continued Local Levy investment through the Business Plan in the NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource.
- Review and recommend for RFCC approval Local Levy funding support for a new Business Plan project – the Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy.
- To recommend to the RFCC, approval of the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2026-27, including for Business Plan projects.



INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OVERVIEW (2021–2026)

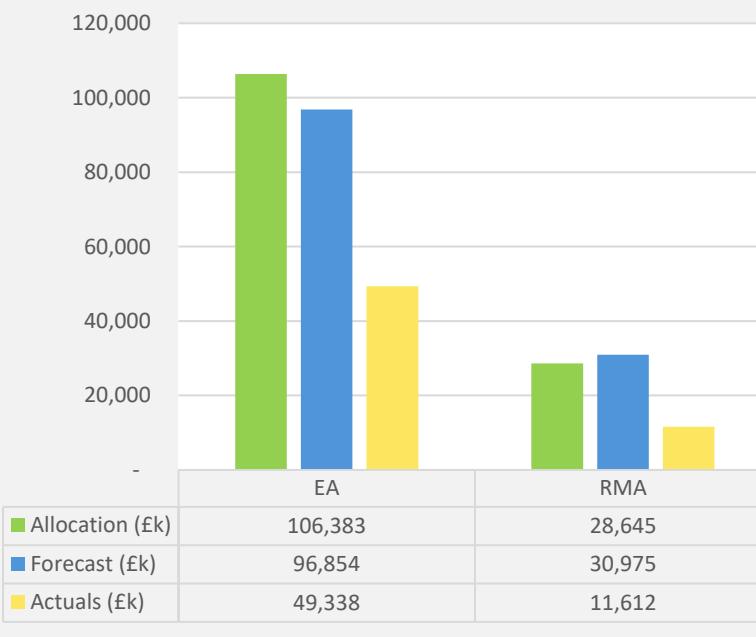
Investment Programme Overview (2021-22 to 2025-26)

	 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.	£166.5m efficiency savings achieved (vs. £339m target).
 NorthWest Overview	13,042 properties better protected (2021-22 to date).	10% of programme funded through partnerships.	£20.2M efficiency savings (21-22 to Q2 of 2025-26).



NORTH WEST TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE (TPE) 2025-26

NW RFCC TPE - In-Year Investment
Programme



Top 10 TPE Spending Projects (by Forecast)

Project Name	Lead	Allocation TPE (£)	Forecast TPE (£)	Actuals TPE (£)
Kendal Appraisal Package Kendal FRM Scheme	EA	19,012,000	18,546,075	8,965,472
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	17,815,276	17,469,285	11,014,191
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	LA	10,000,000	15,000,000	4,593,988
Preston and South Ribble	EA	10,660,000	12,218,738	6,264,389
Capital Reconditioning Programme - GMMC	EA	9,920,000	9,859,000	5,853,000
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	5,090,000	6,703,633	3,976,723
Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	EA	2,953,153	5,091,686	2,921,287
GMMC Recovery 2025	EA	200,000	4,058,487	2,976,789
Anchorholme Coast Protection Scheme	LA	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
Capital Reconditioning Programme - CLA	EA	4,324,000	3,776,692	814,847

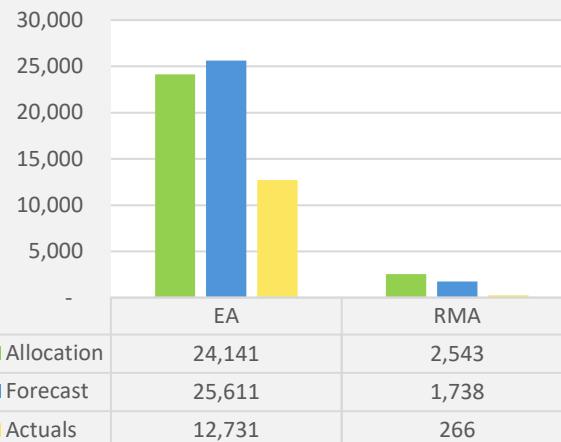
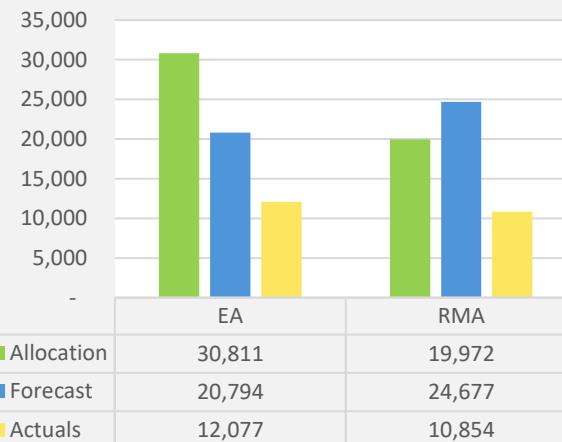
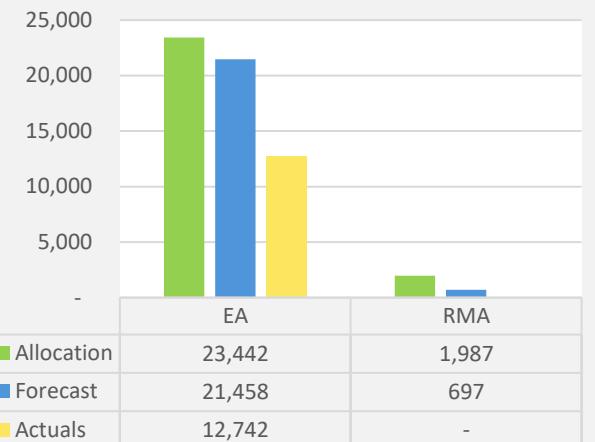
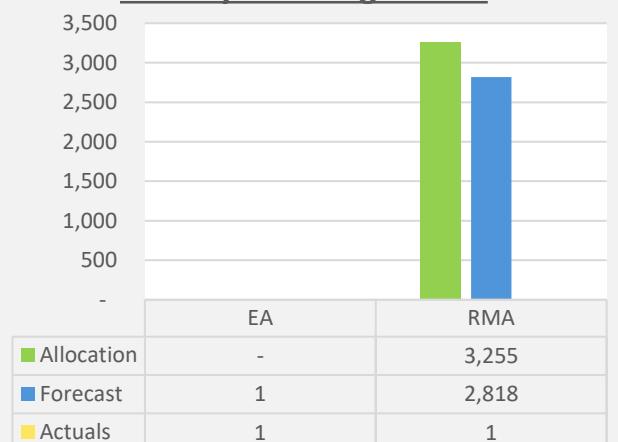
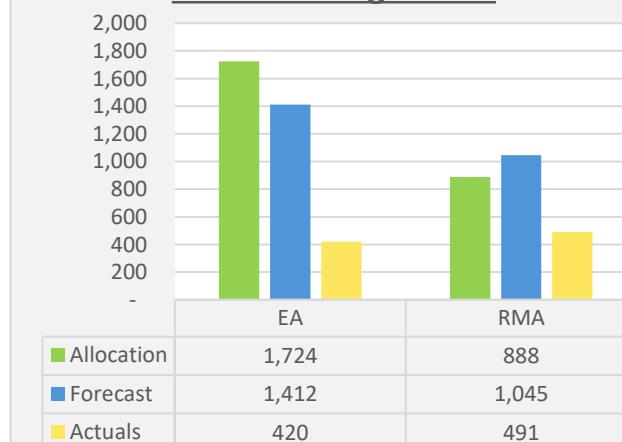
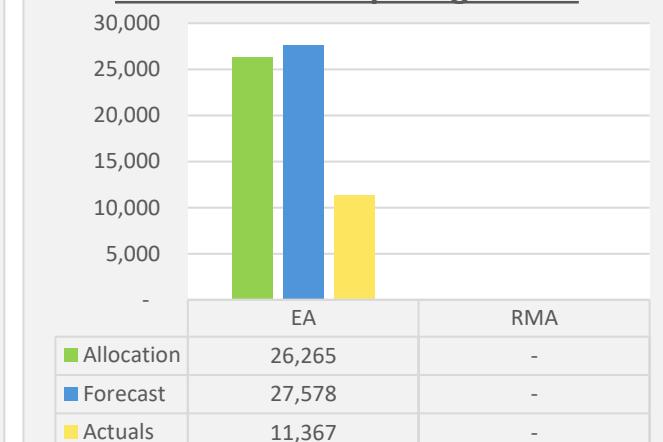
Commentary and Risk:

- Our November forecast shows a programme underspend of £7.2m against the Total Project Expenditure (TPE) allocation of £135.03m. This is £6.8m less than reported to the committee in October. The bulk of this reduction in forecast is due to Kendal (-£4m - due to delays in service diversions), CLA Pumping Station Refurbishments (-£500k - site delays due to wet weather/ground conditions) and the re-profiling of local levy spend on the Thurnham PFR Project (£225k) and the Sankey Brook FRM Scheme (£161k).
- We anticipate further forecast increases and opportunities in Q4 to bring the programme back to allocation by year-end.
- There is £47.5m of Environment Agency (EA) spend and £19.4m of Local Authority (LA) grant claims/spend remaining. Please see Appendix B for more information, including a breakdown by partnerships.

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



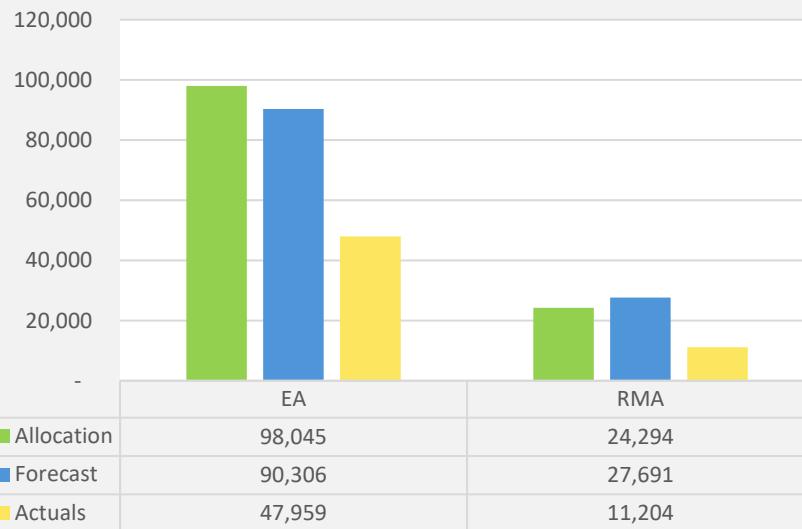
TOTAL PROJECTS EXPENDITURE BY PARTNERSHIP 2025-26

Cumbria ProgrammeLancashire ProgrammeGreater Manchester ProgrammeMerseyside ProgrammeCheshire ProgrammeCross-Partnership Programme



NORTH WEST GRANT IN AID (GIA) EXPENDITURE 2025-26

NW RFCC GiA- In-Year Investment Programme



GiA Capital (CDEL) / Resource (RDEL) splits

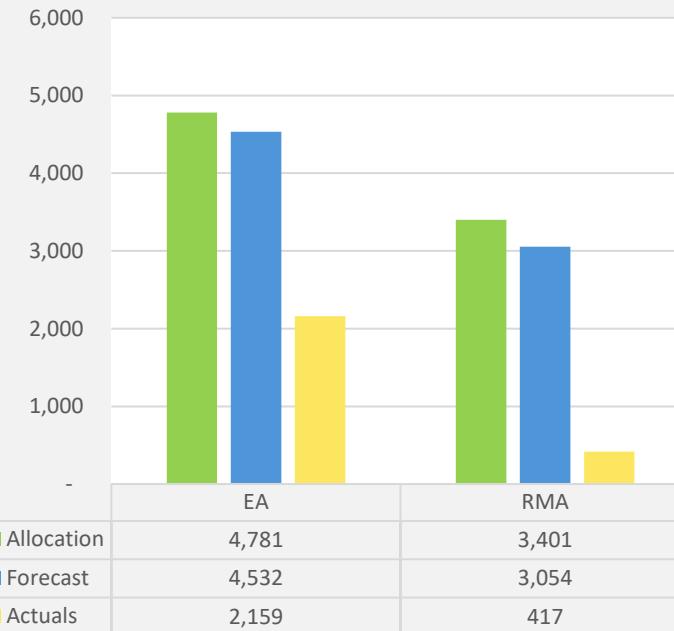
Area	Resource (RDEL)		Capital (CDEL)	
	Budget (£k)	Forecast (£k)	Budget (£k)	Forecast (£k)
Cumbria and Lancashire	5,237	6,237	76,044	71,233
Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire	5,960	5,688	35,098	34,839
North West Total	11,197	11,925	111,142	106,072

Commentary and Risk:

- The latest FCERM GiA forecast shows a programme underspend of £4.3m, which is 3.5% below our North West allocation. We anticipate further increases to this in Q4 to bring the programme back closer to allocation by year-end. These potential increases in spend include local authority grant claims which support efficient delivery, such as the coastal schemes in Lancashire.
- National steer is to work to our September Most Likely Outturn (MLO), which is aligned to allocation for CLA and slightly over allocation for GMMC. We are expecting to deliver close to the FCERM GiA allocation by year-end.
- We are now required to provide a FCERM GiA Capital (CDEL) / Resource (RDEL) forecast split and ensure alignment with allocation. In September, and more recently again in December, we reviewed all projects forecasts. In Cumbria and Lancashire, we are expecting some project level RDEL to CDEL switches which will bring us back to the CDEL/RDEL allocation.



NORTH WEST LOCAL LEVY PROJECT EXPENDITURE 2025-26

NW RFCC Local Levy (Schemes Only) - In-Year Investment Programme**Top 10 Local Levy Spending Projects (by Forecast)**

Project Name*	Lead	Allocation LL (£)	Forecast LL (£)	Actuals LL (£)
Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	EA	0	1,500,000	889,386
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	1,500,000	1,475,712	813,147
Millom and Haverigg Flood Alleviation	LA	500,000	500,000	0
Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	LA	350,000	350,000	350,000
Blackpool Beach Nourishment Scheme	LA	350,000	350,000	0
Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	0	321,618	107,884
Poise Brook - Offerton Green and Hazel Grove	EA	305,000	310,254	113,386
Hindley Group	EA	275,000	275,000	101,803
Manchester Square Pumping Station and Culvert, Blackpool	LA	250,000	250,000	0
River Winster	LA	164,000	164,000	0

*Excludes Quick Win projects, all forecasting £250,000 for each partnership

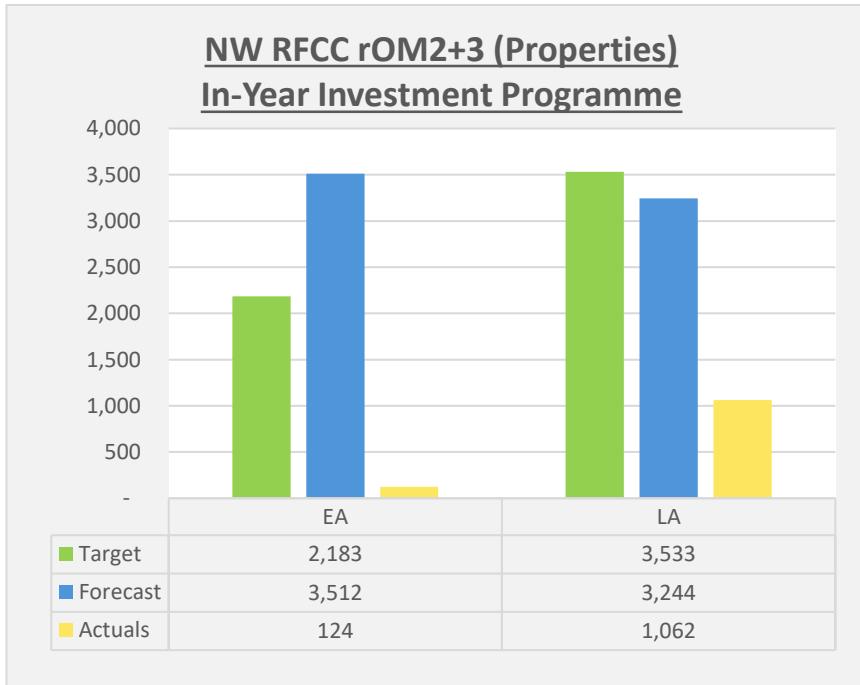
Commentary and Risk:

- The graph and table above exclude the investment on the RFCC Business Plan which is covered in a separate section in this report (see 'NW RFCC Business Plan').
- Latest forecasts show we are spending £7.586m of the £8.182m Local Levy allocation for this year. This is 93% of our allocation. The forecast has reduced by £880k to that reported in October mainly due to the re-profiling of spend on the Thurnham PFR Project (£225k) and the Sankey Brook FRM Scheme (£161k).

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 - Top 10 Projects (by Forecast)

Project Name	Lead	rOM2&3 Target	rOM2&3 Forecast	rOM2&3 Actuals
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	LA	3,000	3,000	1,000
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	0	2,582	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
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	LA	0	26	0
Falcondale Road, Winwick, Warrington	LA	0	23	23
Clifton Villas, Backford	LA	0	16	16
Warwick Bridge PFR scheme	EA	16	16	0

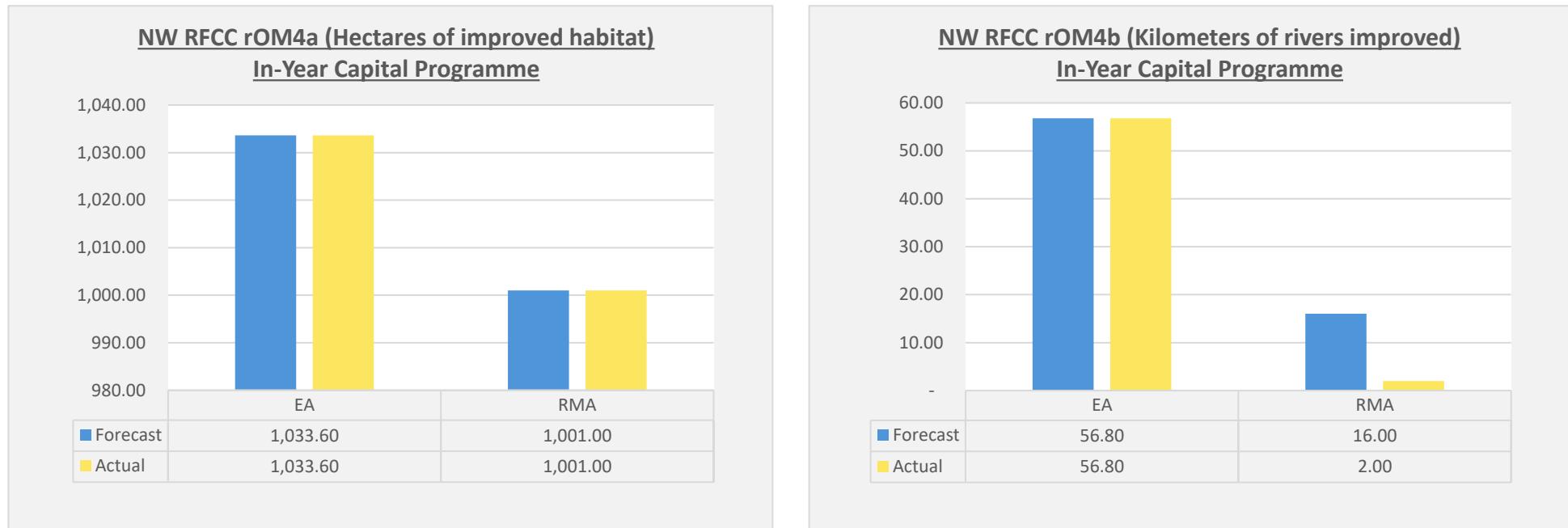
Commentary and Risk:

- North West Properties Better Protected Outcome Measure forecast indicate that 6,756 properties will be better protected against a target of 5,716, exceeding 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.*
- We have several projects that are spending money this year but delivering properties better protected from flooding in future years e.g. Kendal, Blackpool Beach Nourishment and Rochdale and Littleborough Schemes. Details of these projects will be shown in future reports.
- Key changes from the October report include an increase of 1,690 properties against the GMMC Lower Risk Debris Screens Programme.
- Targets were initially set based on the final allocation. A review at the start of the year identified several projects delivering additional properties through the debris screens programme. There are also a number of projects with targets that have been reprofiled to future years, such as Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme (1,460 properties) and 14 full or partial RMA project reprofiles (507, mainly in CLA).

Please refer to Appendix D for the detailed list of properties better protected in FY 2025-26.

NORTH WEST ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOME MEASURES (HABITAT CREATION/ENHANCEMENT/RIVER IMPROVEMENT) 2025-26

There is no set 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 Actual (Ha)	rOM:4B Forecast (km)	rOM:4B Actual (km)
Cumbria River Restoration Package*	Cumbria	EA	1,028.80	1,028.80	56.80	56.80
Liverpool Road, Gt Sankey Surface Water Management Project	Cheshire	RMA	0.00	0.00	14.00	0.00
Preston and South Ribble	Lancashire	EA	4.80	4.80	0.00	0.00
River Winster (Local Levy funded)	Cumbria	RMA	1,001.00	1,001.00	2.00	2.00
*Delivery over years 21-22 to 25-26 and claimed in 25-26		Total	2,034.60	2,034.60	72.80	58.80

NORTH WEST CAPITAL EFFICIENCIES – OVERALL PROGRAMME



The North West has achieved £20.2m against a target of £41.3m. This is an increase of £3.5m reported in October. However, there is still a shortfall of £21.1m, which is 49% of the North West target. The five-year investment programme runs from 2021-22 to 2025-26. Both the EA and other Risk Management Authorities i.e. local authorities, have not met their efficiency targets, with realised efficiencies falling below the 10% target for total FCERM GiA spend.

Since the investment programme was shortened to five years, it is unclear whether this target will be reprofiled to reflect the change.

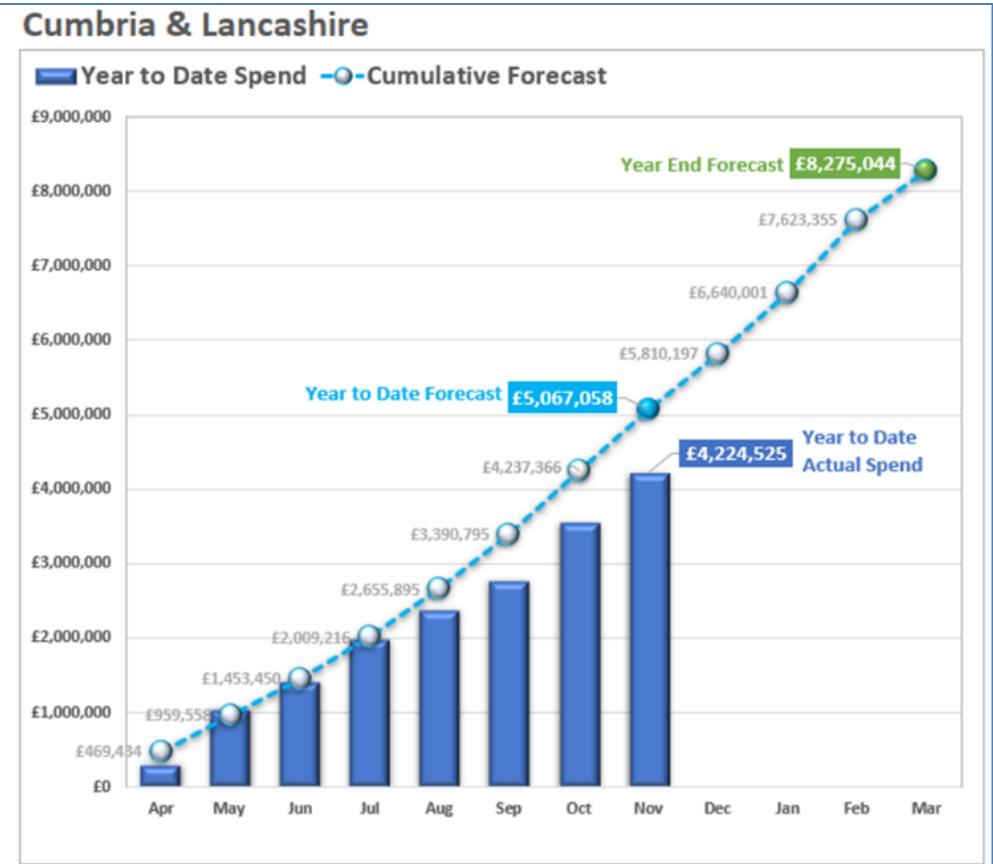
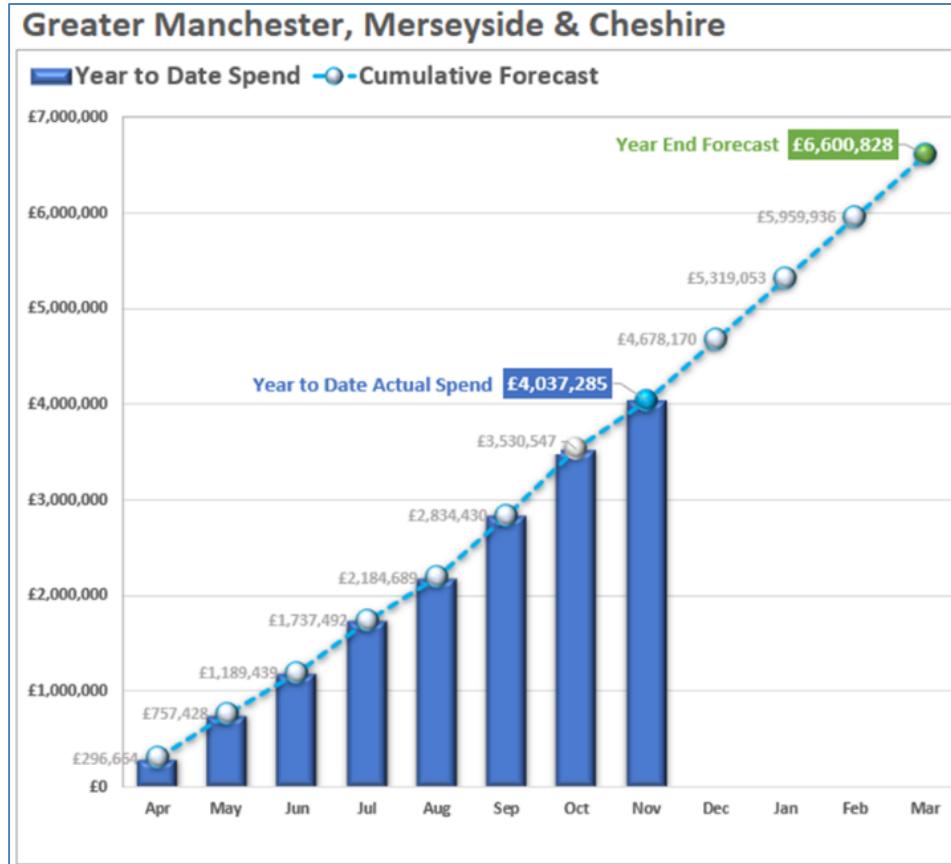
The table below shows efficiency reporting from 2021-22 to Q2 2025-26. Efficiencies reporting is once per quarter.

Area	As of end Q2 (Sept) 2025-26				
	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	£11,420,596	-£16,456,976	41%
Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Cheshire	£133,756,430	£13,375,643	£8,756,137	-£4,619,506	65%
Total	£412,532,149	£41,253,215	£20,176,733	-£21,076,482	49%

Authority	As of end Q2 (Sept) 2025-26				
	5 Year Total GiA Spend	5 Year Programme Target (10% GiA spend)	5-Year Programme Realised Efficiencies	Variance (Target vs Realised) £	Variance (Target vs Realised) %
Environment Agency	£334,710,881	£33,471,088	£17,010,620	-£16,460,468	51%
Local Authority	£77,821,268	£7,782,127	£3,166,113	-£4,616,014	41%
Total	£412,532,149	£41,253,215	£20,176,733	-£21,076,482	49%

RESOURCE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2025-26

Our resource maintenance programmes are progressing well - we have been busy responding on the ground to recent heavy rainfall incidents. Our year to date spend is £8,261,810 of a total North-West budget of **£14,875,872**. We are expecting to end the year at 100% of our total budget.

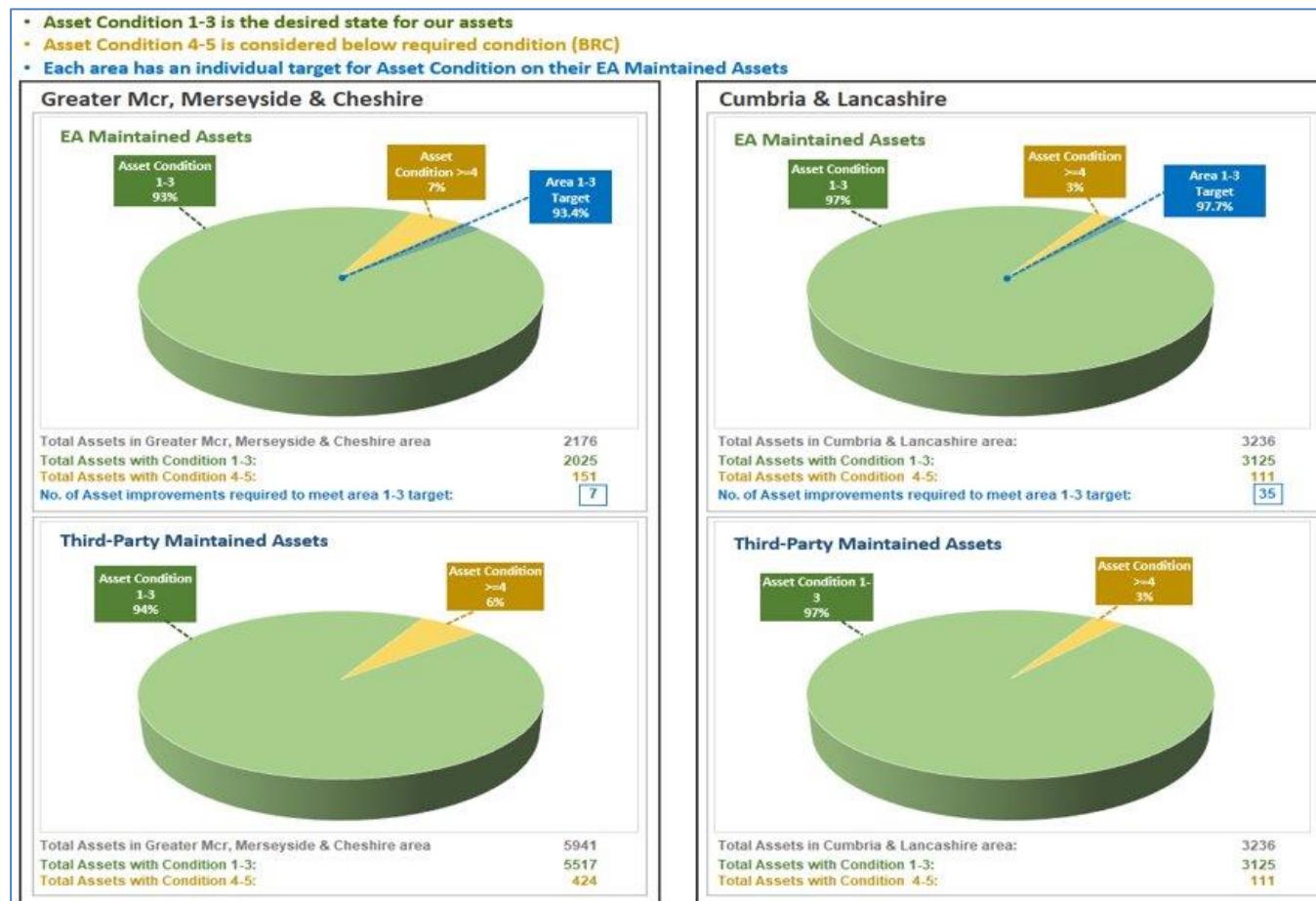


Looking ahead to 2026-27 we have received our allocations and are assessing the implications for the maintenance programmes. We have been advised that an additional £5.5 million Resource Maintenance funding has been made available at a national level. The implications for the North-West region are

not yet confirmed, and we anticipate receiving further details in early January 2026

Environment Agency Below Required Position Assets

All assets undergo visual inspection as part of a rolling programme to assess their health and condition. If an asset falls below the target condition score of 3, it is classified as below the required standard. In such cases, we initiate further investigation and prepare a funding bid for refurbishment.



For Environment Agency maintained assets we have a nationally set target for asset repairs. This is an individual target for each Area. Nationally the reconditioning funding has been fixed for the second year. The result of this means we are not able to meet our asset fix targets.

We monitor third-party assets that do not meet the required condition. While funding these assets remains a challenge, we make every effort to notify landowners when their assets fall below the required standard.

The North-West resource forecast is on track to land on budget at year end. The expectation is that Area delivery teams will not exceed their budgets.

The FBASG are asked to:

- Note the progress on delivering the 2025-26 Investment and Resource Maintenance programmes
- Note the progress on the 2025-26 Local Levy programme spend and forecasts



INVESTMENT PROGRAMME LOCAL CHOICES FOR 2026-27

The North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NW RFCC) Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Group endorsed the proposed local choices allocation and approved local levy requests for the 2026-27 investment programme in November 2025. Below is a summary. We are expecting final allocations to be confirmed in early January 2026.

This followed the Government's commitment of £4.2 billion for flood and coastal risk management between April 2026 and March 2029, as announced in Spending Review 2025. For 2026-27, the North West has received the highest indicative allocation by RFCC nationally, at approximately £158 million FCERM GiA, supporting a strong investment programme. However, this was below the ~£200 million bid submitted in July 2025, requiring difficult prioritisation decisions.

Funding has focused on schemes already in construction and those meeting statutory and safety obligations, alongside strategic resilience and asset maintenance.

Key points include:

- **Local Choices:** Adjustments have been made to align with national priorities, enabling funding for critical schemes such as Kendal FRMS, River Roch FRMS, and Blackpool Beach Nourishment.
- **Over-Programme:** A £17.77 million over-programme allocation has been authorised to manage delivery risk and support unfunded construction projects.
- **Resource Funding:** An additional £1.15 million RDEL has been allocated to the North West for early-stage development of resilience-focused projects.
- **Maintenance:** Indicative allocations for scheduled and reactive maintenance for the NW is £14.82 million (£8.54 million for Cumbria and Lancashire and £6.28 million for Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire).
- **Properties Better Protected:** The programme forecasts 6,698 properties to be better protected from flooding in 2026-27.
- **Local Levy:** Levy balances are under pressure, with proposals to increase quick win funding to £800k per year and reprofile levy for priority schemes such as Sankey Brook FRMS. This investment programme reflects a challenging financial environment, balancing national priorities with local needs to deliver maximum flood risk reduction and resilience across the North West.

The local choice summary for 2026-27 is broken down by partnership and is shown in the table below (excluding additional RDEL and enabling and support programmes).

More detail of the final Local choices return can be found in Appendix E.

Partnership	EA/LA	No. of Projects Local Choices	Local Choice TPE 26-27 (£)	Forecast OM2 and 3 (Properties better protected) for Local Choices
Cumbria	EA	17	28,604,111	64
	LA	8	6,796,809	91
	Total	25	35,400,920	155
Lancashire	EA	24	25,554,000	0
	LA	10	47,218,116	6,964
	Total	34	72,772,116	6,964
CLA Cross Partnership	EA	8	8,765,187	1750
	Total	8	8,765,187	1750
Merseyside	EA	0	0	0
	LA	0	100,000	0
	Total	0	100,000	0
Greater Manchester	EA	7	23,314,808	787
	LA	1	531,000	42
	Total	8	23,845,808	829
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	EA	1	1,135,000	0
	LA	0	100,000	0
	Total	1	1,235,000	0
GMMC Cross-Partnership	EA	2	11,059,400	0
	Total	2	11,059,400	0
Total North West	EA	59	98,432,506	2,601
	LA	19	54,745,925	7,097
	Total	78	153,178,431	9,698

The FBASG are asked to:

- Recommend to the RFCC, consent of the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant-in-Aid (FCERM GiA) allocation and the asset maintenance resource allocation for 2026-27
- Note the proposal to provide details of the investment programme final allocation in January 2026

 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	10.412	6.866
Local Levy income	4.544*	4.681	4.821
Interest earned	0.489	0.400**	0.200**
Total available balance	16.246	15.493	11.887
Total Actuals/Forecast	5.835	8.627	7.421
Remaining cash balance at year end	10.412	6.866	4.466

* Correction to Levy income for 2024-25

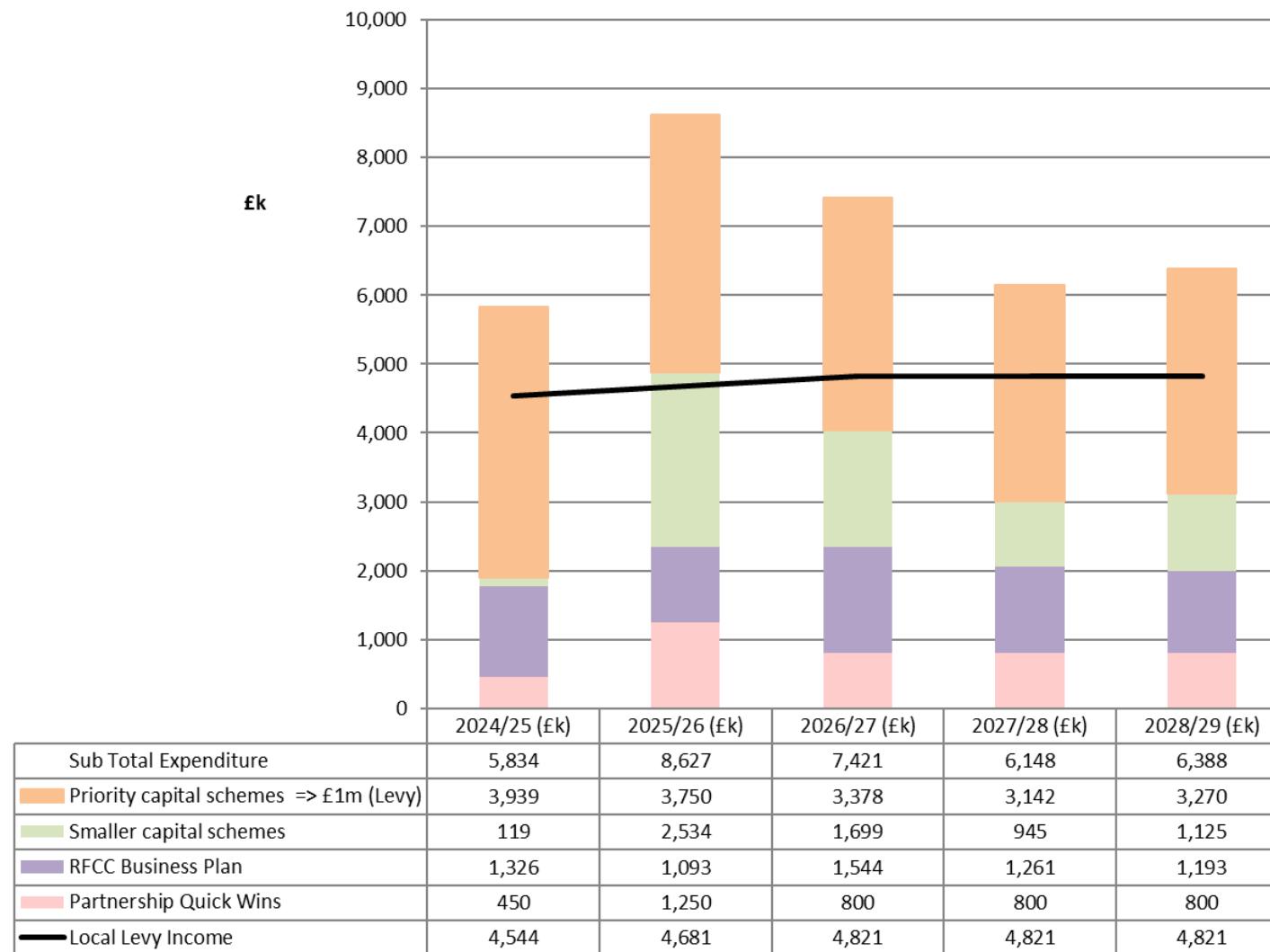
**Interest is to be confirmed.

A further review of Levy balances has been conducted to identify opportunities and to assess current programme forecasts. During this review, we identified a discrepancy in the 2024-25 income, with the income and resulting balance being £75k higher than previously reported. This adjustment has now been corrected and is reflected in the table above.

As part of this review, we identified historic Levy forecasts that were still profiled in future years for EA-led schemes. Following discussions with delivery leads, these forecasts have been removed as the delivery timeframes have changed and alternative funding sources, such as FCERM GiA, are now being used instead of Local Levy. This adjustment has positively affected the Levy balance, and we are now forecasting to remain above the £2m minimum balance until 2028-29. Previously, it was reported that the balance would fall below the minimum level by 2027-28.

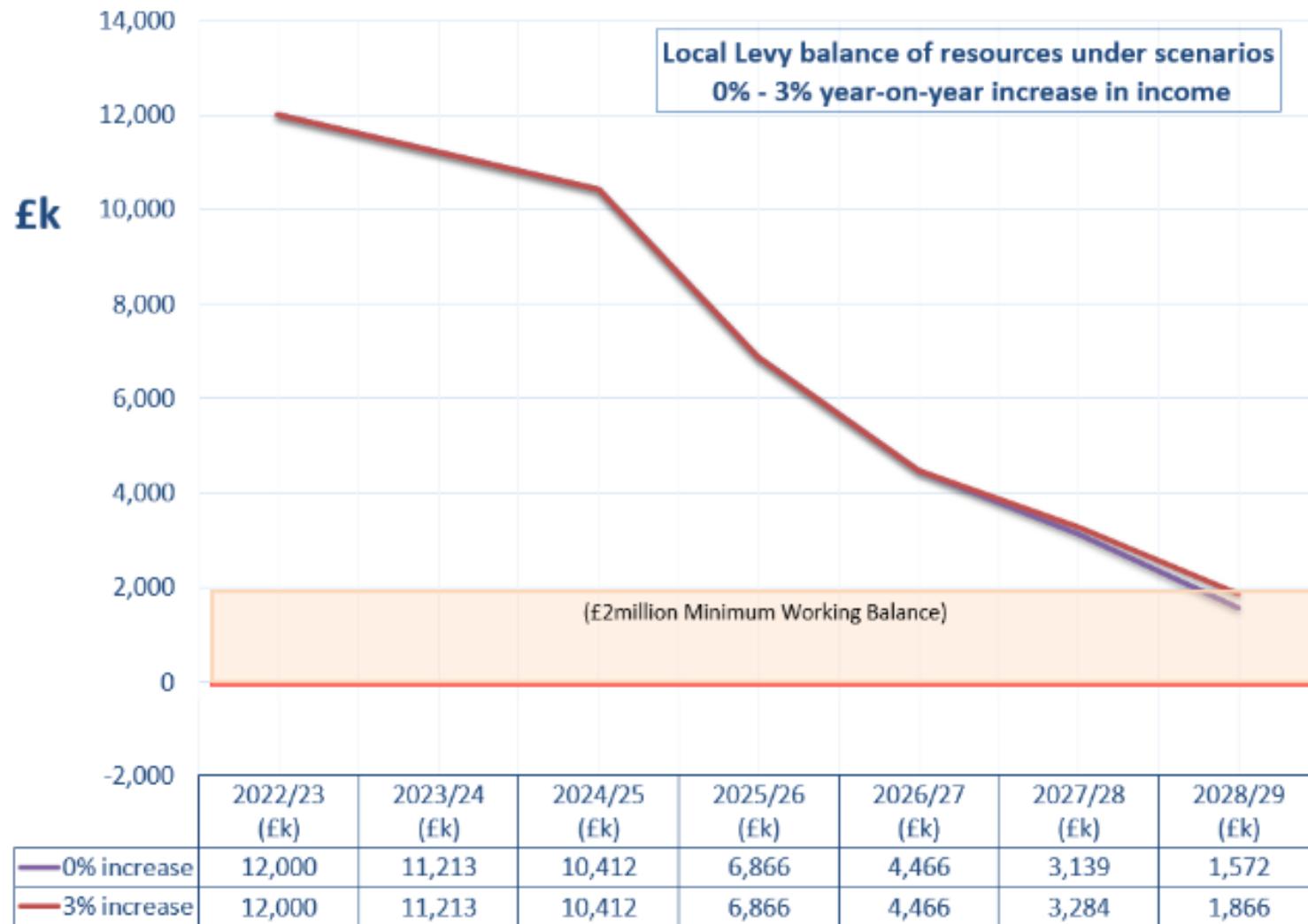
Local Levy Expenditure Scenario

This chart shows the breakdown of the Local Levy spend (actuals and forecasts) by activity classification per year.



Local Levy Balance Scenario

This graph shows the expected Local Levy balances at the end of each year based on the latest forecasts. The graph here includes the new Business Plan levy request for the Upper Irwell strategy, and the levy request for Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields NFM.



The balance is projected to dip below the £2 million minimum working balance in 2028-29. This is several years away, during which time the programme is likely to undergo changes. The minimum working balance was introduced in 2025 to manage a specific period of change and uncertainty over the following couple of years and is scheduled for review in 2027.

Overall, this suggests that there is some capacity within the programme for additional investment.

New requests for Local Levy support

There is one request to support a flood risk scheme – Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields, which is part of the Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram Flood Risk Scheme and Wigan Greenheart NFM (see briefing note at Appendix F).

There is one new project proposal through the Business Plan (see next section and Appendix I)

The funding for both requests is included in the above charts and figures on the previous page.

Local Levy Programme 2026-27

The proposed Local Levy allocation for 2026-27 totals £7.421 million (details can be found in Appendix K).

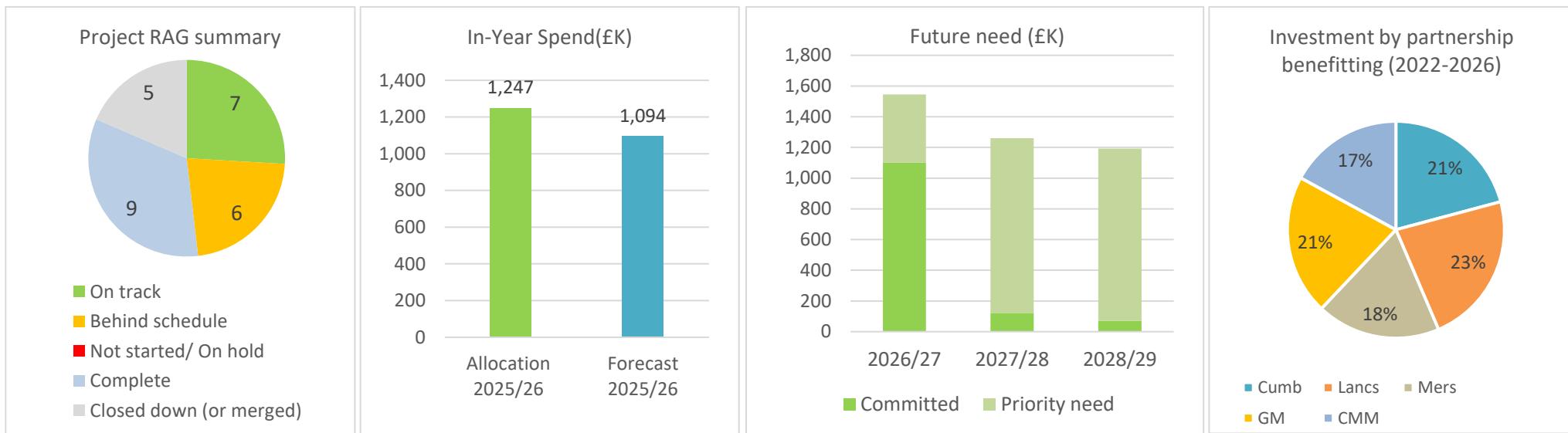
The FBASG are asked to:

- Consider and recommend for RFCC approval, an allocation of £71,799 of Local Levy in 2026-27 for Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields NFM.

NW RFCC BUSINESS PLAN

Dashboard

See Appendix J for full project level detail



Ambition	Projects	On track	Behind schedule	Complete	Closed down (or merged)	Allocation 2025/26	Forecast 2025/26	Total investment 2022-2026 (£K)	Committed Local Levy need 2026/27	Additional funding need 2026/27	Committed Local Levy need 2027/28	Additional indicative funding need 2027/28
Accessing investment and funding	5	1	0	1	3	52	52	163	55	0	58	0
Building community resilience	5	0	4	1	0	257	257	1,040	0	265	0	273
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	6	3	1	2	0	137	67	281	285	109	0	65
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	6	0	1	3	2	79	71	430	65	0	64	0
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	3	0	2	0	722	647	2,373	696	15	0	711
Unallocated/indicative									0	55		90
	27	7	6	9	5	1,247	1,094	4,286	1,101	444	122	1,139

Issues (Amber rated projects)

Building community resilience (Projects ID5/5A/6/7)

- The EA have been working with Defra to put in place formal partnership arrangements with Newground for 2025-26 but due to the time this has taken, service delivery on the projects has been restricted. It is hoped this will be resolved soon.
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority will take over and lead the procurement and contractual arrangements for the projects from 2026-27 and EA/GMCA are preparing an open market tender for launch in January.

Unpave the Way (ID12)

- Progress on 2025-26 deliverables has slowed due to sickness absence of the Project Manager resource, restricted capacity of landscape garden designer to input to SuDS Guide, and loss/change of project lead within UU. Still hoping to launch the SuDS Guide and LA guidance by end of March.

NFM Pipeline (Cumbria) (ID20)

- Project leads are refining the scope and considering the best modelling approach, which may involve two models, one on soil storage and tree interception, but in conjunction with a second model focusing on overland storage which adds more value for large-scale flood storage and more accurate targeting. This flexibility is important because the new flood funding formula offers more money for NFM, but the exact funding process is still unclear.
- To maximise opportunities, it is the intention to use the Environment Agency's research framework and combine Local Levy with CiFR funding, which would allow more flexibility and support research outputs. If procurement issues can be resolved, they aim to award the work by March 2026.

Projects proposed for continued investment

Note that the Local Levy investment for both of these continued investment proposals is already built into the Local Levy income and expenditure scenario as an indicative investment need. Therefore, this does not represent additional investment which will reduce Levy balances further than already being forecast.

Building community resilience (Projects ID5/6/7) (£817.8K) (See Appendix G)

- The North West RFCC is being asked to support continued Local Levy investment in its flagship Flood Hub website and community flood resilience initiative. This has been delivered in conjunction with partner Newground CIC since 2016. This initiative delivers an integrated set of services to build community resilience to flooding across the North West: the [Flood Hub website](#), direct community engagement support through events, bespoke responses to individual queries, establishment of and support to community flood action groups, and a programme of social media campaigns. It provides vital support to communities as well as to flood risk management authorities, filling critical gaps in community engagement capacity. The Flood Hub also provides a well-used platform for sharing communication on flood risk schemes in design or construction, an aspect of the site which is funded separately from FCRM Grant-in-Aid. The Flood Hub now attracts over 25,000 monthly page views and while tailored to the North West, is widely used nationally as a key resource for flood information. With climate change impacts increasing and national funding policy shifting toward resilience measures, this service remains essential.
- To maintain delivery at current levels, RFCC approval is requested for £817.8K over three years (2026–2029). A new contract will be procured via a GMCA-led tender early in 2026, ensuring compliance with procurement rules. This investment represents strong value for money, enabling RMAs to reach far more communities than possible alone and supporting the RFCC's Business Plan ambition to build resilience.

(Projects proposed for continued investment)

NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource (ID9A) (£163K) (See Appendix H)

- The North West RFCC is being asked to support continued Local Levy investment to part-fund (50%) the NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager post at Mersey Forest for a further four years (2026–2030), at a total Local Levy cost of £163k. Mersey Forest will match this contribution.
- The role has been instrumental in delivering the RFCC's ambition to manage water at the catchment scale using nature-based solutions. Over the past four years, the post has exceeded targets for technical appraisals, NFM project delivery, installation of interventions, flood storage provision, and habitat creation. It has also successfully leveraged £405k of external capital funding from national schemes and environmental funds.
- Continuing this investment will ensure the North West maintains a skilled resource to unlock future capital funding opportunities, particularly in light of upcoming FCRM funding reforms from April 2026. The post will remain available to support LLFAs and environmental partners across the North West RFCC area.

New project proposal: Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy (£100K) (See Appendix I)

- This proposal seeks £100k of Local Levy funding to further develop and implement an integrated water management strategy for the Upper Irwell catchment, focused on nature-based solutions (NFM) to reduce flood risk and deliver wider environmental benefits. The project builds on significant progress to date, funded from a range of sources, including the creation of the Upper Irwell NFM Investment Tool and prioritised catchment mapping, developed with Manchester University, which identify optimal locations for interventions.
- The strategy responds to severe and recurring flood risk in communities such as Irwell Vale, where traditional engineered solutions are neither viable nor cost-effective.
- Learning and tools from this project are designed for transferability across the North West, with broad engagement already underway. The approach will inform regional and national NFM policy and practice.

The FBASG are asked to:

- Note the update, including the issues reported.
- Recommend for RFCC approval, continued Local Levy funding for:
 - **Building Community Resilience (ID5/6/7) (£817.8K over the next three years)**
 - **NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource (ID9A) (£163K over the next four years)**
- Recommend for RFCC approval, the investment of **£100K for the Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy**.
- To approve the Local Levy funding for Business Plan projects in 2026/27, totaling **£1,545K**, which is summarised above and set out in detail in Appendix J.
- To recommend to the RFCC, approval of the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2026-27, including for Business Plan projects.

APPENDICES

Appendix A	DEFINITIONS (ROMS, CDEL/RDEL, ETC.)
Appendix B	SUMMARY OF ALL IN-YEAR FUNDING SOURCES – BUDGET, FORECAST AND ACTUALS
Appendix C	NORTH WEST LOCAL LEVY PROGRAMME 2025-26
Appendix D	2025-26 PROPERTIES BETTER PROTECTED FORECAST AND TARGET DATA (FOR INFO ONLY)
Appendix E	DETAILED LOCAL CHOICES RETURN
Appendix F	LOCAL LEVY REQUEST – LOW HALL FLASH AND VICTORIA FIELDS NFM
Appendix G	BUSINESS PLAN PROJECT CONTINUATION PROPOSAL – BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE
Appendix H	BUSINESS PLAN PROJECT CONTINUATION PROPOSAL – NFM TECHNICAL APPRAISAL AND DELIVERY MANAGER RESOURCE
Appendix I	BUSINESS PLAN NEW PROJECT PROPOSAL – UPPER IRWELL INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT AND NATURE BASED SOLUTIONS STRATEGY
Appendix J	RFCC BUSINESS PLAN – PROJECT SUMMARIES
Appendix K	LOCAL LEVY PROPOSED PROGRAMME 2026-27

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 (Red, Amber, Green) 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.

6) Other Risk Management Authority (oRMA)

The investment programme delivery is categorized by type of risk management authority into the Environment Agency and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). In the North West oRMAs are generally local authorities.

Appendix B	SUMMARY OF ALL IN-YEAR FUNDING SOURCES – BUDGET, FORECAST AND ACTUALS		
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North West		BUDGET	Latest Forecast (Nov)	
		BUDGET (£k)	FORECAST (£k)	VARIANCE (£k)
GIA	EA	£98,045	£90,306	-£7,739
	RMA	£24,294	£27,691	£3,397
	TOTAL	£122,339	£117,997	-£4,342
LOCAL LEVY	EA	£4,781	£4,532	-£249
	RMA	£3,401	£3,054	-£347
	TOTAL	£8,182	£7,586	-£596
PF	EA	£3,557	£2,016	-£1,541
	RMA	£950	£230	-£720
	TOTAL	£4,507	£2,246	-£2,261
TPE	EA	£106,383	£96,854	-£9,529
	RMA	£28,645	£30,975	£2,330
	TOTAL	£135,028	£127,829	-£7,199

Partnership	Full Year Forecast (£k)	Spend/ claims to date (£k)	Variance (£k)	EA Remaining Spend (£k)	LA Remaining Spend (£k)
Cumbria	£27,349	£12,997	-£14,352	£12,880	£1,472
Lancashire	£45,471	£22,931	-£22,540	£8,717	£13,823
Greater Manchester	£22,155	£12,742	-£9,413	£8,716	£697
Merseyside	£2,819	£2	-£2,817	£0	£2,817
Cheshire	£2,457	£911	-£1,546	£992	£554
Cross-Partnership	£27,578	£11,367	-£16,211	£16,211	£0
Total	£127,829	£60,950	-£66,879	£47,516	£19,363

Appendix C	NORTH WEST LOCAL LEVY 2025-26 – UPDATED PROGRAMME			
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Partnership	Scheme Name	RMA Type	2025-26 RFCC 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	30
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	0	400
Lancashire	Blackpool Manchester Square	LA	250	250
Lancashire	Wyre Investment Readiness Project (ID2)*	EA	45	52
Lancashire Total			3,320	1,732
Cheshire	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	LA	250	250
Cheshire	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	90	120
Cheshire	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	EA	161	0
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			501	370
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
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

AGENDA ITEMS 3, 4, 5, and 6

RFCC Business Plan	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - GMMC (ID16)	EA	225	179
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - C&L (ID16)	EA	163	163
RFCC Business Plan	Building Community Resilience - C&L (ID5-7)	EA	129	129
RFCC Business Plan	Building Community Resilience - GMMC (ID5-7)	EA	129	129
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Partnership Officers - GMMC (ID16)	EA	126	117
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Partnership Officers - C&L (ID16)	EA	84	79
RFCC Business Plan	Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme (SMP Co-ordinator) (ID16)	LA	53	53
RFCC Business Plan	Support for North West RFCC (Business Plan Implementation) (ID16)	EA	30	30
RFCC Business Plan	Mersey Forest NFM Tech App Collab (GMMC-led) (ID9A)	EA	35	35
RFCC Business Plan	North West RFCC Floods Conference	EA	12	12
RFCC Business Plan	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	EA	60	20
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Coastal Adaptation (Coastal Centre of Excellence ID17)	LA	25	25
RFCC Business Plan	Unpave the Way (Front gardens) (ID12)	EA	79	71
RFCC Business Plan	RFCC Business Plan - Unallocated (C&L)	EA	8	0
RFCC Business Plan	RFCC Business Plan - Unallocated (GMMC)	EA	8	0
RFCC Business Plan Total			1,165	1,041
Total Local Levy - North West			9,347	8,627

*Part of RFCC Business Plan

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

Forecast (£k)	2025-26	
	EA	LA
Cumbria	1,540	914
Lancashire	532	1,200
Greater Manchester	2,460	320
Merseyside	0	250
Cheshire Mid-Mersey	0	370
RFCC Business Plan	963	78
Total	5,495	3,132

Appendix D	2025-26 PROPERTIES BETTER PROTECTED – TARGET, FORECASTS AND ACTUALS (FOR INFO ONLY)
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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	0	26	0
Warwick Bridge PFR scheme	EA	Cumbria	16	16	0
Low Crosby	LA	Cumbria	15	20	0
Spittal Farm, Wigton	LA	Cumbria	9	0	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	2582	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	0	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
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	LA	Merseyside	0	0	0
Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	EA	Greater Manchester	0	1460	0
West End Road, St Helens	LA	Cheshire	0	11	0
Turf Hill	LA	Greater Manchester	0	21	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	11	22	0
Darwen Central , Darwen	LA	Lancashire	0	59	0
Chester Close , Blackburn	LA	Lancashire	0	58	0

AGENDA ITEMS 3, 4, 5, and 6

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			6756	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	47	1557	0
Merseyside	1	0	0	0
Cheshire	11	162	11	53
Cumbria	9	40	142	9
Lancashire	8	3,718	4006	1000
Cross-Partnership	2	2,789	0	124
Total	35	6,756	5,716	1186

Appendix E	Northwest Investment Programme - Local Choices Detail sorted by TPE 2026-27 (highlighted top 10 projects)
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Project Name	Lead Risk Management Authority - Name	Project Type	Local Choices Core GiA 2026-27	Local Choices All GiA 2026-27	Local Choices TPE 2026-27
Kendal Appraisal Package Kendal FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	Defence	24,028,268	24,028,268	24,968,268
Blackpool Beach Nourishment Scheme	Blackpool Borough Council	Capital Maintenance	17,690,000	17,690,000	17,690,000
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRMS	Environment Agency	Defence	11,430,808	16,430,808	17,515,808
Preston and South Ribble	Environment Agency	Defence	5,000,000	15,000,000	17,164,000
Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	Blackpool Borough Council	Defence	14,600,000	14,600,000	14,600,000
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	Environment Agency	Defence	11,027,000	11,027,000	11,027,000
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	Wyre Borough Council	Defence	9,133,116	9,133,116	9,133,116
Millom and Haverigg Flood Alleviation	Cumberland Council	Defence	6,233,809	6,233,809	8,233,809
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	5,990,187	5,990,187	5,990,187
Capital Recondition Projects GMMC	Environment Agency	Reconditioning	5,272,243	5,272,243	5,272,243
River Calder, Padham	Environment Agency	Defence	5,000,000	5,000,000	5,000,000
Capital Recondition Projects CLA	Environment Agency	Reconditioning	4,268,764	4,268,764	4,268,764
Anchorholme Coast Protection Scheme	Blackpool Borough Council	Defence	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	Environment Agency	Defence	2,378,000	2,378,000	2,378,000
CLA Pumping Station Refurbishments	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	2,200,000	2,200,000	2,200,000

AGENDA ITEMS 3, 4, 5, and 6

ENVDidsbury FSR Drawdown	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	Environment Agency	Defence	1,472,466	1,472,466	1,472,466
Garstang Gate Repair	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	1,240,000	1,240,000	1,240,000
Darwen Central , Darwen	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Defence	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Sankey Brook Flood Risk Management Scheme	Environment Agency	Defence	833,000	833,000	1,135,000
CLA Asset Management Planning Project	Environment Agency	Strategy	750,000	750,000	750,000
Altmouth Asset Review	Environment Agency	Strategy	650,000	650,000	650,000
Burrow Beck Conveyance Improvements	Environment Agency	Defence	625,000	625,000	625,000
CLA 25-27 Culverts	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	575,000	575,000	575,000
Skirting Beck, Egremont	Environment Agency	Defence	520,000	520,000	520,000
Glasson Dock Gate	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	510,000	510,000	510,000
Salford Flood Alleviation Improvements	Environment Agency	Defence	500,000	500,000	500,000
Shaw, Cringle, Ley and Willow Brook	Manchester City Council	Defence	431,000	431,000	431,000
Caldew FRMS Appraisal	Environment Agency	Defence	400,000	400,000	400,000
Cockermouth Asset Reconditioning Project	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	397,000	397,000	397,000
Hydrometry & Telemetry Capital Projects- CLA	Environment Agency	Hydrometry and Telemetry	386,000	386,000	386,000
Poise Brook - Offerton Green and Hazel Grove	Environment Agency	Defence	357,000	357,000	357,000
Croston FRMS Modelling Project	Environment Agency	Modelling and Forecasting	350,000	350,000	350,000
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Blackburn with Darwen Borough	Defence	339,000	339,000	339,000

AGENDA ITEMS 3, 4, 5, and 6

	Council				
Hindley	Environment Agency	Defence	324,000	324,000	324,000
South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	Environment Agency	Defence	0	0	300,000
Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	Environment Agency	Defence	300,000	300,000	300,000
Modelling & Forecasting Capital Projects – GMMC	Environment Agency	Modelling & Forecasting	275,000	275,000	275,000
River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	Environment Agency	Defence	240,000	240,000	240,000
Chester Close, Blackburn	Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council	Defence	230,000	230,000	230,000
Hydrometry & Telemetry Capital Projects – GMMC	Environment Agency	Hydrometry & Telemetry	222,000	222,000	222,000
Silloth Groyne Replacement	Cumberland Council	Capital Maintenance	200,000	200,000	200,000
Pennine Peat Partnership Upland Peat Forest of Bowland	Environment Agency	Defence	30,000	30,000	180,000
Lessonhall PS MCC	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	150,000	150,000	150,000
PFR - Stockdalewath	Environment Agency	Property Level Protection	250,000	250,000	250,000
Cumbria River Restoration Package	Environment Agency	Environmental (no households)	135,000	135,000	135,000
Starr Hill Sand Dunes Environmental Works	Blackpool Borough Council	Defence	126,000	126,000	126,000
Wyre Catchment Readiness Project	Environment Agency	Strategy	80,000	80,000	125,000
Allonby and Ribchester	Environment Agency	Modelling and Forecasting	120,000	120,000	120,000
Parton FCERM	Cumberland Council	Defence	100,000	100,000	100,000
Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	Manchester City Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	100,000
Merseyside Quick Win Projects	Liverpool City Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	100,000

AGENDA ITEMS 3, 4, 5, and 6

Cheshire Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	Cheshire West & Chester Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	100,000
Cumbria Quick Win Projects	Cumberland Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	100,000
Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Lancashire County Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	100,000
Corby Weir Fish Pass Project	Environment Agency	Defence	100,000	100,000	100,000
Wigton Road, Carlisle Surface Water Scheme	Cumberland Council	Defence	83,000	83,000	83,000
Renwick, Cumbria	Westmorland and Furness Council	Defence	70,000	70,000	70,000
NW Mapping and Modelling 2 (CLA_	Environment Agency	Modelling and Forecasting	54,000	54,000	54,000
NFM - Trawden Natural Flood Management Delivery	Environment Agency	Environmental (no households)	50,000	50,000	50,000
Lancaster Phase 4 - Mill Race Surface Water Study	Lancashire County Council	Strategy	40,000	40,000	40,000
Grange Coastal Defences	Westmorland and Furness Council	Strategy	37,500	37,500	37,500
ENVGMMC RECOVERY	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	32,400	32,400	32,400
Crossens and Redbridge (Cutting the Carbon)	Environment Agency	Carbon Reduction	30,000	30,000	30,000
Hodder and Ribble NFM	Environment Agency	Environmental (no households)	27,000	27,000	27,000
CLA Landscape Maintenance - Rickerby	Environment Agency	Defence	16,781	16,781	16,781
CLA Landscape Maintenance - Carlisle Phase 1	Environment Agency	Defence	10,681	10,681	10,681
Carlisle Appraisal Package Low Crosby	Environment Agency	Defence	10,000	10,000	10,000
ENVCLA_Janson Pool 23-24	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	10,000	10,000	10,000
ENVCLA_RiverMede 23-24	Environment Agency	Capital	10,000	10,000	10,000

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		Maintenance			
ENVCLA_Wild Boar 23-24	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	10,000	10,000	10,000
ENVCLA_Yoad Pool 23-24	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	10,000	10,000	10,000
Cumwhinton Flood Alleviation	Cumberland Council	Defence	10,000	10,000	10,000
CLA Landscape Maintenance - Gosling Sike	Environment Agency	Defence	8,915	8,915	8,915
ENVCatterallBridgeReplacement	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	5,000	5,000	5,000

Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields NFM – Part of Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram Flood Risk Scheme and Wigan Greenheart NFM



Figure 1 Platt Bridge Flooding New Year's Day 2025

Introduction/ Background

The area around Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram in Wigan has suffered frequent flooding from both river and surface water. The most significant floods were in 2015 when 44 properties flooded and on New Year's Day 2025 when 56 properties flooded. There have also been 3 other surface water floods in the last 14 months internally flooding several houses.

The Environment Agency is developing a £30-50 million flood risk management scheme to reduce river flooding to the area. We were working with United Utilities, Wigan Council and GMCA on this. Following the NYD floods this partnership became far more active and we embarked on a 3-month sprint to develop the Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram Integrated Water Management Action Plan that outlined how we can reduce flooding from all sources. Since the NYD flood two Flood Action Groups have been formed and we are working closely with them in implementing the Action Plan.

Scheme Development

A preferred option for the EA flood risk scheme will be selected in the spring. Construction is planned for 2030. We anticipate that the preferred option will consist of a large flood storage reservoir at Aspull and some walls and embankments in the towns and as much nfm as we can do. We have been working closely with the residents who are very anxious about more flooding and want to see some immediate action. They cannot understand why it will take us 4 years before we begin construction.

In this bid we are asking for funding to progress two elements in advance of the main works. These elements will deliver a reduction in flood risk and demonstrate to the community that we are doing everything we can to reduce their risk. This will not jeopardise the delivery of the main scheme.

These areas are Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields (highlighted in the boxes in Figure 2). These areas are part of the **Wigan Greenheart Landscape Recovery Project. (LRS)**. [Wigan Greenheart Landscape Recovery | The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire Manchester and North Merseyside](#) This is the highest tier of the new Defra funded Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) that has replaced farm subsidies.

The overall Greenheart Project will deliver £4.7 million of capital improvements and £31 million of maintenance (revenue) over 20 years.

The LRS also has the potential to reduce flood risk, and we have been working with Lancs Wildlife Trust on their designs to maximise these benefits. However, these capital elements of the natural flood management are not covered by LRS funding. Therefore, although LRS will provide

maintenance costs for at least the next 20 years, amounting to £171k, capital costs of £92k are required to implement the nfm work. If capital money can be found, the works can begin next summer. Some works, funded by Wigan Council, will commence this winter.

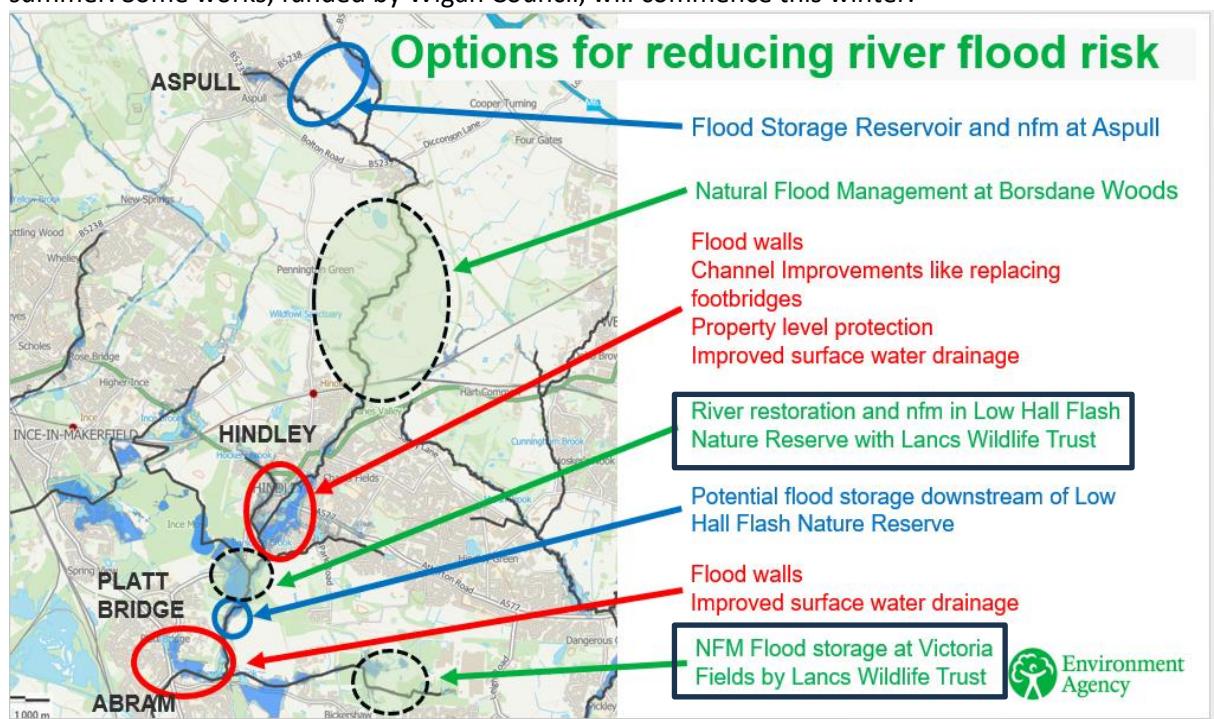


Figure 2

Scheme benefits

The benefits of the overall scheme will likely be around £80 million. The flood risk benefits for this nfm element have not been fully evaluated, (but will done in the full appraisal), to do it now would cost £5-10k, so we estimated these benefits. We have estimated the benefits to be £750k to £1.5 million whole life cost over 20 years, the lifetime of the LRS.

The main aim of LRS is to improve the environment more generally and more specifically aid wildlife recovery for species like willow tit and bittern. It also aims to strengthen the connection between nature, wellbeing, and health, demonstrating that a healthier landscape leads to healthier and happier people. Much of the LRS capital work will go on habitat creation, footpath creation and other access improvements. There will also be work on engaging with communities and schools, bringing in private finance to make the money go even further and monitoring and maintenance.

Number of residential properties that will benefit

There 79 properties at risk of flooding downstream of Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields. , with 48 of these at risk from 1 in 30 chance per year of flooding today.

Properties in deprived areas

Platt Bridge is in the top 4% most deprived wards in England. Properties in Abram are in the top 23%. 57% of properties at risk are in deprived wards.

Non-residential properties that will benefit

Several small local businesses and shops, the largest being B and M Home Stores and an Iceland. A United Utilities Pumping Station would also benefit from the main scheme and the nfm works.

Properties that will be better protected in the future, against flood risk in 2040

The overall scheme will fully cater for future climate impacts. We have not evaluated the impact this nfm work will have on future impacts.

Environmental benefits

As described in the scheme benefits section, the main driver for the Landscape Recovery Scheme is to deliver environmental benefits.

Will the scheme promote regeneration?

Platt Bridge has been blighted by flood risk. Reducing flood risk will help the town to prosper.

Funding and External Contributions

The 2026 capital cost of Low Hall Flash is £21,238

The 2026 capital cost for Victoria Fields is £71,561

Total capital cost **£92,799**

Wigan Council Contribution £21,000

The maintenance costs of £171,000 over 20 years are funded by LRS

Victoria Fields

Cost Type	Category	Sub category	Cost incurred year 0 - 20 of PIP (£)
Capital	Project mgt	Clerk of works	10,606
		Contract/staff onsite welfare	990
		Licenses and permissions	238
		Pond Creation/ Main river enhancements	47,330
		In-ditch features	1,126
	Site green infrastructure	Bund 1	7,348
		Bund 2	1,824
		Leaky woody dams	2,100
		Total	71,561

Low Hall

Assumed implementation of works in Autumn 2026 (no braided channels)

Cost Type	Category	Sub category	Cost incurred year 0 - 20 of PIP (£)
Capital	Project mgt	Clerk of works	3,750
		Contract/staff onsite welfare	990
		Licenses and permissions	479
		Pond/ channel edge and streambed creation	19,212
		Bund 1	557
	Site green infrastructure	Total	21,238

Flood Defence Grant may be available for these works, however this would mean waiting for several years for implementation. The current 2026-27 programme is over-subscribed and the main flood risk scheme was not allocated any FDGiA money for 2026-27. It was only as part of the Local Choices process that the RFCC was able to re-allocate money for the project to continue.

The main project is also still in appraisal and we do not have enough money to spend on capital works, nor the authorisation to do so. The national FCRM team have advised that currently we cannot spend money on capital works whilst still developing the appraisal.

Lancs Wildlife Trust are planning to begin construction next year. However, without an approved business case we cannot secure FDGiA. Under the new funding policy LWT may be able to apply for FDGiA. If successful we would not need Local Levy. However, that is unlikely.

Current funding gap

Current capital costs are £92,799 for both Low Hall and Victoria Fields for construction in 2026. Maintenance or revenue costs are £171,000 and will fully met by the LRS. Wigan Council are contributing £21,000. Therefore, the funding gap is £71,799 which we are asking for.

Recommendation

We are asking for £71,799 local levy in 2026-27 to help deliver reduced flood risk to 59 properties. The project team will continue to develop the Hindley Flood Risk Project and work with partners to ensure a fully integrated scheme to reduce flood risk from all sources is developed.

Appendix G	BUSINESS PLAN PROJECT CONTINUATION PROPOSAL – Building Community Resilience (ID5/6/7)
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Background

Increasing the resilience of our communities to flooding and coastal change is a key ambition within the RFCC Business Plan, reflecting resilience as a central theme of the National FCERM Strategy. This is becoming even more important as the impacts of climate change become more apparent, and with the shift in national funding policy reducing funding for traditional engineered schemes towards greater use of wider resilience measures.

Since 2016, the North West RFCC has sponsored and funded a collaborative partnership between the Environment Agency, RMA partners, and Newground Community Interest Company (CIC) based in Blackburn. Newground act as a neutral intermediary advice and support service for our flooded and at-risk communities, working alongside flood risk management authorities (RMAs) to increase resilience to flooding and coastal change. It began as community engagement support and advice after the major December 2015 flooding events and has developed into a broader and more integrated service to build resilience. A key early finding was the need for an online space to host all the advice and guidance that was being developed. This led to the creation and launch of the Flood Hub website in 2017 – a ‘one-stop shop’ for flood resilience information.

These initiatives have become the flagship of the North West RFCC’s approach to using Local Levy funding to go further in addressing flood risk in its region, initially as a standalone initiative, and then through its Business Plan.

There are three key strands to the service recognised as three separate projects within the RFCC Business Plan:

- ID5 – [The Flood Hub website](#)
- ID6 – Supporting community engagement on adaptation to coastal change
- ID7 – Flood Resilience Action Campaign

The Flood Hub website (ID5)

Newground develop, host and manage the website as well as creating much of the content for the site on behalf of the EA and RMAs, using their knowledge and experience of flood risk management and resilience. This includes specialist content such as educational teaching material which need to align with the National Curriculum and Key Stages.

The Flood Hub website has become very well used and highly regarded with analytics showing it now consistently receiving over 25,000 page views per month, even during the exceptionally dry year of 2025. The EA and other RMA partners rely heavily on the Flood Hub as a platform for providing help and advice on flood preparedness and resilience tailored to a public audience, initially with limited understanding. While tailored to the North West and seeing widespread use in this region, analytics and feedback provide extensive evidence of its use right across the country. The recent national EA Flood Action Week campaign included a link to The Flood Hub for guidance.

Risk management authorities also use the [Schemes](#) section of the site for sharing information and updates on schemes in design or construction. The Schemes page on the Flood Hub are funded from FDGiA.

Through the Contact Us facility on the site, Newground also respond to numerous queries from members of the public, signposting information on the site, referring them to the relevant RMA, or delivering bespoke advice where appropriate. Common themes of enquiries include insurance, riparian owner responsibilities and property flood resilience measures.

Supporting community engagement on adaptation to coastal change (ID6)

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Newground has been able to support the North West and North Wales Coastal Group, with involvement in some community engagement activity. They have also developed the Coast section of The Flood Hub and have provided an online platform for the Our Future Coast project.

Flood Resilience Action Campaign (ID7)

Newground regularly support RMAs across the North West in engaging directly with communities including attending drop-in events alongside RMAs, often outside normal working hours. They have been extremely busy this year supporting communities affected by the New Year flooding. When emotions and feelings towards risk management authorities can be heightened, having a neutral, third-sector partner providing support and advice proves invaluable. Newground also support multi-agency engagement with at risk communities which haven't flooded in recent times to raise awareness.

They provide ongoing support to individual communities to establish flood action groups and work with them to help them develop flood action plans.

They also plan and implement a regular programme of social media campaigns throughout the year to keep flood risk awareness on the agenda, to signpost content on The Flood Hub website, and to share warning information during flood events.

Resources and costs

To carry out this work, Newground employ a team of 5 full-time staff, several of whom are recent graduates whose development they support. One resource is dedicated to community engagement, two are dedicated to The Flood Hub, there is a Project Manager heavily involved in delivery, and an additional flexible resource supporting all aspects of the work as required.

The costs of this initiative over the last three years have been as follows:

Local Levy funded	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	TOTAL
The Flood Hub website	100	115	119	334
Supporting community engagement on coastal adaptation	10	10	10	30
Flood Resilience Action Campaign	120	125	128	373
TOTAL	230	250	257	737
The Flood Hub Schemes pages (funded from GiA)	100	100	100	300

With community engagement resources within RMAs very limited, we would not be able to achieve anywhere near as much as we currently do without the support of this partnership and its additional resources. This Business Plan initiative provides considerable value for money, directly supporting communities, businesses and householders, and enabling RMAs to reach and support many more individuals than would be possible without it.

Current contractual position

Newground have been providing the service to a high standard and the relationship has been very successful, receiving regular positive feedback.

Following changes to procurement legislation this year, there are now tighter restrictions on direct awards and we have needed to justify and seek approval from Defra and the EA nationally to direct award to Newground this year. We are only able to do this for 2025/26. This process is ongoing but we hope that the 2025/26 contractual arrangements will be finalised in the near future.

For the service beyond this year, an open-market tender process is required to confirm the most suitable supplier. This could still be Newground but the tender process will determine this. The EA have agreed with Greater Manchester Combined Authority that they (GMCA) will lead the tender process and future contractual arrangements as this can be achieved much more quickly and brings the contractual

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arrangements within the North West. The tender documentation is currently being prepared with an anticipated publication in January. The tender will be for a further 3-year contract (through to March 2029), with an optional extension of two years (to March 2031). Note however that the contractual arrangements are always subject to confirmation of available funding on an annual basis.

Proposal for continued investment

Given this intended commitment to a new contract in the near future, ongoing RFCC support for the continued investment in this initiative is required.

The costs are currently estimates pending the tender process but are reflective of the current level of service and resource with allowances for inflationary increases (3% per year) in costs over the period.

The total Local Levy investment requested to continue to provide this high value service is **£817.8K** (£265K in 2026/27, £273K in 2027/28, and £281K in 2028/29).

This Local Levy investment is already built into the Local Levy income and expenditure scenario as an indicative investment need. Therefore this does not represent additional investment which will reduce Levy balances further than already being forecast.

The Flood Risk Schemes pages of The Flood Hub are funded from Grant-in-Aid.

Local Levy funded	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	TOTAL
The Flood Hub website	122	125.7	129.4	377.1
Supporting community engagement on coastal adaptation	10.6	10.9	11.2	32.7
Flood Resilience Action Campaign	132	136	140	408
TOTAL	265	273	281	817.8
The Flood Hub Schemes pages (funded from GiA)	100	100	100	300

Recommendation

That the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup recommend for RFCC approval ongoing investment in this initiative, at an estimated cost of **£817.8K** over the next three years.

Appendix H	BUSINESS PLAN PROJECT CONTINUATION PROPOSAL – Natural Flood Management (NFM) Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource (ID9A)
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Proposal

That the RFCC continue to invest Local Levy funding to part (50%) fund the NFM technical appraisal and delivery manager, based at Mersey Forest, over the next 4 years at a total cost of £163k.

Summary

Under the NW RFCC business Plan, as part of the ‘Managing water at the catchment scale with nature’ ambition, Local Levy has been used to part fund (50%) a NFM post at Mersey Forest. Mersey Forest fund the other 50% of the post. The arrangement has been in place in the current form for the past 4 years. The spend has been around £35k per year, a total of £126k when it comes to an end in June 2026.

The aim of the project was to part-fund the resource on a ‘payment-for-outputs’ basis. The funding accounted for 115 days of appraisal and delivery time per year, at £262 per day, rising by 3% each year. The targets for the four years were 40 technical appraisals (10 per year), 8 delivery projects completed (2 per year), deliver 4,000 m³ of additional storage (1,000 m³ per year), and 8 Ha of habitat created/restored (2 ha per year).

From 2022 to 2025, the post has delivered: 48 NFM technical appraisals, project-managed and delivered 12 large NFM intervention projects, installed 122 NFM interventions, delivering 14,200 m³ of flood storage attenuated, and created or improved 10.1 ha of habitats. The NFM Appraisal Manager successfully drew in £225k of capital funding from Defra’s £25m NFM scheme, £35k from Trees for Climate, and £145k from the Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The habitat restored or created has been key to helping to deliver some of the North West’s targets.

The aim is to continue to fund this important enabling initiative, based on its excellent delivery record, and recognising that with the reforms to the FCRM funding from April 2026, there will be more capital funding available for good, well-designed NFM projects. Having a skilled NFM Technical Appraisal Manager in place has proven to be key at unlocking capital funding streams.

The Local Levy requested is £163K, the profile of which is set out below. The Mersey Forest Contribution will match this contribution and will be £163k over 4 years. The total project cost over that period (Local Levy and Mersey Forest) is £326k.

Year	Local Levy contribution (£K)
2026/27	39
2027/28	40.2
2028/29	41.4
2029/30	42.6
	163.2

This Local Levy investment is already built into the Local Levy income and expenditure scenario as an indicative investment need. Therefore, this does not represent additional investment which will reduce Levy balances further than already being forecast.

Delivery to date

Delivery to date has been more focused within the Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire area, but the resource and support is available to any LLFAs or environmental NGOs across the North West RFCC area.

2022/23

- Initial site appraisals, design and preparatory work: **Colliers Moss and Griffin Wood (St Helens); Peers Clough Farm (Rossendale); Tullis Russell (Bollington); Broomy Bank Farm (Malpas); Fir Tree Farm (Billinge); Hoyle Dean Farm (Rossendale); Park Brook North (Warrington); Vale Royal Drive (Northwich).**
- Site Delivery: **Colliers Moss (St Helens)**, Management of contractors to build and deliver: 11x multi stack leaky woody dams, estimated potential storage volume: 320m³; 10x stake and wedge leaky woody

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dams, estimated potential storage volume: 388m³; 25m of clay core bund to store and redirect floodwater; 30m of channel creation/ditch connection.

- Site Delivery: **Griffin Wood (St Helens)**: Management of contractors to build and deliver: Open airing of approximately 100m of culverted channel; Creation of approximately 140m of meandering open channel.

2023/24

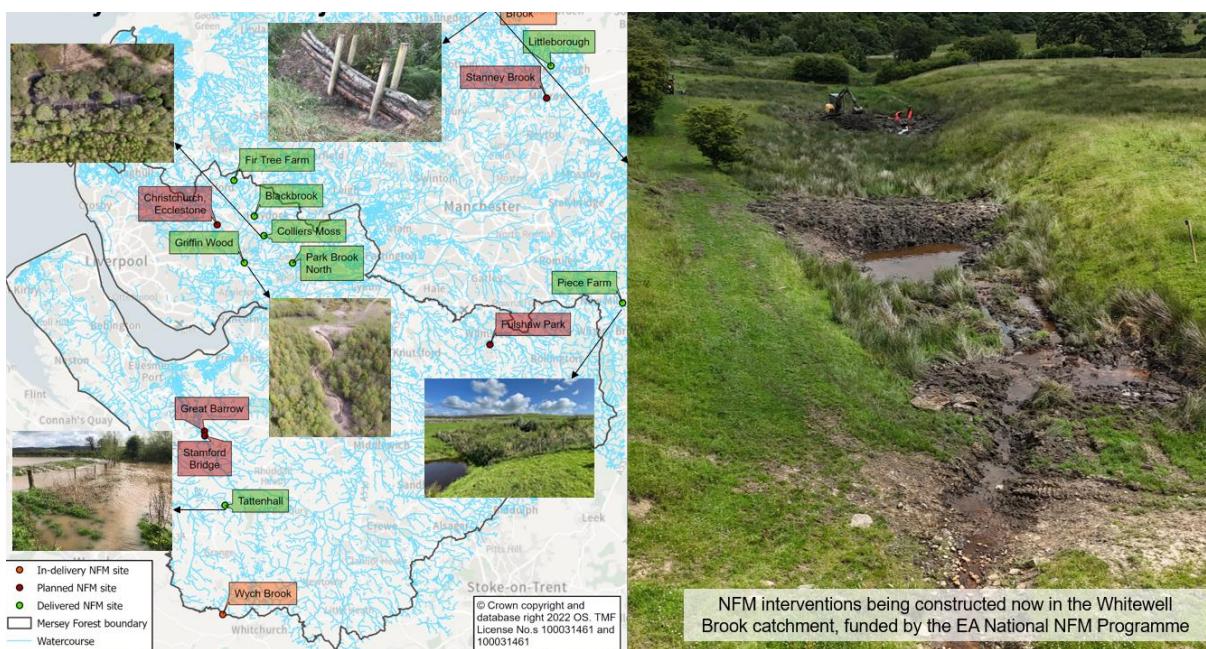
- **Fir Tree Farm (St Helens)**: Delivery and project management of two clay core bund and basin structures, each with three pipes to pass forward flow and excavation behind to create storage basin: Downstream bund, 49m length, 1169 m³ potential storage capacity; Upstream bund: 44m length, 489 m³ potential storage capacity.
- **Park Brook North (Warrington BC)**: creation of updated plans, a description of the scope of work and RAMS following conversations with Warrington Borough Council and agreement that work could be carried out in house. Tree and vegetation clearance to create a conveyance corridor to better encourage peak flows onto the floodplain. Estimated potential attenuation volume on floodplain: 5,490 m³.

2024/25

- **Great Barrow (Cheshire West and Chester)**: NFM interventions and tree planting at Willow Cottage have now been delivered through a combination of landowner's personal funding and a Trees for Climate grant. Delivered 8 NFM interventions, Total storage capacity: 476 m³, C@R downstream which will directly benefit: Great Barrow, WFD watercourse enhanced: 0.29 km, Habitat created 1.6 Ha.
- **Whitewell Brook (Rossendale)** submitted and selected as one of the 41 projects taken forward by the EA's National £25m NFM Programme; planning and developing this project for full business case approval; Procurement of a CDM advisor and development of requirements to meet CDM Regs; Installation of monitoring equipment across all three sites to meet the NFM Programme requirements for gathering baseline data prior to construction of NFM interventions; application to Rossendale Borough Council for Lawful Development Certificates; development and initiation of tender process: developing tender documents, answering contractor queries and attending site visits with contractors.

2025/26

- Delivery of 3 large NFM projects (**Whitewell Brook, Rossendale**) that are delivering a further 49 interventions and a further 5,200 m³ of storage attenuated, drawing down £225k funding from Defra's £25m NFM scheme.
- Delivery of **Wych Brook (Cheshire West and Chester)**: Trees for Climate (£35k), which yielded a further 19 NFM interventions: 1,600 m³ attenuated.



Recent NFM projects (left) and drone image of Whitewell Brook (right)

Appendix I	NEW BUSINESS PLAN PROJECT PROPOSAL – UPPER IRWELL INTEGRATED WATER MANAGEMENT AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS STRATEGY
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Project name

Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy
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Sponsoring Sub-regional partnership and RFCC Member

The project is located in Greater Manchester and falls under the ‘Managing Water at Catchment Scale with Nature’ ambition of the Business Plan, led by the Cumbria partnership and sponsored by Kate Morley. It has been scrutinised and recommended for approval by both.

Strategic aim(s) the project contributes to

- To drive the mainstreaming of nature-based solutions as part of the flood and coastal erosion risk management approach, encouraging holistic and innovative approaches, and achieving wider environmental benefits wherever possible. –
- To increase the ambition and scale of catchment partnerships, through best practice, and effective, locally appropriate leadership and engagement

Project Organisation

Lead partner	Environment Agency
Other partners involved	Groundwork Greater Manchester who are the Irwell Catchment Host, United Utilities, City of Trees, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Lancs CC, Bury, Rossendale, Natural England, National Trust and the Greater Manchester Integrated Water Management Plan

Objectives

The overall objective of this project is to reduce flood risk in the Upper Irwell using nature-based solutions that also improve the environment and manage water in a more holistic way. The Local levy contribution would build on the existing work and put us in a strong position to secure Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGIA) to implement NFM projects.

Background

A key aim of the project is to address flooding in Irwell Vale, which has flooded six times since 1995. The original engineered solution required 2.5m walls through the village, costing over £20m with only £5m GiA eligible and a benefit-cost ratio barely above 1, making it unviable even under the new funding policy. Irwell Vale is not unique—over 1,000 homes in the Upper Irwell face a 1-in-100 annual flood risk, with 233 at 1-in-20, spread across 53 communities where engineered defences are impractical. When closing the project, we committed to exploring sustainable upstream Natural Flood Management (NFM) solutions.

2020: 63 properties flooded
2015: 81 properties flooded
2012: 42 properties flooded
2002: 8 properties flooded
1998: 3 properties flooded
1995: 32 properties flooded

The Environment Agency’s Flood Risk and Environment Programme teams developed an integrated approach to manage water holistically, reducing flood risk and improving water quality. In 2024, project partner Manchester University used existing data to model NFM interventions, creating the Upper Irwell NFM Investment Tool. Phase 2 applied advanced algorithms and hydrodynamic modelling to optimise solutions and identify priority sub-catchments, providing a clear map of where projects should be located.

Working with partners via the Irwell Catchment Partnership, the project is now part of EPIC2030 (Environmental Land Management Partnership in the Irwell Catchment), aiming to manage the Upper Irwell landscape to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and enhance resilience. It also serves as a pilot within the [GM Integrated Water Management Plan](#), a collaboration between GMCA, United Utilities, and the Environment Agency.

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This Local Levy bid seeks to use the NFM Investment Tool to develop an Investment Plan that coordinates funding streams and partners to deliver fully funded projects with wide environmental and flood risk benefits.

Activity/Method/Phases

The Upper Irwell NFM Investment Tool provides costs, benefits, and properties at risk. The next step is to turn this into an Investment Plan to implement NFM across the catchment, reducing flood risk and delivering wider environmental benefits. Work will focus on three elements:

1. Engaging Landowners

- Build on existing relationships (e.g., National Trust, Woodland Trust) and expand engagement across the catchment.
- Work through the Irwell Catchment Partnership (hosted by Groundwork GM) and Natural England officers to target priority areas.
- Plan to use some of the funding to support engagement activities.

2. Business Case Development

- Develop robust business cases to secure FDGiA and other funding streams.
- FDGiA will fund capital works; ELMS will cover maintenance; partners will contribute additional capital.
- Local Levy will fund consultants for appraisal and design to ensure competitive bids.

3. NFM Delivery

- Prepare shovel-ready projects and seize early delivery opportunities in 2026–27.
- Work with EPIC partners, including:
 - Groundwork Greater Manchester – being supported to develop a Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund (NEIRF) project that looks at the benefits of NFM working with landowners that are already receptive to NFM on their land. However, to make a significant difference we need to deploy NFM more widely. The prioritised catchment map means we can now target areas where we know interventions will be most effective and the Investment Tool also gives us the core elements of a project.
 - United Utilities – Good progress to date. UU want to reduce the amount of rainwater entering the combined sewer system. This can be done using NFM techniques and UU will be using Advanced WINEP money to deliver partnership projects.
 - Using Water Environment Investment Fund (WEIF) money to understand the wider environmental and Water Framework Directive benefits that can be delivered as part of the overall programme.
 - Lancashire County Council - very keen to use the tool now available.
- Target interventions using prioritised catchment maps and Investment Tool outputs.

Deliverables/outputs

1. Landowner engagement plan, a list of landowners in priority locations who are interested in our offer.
2. Business case to secure FDGiA.
3. Some on the ground NFM work.

Estimated project duration

Start	Completion
April 2026	Ongoing for many years.

Local Levy investment sought (£K)

2025/26	
2026/27	£75k
2027/28	£25k
2028/29	
TOTAL	£100K

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

The table below shows what has been spent in the last 2 years (highlighted blue) on developing the Upper Irwell NFM Investment Tool, three NFM projects in Whitewell Bottom as part of the Defra £15 million pilot, Defra Test and Trial and NEIRF. NEIRF has modelled NFM interventions on the land owned by willing farmers to see what benefits can be derived. The next stage of that project will be to identify beneficiaries that will pay for flood risk benefits. Then they will deliver NFM projects using money from beneficiaries. After that we will adopt a similar approach to bring in further money to support NFM delivery alongside FDGiA. That money cannot be reasonably quantified at present.

The sums in green have been secured whereas the numbers in white are what we hope to achieve. The WEIF money has been bid for.

Source	24/25	25/26	Total to date	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	Total future investment
FDGiA UI NFM Tool	£ 50,000		£ 50,000					£ -
FDGiA project delivery			£ -		£ 250,000	£ 500,000	£ 750,000	£ 1,500,000
FDGiA Whitewell Bttom NFM		£ 188,676	£ 188,676					£ -
Local Levy (this bid)			£ -	£ 75,000	£ 25,000			£ 100,000
WEIF Capital			£ -	£ 30,000	£ 50,000	£ 100,000	£ 150,000	£ 330,000
WEIF Revenue		£ 25,000	£ 25,000	£ 25,000	£ 25,000	£ 15,000	£ 15,000	£ 80,000
Defra Test and Trial	£ 66,699	£ 70,725	£ 137,424					£ -
Defra NEIRF	£ 66,077	£ 30,318	£ 96,395					£ -
NEIRF Beneficiaries			£ -	?	?	?	?	£ -
EA/UU Green Recovery	£ 11,855		£ 11,855					£ -
United Utilities AWINEP			£ -	£ 130,000	£ 210,000	£ 210,000	£ 200,000	£ 750,000
City of Trees, Trees for Climate Capital			£ -	£ 78,000	£ 78,000	£ 78,000	£ 78,000	£ 312,000
Total	£ 194,631	£ 314,719	£ 509,350	£ 338,000	£ 638,000	£ 903,000	£ 1,193,000	£ 3,072,000

Transferability and plans for wider application

The NFM Investment Tool is built on nationally available data, with transparent workings and a reviewed Python script, making it easily adaptable to any catchment. While the catchment modelling requires university computing resources, Manchester University is documenting the process and exploring regional application. Partners from Cumbria and Lancashire have already been engaged through workshops, and EA national staff are involved to inform future guidance.

To ensure transfer, all data and tools are shared via the Irwell Catchment Partnership SharePoint, and lessons will feed into the GM Integrated Water Management Plan and other regional initiatives. Lancashire County Council, the Cumbria partnership, and United Utilities are actively engaged, and a NW Catchment Management Group has been established to coordinate learning. Manchester University will publish academic papers on the tool and optimisation approach, supporting wider uptake.

Appendix J	RFCC BUSINESS PLAN – PROJECT SUMMARIES
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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)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	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	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 was completed on target. Ongoing payments are for the ecosystem services being provided by the NFM interventions.	48	45	52	55
BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE							
ID5	The Flood Hub	Amber	Amber due to current issue with delay to establishing renewed contractual arrangements. Service delivery is currently subject to restriction.	315	118.5	118.5	122
ID5A	The Flood Hub – Expansion trial	Amber		0	0	0	0

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ID6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	Amber	Amber due to current issue with delay to establishing renewed contractual arrangements. Service delivery is currently subject to restriction.	30	10.3	10.3	10.6
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience						
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	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	0
ID9A	NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager 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. Proposal for ongoing agreement for another four years is included within these papers.	108.8	35	35	39

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ID23	Peatland restoration funding development	Green	Funding approved October 2025 with different approaches required and being progressed with the three peat partnerships in Cumbria, Lancashire and in the south Pennines.	0	0	0	150
ID19	NFM project delivery	Complete	Forest Hills (£30K) was completed in 2022/23. Smithy Brook (£9K) project completed in August 23.	39	0	0	0
ID20	Land management engagement	Green	The Cumbria partnership in conjunction with the CiFR project designed and led the 'Landscape in a Changing Climate' conference held in Kendal on 9 October 2025. This specific action is complete. There is currently some consideration about any follow-on engagement the RFCC may wish to support.	0	12	0	0
ID22	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	Amber	Project leads are refining the scope and considering the best modelling approach, which may involve two models, one on soil storage and tree interception, but in conjunction with a second model focusing on overland storage which adds more value for large-scale flood storage and more accurate targeting. This flexibility is important because the new flood funding formula offers more money for NFM, but the exact funding process is still unclear. To maximise opportunities, it is the intention to use the Environment Agency's research framework and combine Local Levy with CiFR funding, which would allow more flexibility and support research outputs. If procurement issues can be resolved, they aim to award the work by March 2026.	0	60	20	130

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ACHIEVING CLIMATE RESILIENT PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE							
ID10	Evidence gathering – Climate resilience within planning & dev't	Complete	Liverpool University student projects carried out projects gathering evidence on planning and flood risk across the North West in 2022/23 and 2023/24. Project came to a natural conclusion and the RFCC lost its direct link into Liverpool University due to a change in RFCC membership. A summary presentation was provided to the RFCC meeting in October 2025.	0	0	0	0
ID12	Action campaign – Unpave the Way	Amber	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. Amber due to current lack of project resource: Project Manager sickness absence, change and handover of UU project lead, and restricted capacity of garden designer inputting to the SuDS Guide.	135	79	71	60

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ID4/13	Data sharing and mapping of flood risk and drainage assets	Complete	Project was led jointly by Greater Manchester and Merseyside partnerships. Phase 1 was an audit of LLFA Asset Registers. Phase 2 captured case studies highlighting challenges of asset data sharing and mapping. Phase 3 and the final report made a series of 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.	197	0	0	0
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	0
INCREASING RMA CAPACITY AND COLLABORATION							
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	0

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Investment need 2026/27 (£K)
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 small amount of funding is earmarked should needs not be able to be met through other funding or mechanisms.	0	15	0	15
ID16	Additional capacity (to support the RFCC, partnerships and RMAs)	Green	Partnership Co-ordinators – all five roles filled and ongoing with funding approved to March 2027. LA Capital Project Advisers – one vacancy in GMMC Area since June. Funding approved to March 2027. Capital Programme Co-ordinator – role filled and ongoing to 2027. Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator – role filled, ongoing and funding approved to March 2027. Partial contribution for RFCC Business Plan implementation management resource ongoing.	1,697	682	621	694

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Investment need 2026/27 (£K)
ID17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - Develop business case	Green	<p>Scoping and consultation work through the summer and autumn, including 2 workshops, surveys and a councillor briefing.</p> <p>The first pilot opportunity, to progress a Morecambe Bay Study/strategy, is in development, which will develop and test the CoCE concept.</p> <p>The ambition for the Centre is that it will make things happen on the North West coast — accelerating delivery of the SMP through collaboration, shared expertise and practical support, ensuring every partner has the capacity, capability and confidence to protect and enhance our coastal places.</p> <p>As this develops, further work and funding will be needed to scope opportunities, delivery, and test the impact/value of the CoCE.</p>	0	25	25	0
ID18	RFCC SharePoint site	Complete	<p>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.</p>	0	0	0	0

Appendix K

LOCAL LEVY PROPOSED PROGRAMME 2026-27

Partnership	Scheme/Project Name	RMA Type	Lead RMA	2026/27 Allocation (£k)
Cumbria	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	EA	EA	10
Cumbria	South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	EA	EA	300
Cumbria	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	EA	EA	10
Cumbria	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	LA		160
Cumbria total				480
Lancashire	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	EA	EA	30
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	EA	765
Lancashire	PFR Thurnham	EA	EA	225
Lancashire	Preston and South Ribble	EA	EA	2,000
Lancashire	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	LA		160
Lancashire	Wyre Investment Readiness Project (ID2)*	EA	EA	55
Lancashire total				3,235
Merseyside	Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral	LA	Wirral Council	113
Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	LA		160
Merseyside total				273
Greater Manchester	Heywood Surface Water Management Programme	LA	Rochdale Council	75
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	EA	EA	500
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	LA		160
Greater Manchester	Low Hall and Victoria Fields NFM	EA	EA	72
GM total				807
Cheshire Mid Mersey	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	EA	EA	302
Cheshire Mid Mersey	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	LA		160
Cheshire Mid Mersey total				462
Cross partnership	North West Property Flood Resilience	EA	EA	675
Cross partnership total				675
RFCC Business Plan	Building Community Resilience (inc The Flood Hub) (ID5/6/7)	LA	GMCA	265
RFCC Business Plan	NFM Tech App Collab (ID9A)	EA	EA	39
RFCC Business Plan	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria) (ID22)	EA	EA	130
RFCC Business Plan	Peatland Restoration - Programme development and delivery (ID23)	EA	EA	150

RFCC Business Plan	Upper Irwell IWM / NBS Strategy (ID24)	EA	EA	75
RFCC Business Plan	Unpave the Way (ID12)	EA	EA	65
RFCC Business Plan	RMA skills and capacity building (ID15)	EA	EA	15
RFCC Business Plan	Additional capacity (ID16) – SMP Coordinator	LA	Sefton Council	55
RFCC Business Plan	Additional capacity (ID16) – Partnership Coordinators (5)	LA	Various	210
RFCC Business Plan	Additional capacity (ID16) – LA Capital Project Advisors (5)	EA	EA	320
RFCC Business Plan	Additional capacity (ID16) – Capital Programme Coordinator	EA	EA	81
RFCC Business Plan	Additional capacity (ID16) – Business Plan programme management / RFCC support	EA	EA	30
RFCC Business Plan	RFCC conference/workshop	EA	EA	5
RFCC Business Plan	Unallocated (pending proposals for follow-up activity from completed projects)			50
RFCC Business Plan total				1,490
PROGRAMME TOTAL				7,421

*Also part of RFCC Business Plan

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

FINANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE SUB GROUP MEETING

9 JANUARY 2026

PROPERTY FLOOD RESILIENCE – PROJECT ALLOCATION PROPOSALS



Recommendation: For the RFCC F&BASG to approve the proposed allocation of funding to projects set out in the paper

Introduction

In July 2025 the Northwest RFCC agreed to support Property Flood Resilience (PFR) projects. The Local Levy allocation agreed was £2.7 Million across three years. The proposed split can be seen below:

2026/27: £675,000

2027/28: £900,000

2028/29: £1,125,000

Bidding period

The Northwest Hub leads distributed the application form and guidance pack to Partnership Coordinators, who then shared the information with their respective contacts across the areas they cover. The bidding period for project submissions opened on 31 October and closed on 28 November. Thank you to everyone who submitted a bid during this period. A summary of the number of bids received can be viewed in the table below and clearly highlights the level of interest in PFR across the North West region.

Partnership area	Total value of bids	Number of projects	Number of local authorities submitting bids
Cumbria	£285,000	2	1
Lancashire	£270,000	4	2
Greater Manchester	£4,470,000	20	3
Merseyside	£255,000	3	1
Cheshire	£585,000	6	3
Total	£5,865,000	35	10

Pipeline and Assurance Group

A Pipeline and Programme Assurance Group has been established to provide structured oversight and advisory input on the allocation of Local Levy funding for Property Flood Resilience (PFR) projects. Its purpose and responsibilities are outlined below:

- Oversee allocation of Local Levy funding to PFR projects.
- Ensure consistent application of processes and scoring criteria across all projects.
- Review funding bids using the agreed prioritisation criteria.
- Support decision-making when projects within the same partnership area receive identical scores, helping determine which should progress.
- Ensure equitable distribution of projects across partnerships for the duration of the funding period as bids allow
- Issue letters to successful projects confirming approval

The group is chaired by the Finance & Business Assurance Sub group Chair and has representatives from the Environment Agency and two representatives from each of the five partnerships to ensure balanced regional input.

Scoring and Decisions

All submissions were reviewed and scored against the four criteria, previously endorsed by the Committee. Supplementary information was also captured (such as the number of properties and type of flooding); although this was not formally scored, it could be considered during the assessment process.

The Pipeline and Assurance Group met on the 8th December 2025 to review the scoring of the projects and discuss which projects should be allocated funding. The highest scoring applications from each partnership were shortlisted and presented to the Pipeline and Assurance Group, which assessed the proposals to ensure a balanced distribution of projects across partnerships. In cases where projects received equal scores, this group also helped determine funding allocations.

The agreed scoring criteria can be seen below:

Criteria	Rating	Score	Weight
Highest level of Flood Risk of benefiting properties	Very Low Low Medium High	1 2 3 4	35%
Number of internal flooding events since 2010 experienced by the properties being put forward for PFR	1 2-3 4+	1 2 3	30%
Level of Deprivation of community	60% least deprived 21%-40% most deprived 20% most deprived	1 2 3	20%
Level of engagement with community and/or property residents to date	None - Need to begin engagement Some - Some residents are aware PFR could be an option available to them Positive - Residents are aware and keen to receive PFR measures	1 2 3	15%

Pipeline and Assurance Sub group Discussions

Those representing regional partnerships stated the need to document clear reasoning and rationale behind project allocation recommendations so that this could be communicated to elected officials.

Some assurance group members commented that making decisions on allocations was not easy with only limited information on the projects. It was clarified that the scoring was the main prioritisation factor with the assurance group considering options to both ensure the funding is used where the priority is highest but also ensuring a reasonable spread across the partnerships.

Discussions were had on the relative merits of using the funding to partially fund larger PFR schemes, compared with fully funding smaller schemes. There were some questions about the suitability of the PFR funding to fund larger projects, or whether they should bid for ‘standalone’ Local Levy like other large capital schemes.

The input of partnership representatives was particularly valuable when discussing the merits of projects within their respective areas. For example, one representative was able to present new information which meant a particular bid was no longer required. Also, partnership representatives were able to explain the priority projects for their area and help ensure allocation decisions were aligned with area priorities wherever possible.

It was suggested that a reserve list of projects may be needed to ensure progress in case any funded projects experience delays.

Allocation of funding conditions

During the assurance group meeting, it was recognised that the funding pot should remain flexible over the three-year period. The actual costs of the projects will not be confirmed until the engagement with residents progresses, and property surveys are complete. The Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup are asked to support retaining flexibility within the £2.7 Million allocation across the three years. There may be a need to reprofile funds.

It is proposed that projects allocated funding will update the Northwest Hub leads every 3 months on progress. Once complete, a review and lessons learned will be presented back to the Committee. Additionally, all funded projects must participate in a lessons-learned workshop. This will capture successes and areas for improvement, supporting continuous learning and strengthening future PFR project delivery.

Recommendation on projects to receive funding in Year 1 (2026/27)

The outcome of the prioritisation and assurance discussions highlighted 7 projects for the first round of funding in 2026/27.

We ask the Finance and Business Assurance Sub group to support the allocation of Local Levy from the agreed PFR pot to the below projects for FY 2026/27.

Partnership area	Name	Organisation	Cost (£)	Total cost (£)
Cumbria	Naddle Gate, Burn Banks	Westmorland and Furness Council	£ 35,000	£135,000
	Stockdalewath PFR	Environment Agency	£100,000	
Lancashire	Bacup	Environment Agency	£120,000	£120,000
Greater Manchester	Bolton House Road	Wigan Council	£90,000	£165,000
	Carville Grove	Wigan Council	£75,000	
Cheshire Mid Mersey	Ashton Hayes	Cheshire West and Chester Council	£195,000	£195,000
Merseyside	Maghull	Environment Agency	£60,000	£60,000
Total				£675,000

Six projects have received full funding but there was some flexibility to partially fund the Stockdalewath scheme which has received some funding from elsewhere.

North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee



January 2026 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

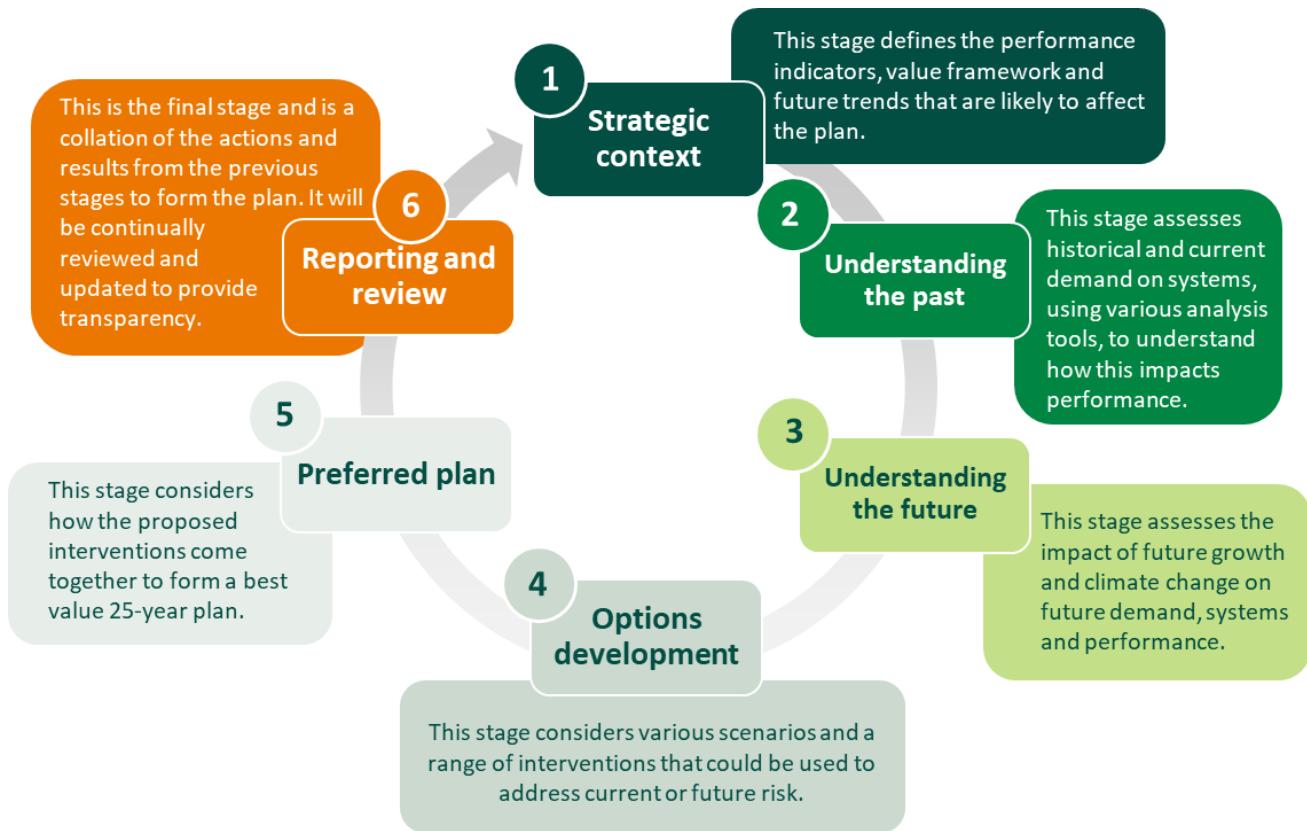
Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 06 October 2025 to the 06 January 2026. This is unverified data at this time, and so the numbers are likely to fluctuate until the regulatory data is signed off for our full year regulatory reporting for Ofwat. 'Severe 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	2	0	0
Merseyside	0	0	0	0
Greater Manchester	7	8	0	0
Lancashire	6	13	0	0
Cumbria	5	46	0	2

3. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

With regards to the stages of the DWMP process (Figure 1), the team are currently underway with the Strategic Context (stage 1) and are making good progress exploring what assessments, data and inputs are required for the 'Understanding the past' (stage 2) and 'Understanding the future' (stage 3).

Figure 1: The stages of the DWMP process.



The Strategic Context stage of the plan (stage 1) is centred around three key elements:

1. the long-term ambition and vision for the North West;
2. future trends that may affect drainage and wastewater systems, such as climate change, population growth, and future development; and
3. detailing how value and benefits will be accounted for in the plan to consider the impacts on customers, the environment, recreation and local economy. This is commonly referred to as a 'value framework'.

The North West is a diverse region, and in order to develop a holistic plan for 2030-2055, understanding the views, priorities and needs of stakeholders and customers is key. We are currently engaging with a variety of different groups to understand the wide range of potential different views and priorities, with the aim to balance these where possible.

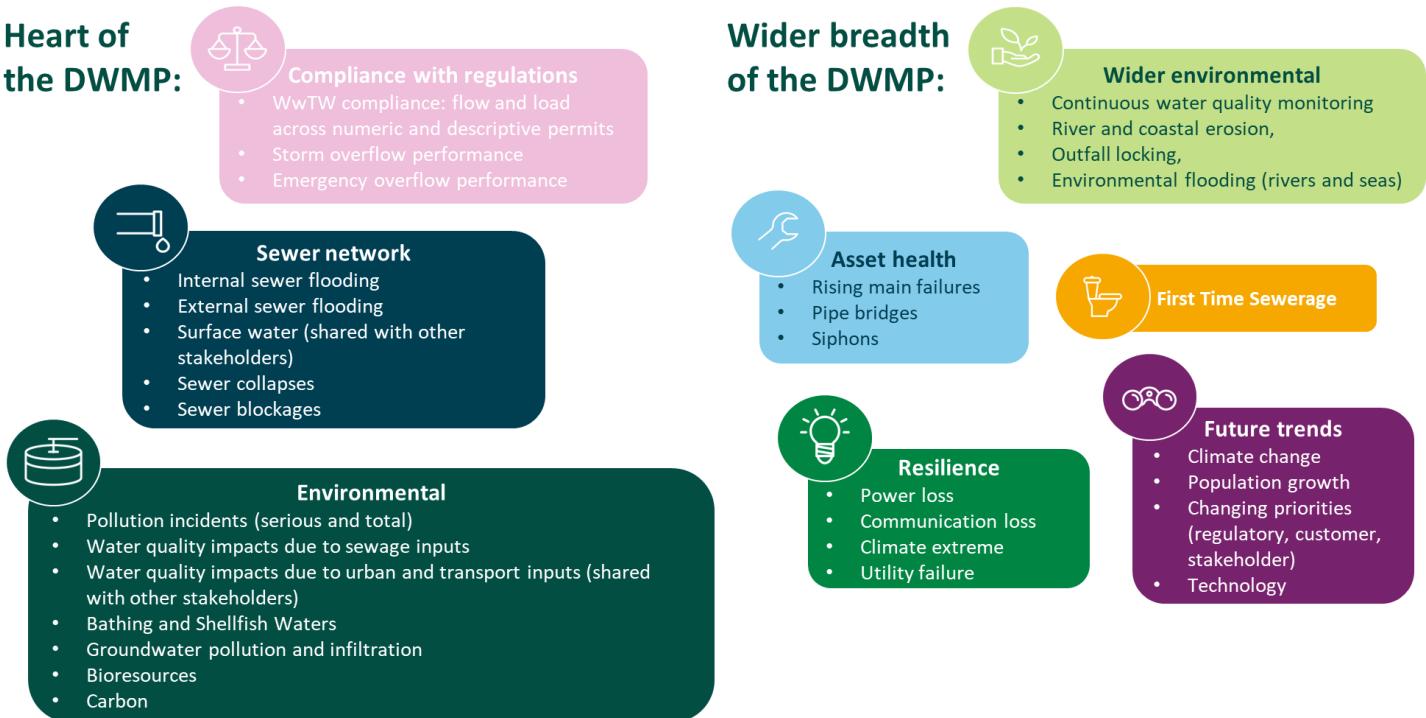
Figure 2 highlights the vast breadth of the DWMP across drainage and wastewater systems, and we would like to know:

- *What matters to you?*
- *What are your future priorities?*
- *What is your long-term ambition for the North West?*

You can share your thoughts directly with the team at DWMP@uuplc.co.uk, or complete the Future Priorities survey here: [UU DWMP Future Priorities Survey](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UU_DWMP_Future_Priorities_Survey) (approx. 5 mins to complete).

The Strategic Context stage of the plan is the building block for the remaining stages of plan development. We will use the insights gained from this stage to feed into the risk assessments elements (stages 2 and 3, Figure 1), to understand what risks and opportunities there may be work in partnership in the future.

Figure 2: Overview of the breadth of the DWMP across drainage and wastewater systems.



4. Integrated Water Management

4.1 Cumbria

The Carlisle IWMP approach continues to progress with partners working together. A key output from the Carlisle IWM collaborative workshop, held in October, was to complete an interactive mapping session for organisations to share information to help identify shared priority areas for focus. This has resulted in four workstreams being identified: St Cuthbert's Garden Village, Sheepmount, Caldew sub-catchment and the wider Eden catchment.

As part of the AMP8 period (2025-2030), we have secured investment to develop a Net Zero Strategy for St. Cuthberts Garden Village. Last month saw the first collaborative workshop held to introduce the scheme and discuss how partners can work together to achieve its goals.

4.2 Lancashire

Activity is on-going to explore potential areas which would benefit from an IWM approach across Lancashire. Engagement continues with many organisations across the county, in particular, with key organisations supporting the refresh of the Turning Tides Partnership.

4.3 Greater Manchester

Hindley IWMP activity is on-going. Recent focus has been on partners working together to install temporary pumping measures to alleviate surface water flooding in the Keats Way area in early 2026.

Feasibility work to look at permanent solutions for alleviating surface water flood risk on Keats Way is being commissioned.

UUW has been part of the development of the Stockport Integrated Drainage Strategy (IDS), set for publication in January 2026. The IDS outlines a coordinated, place-based approach to managing surface water and flood risk in the town centre through measures like watercourse creation, SuDS, and nature-based solutions. It requires new developments to manage runoff using a hierarchical SuDS approach, prioritising on-site infiltration and storage before discharge to watercourses or sewers, to reduce flood risk, improve water quality, and enhance biodiversity. The IDS will guide future development, investment, and public realm improvements in the Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC) area, serving as a key reference for planners, developers, and the MDC team, with ongoing input from the LLFA and partners.

4.4 Merseyside

Following the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Vision for Sustainable Water Management in 2025, the Merseyside trilateral partnership has focussed on the development of the IWMP, with collaborative workshops planned for the delivery of key enabling portions of the IWMP early in 2026.

Beginning with 'Data and Evidence' in Q1 of 2026, the key enabling workshops will be:

- **Data and evidence:** The gathering and sharing of data to guide and monitor activity
- **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
- **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.

Alongside the creation of the IWMP there has been a focus on functional integration with Local Authorities. Beginning with planning and development functions, collaborative workshops have been held to understand how these processes are currently structured and how their desired outcomes might be better facilitated in the future. These workshops aim to provide efficient delivery of services across the region through effective engagement between UUW and the Local Authorities.

The first Vision Mersey IWMP Investigations Workshop was held in October, bringing together key stakeholders across Merseyside to discuss the future of wastewater management in the area for AMP9 and beyond. This series of workshops aims to deliver transformative improvements in water management for the region through a collaborative integrated water management approach, incorporating the needs of the region in the design of the future wastewater solutions.

4.5 Cheshire

Discussions continue across the county with regards to IWM in light of upcoming devolution in Cheshire, with positive discussions around options for both hyper-local and Cheshire-wide IWM.

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

5. Rainwater Management

An update on current activities is listed below:

- £9 million Sustainable Water Fund (SWF) is open for all North West Local Authorities to bid for. Full details can be found online ([Sustainable Water Fund](#)). This is for any council-led project which is looking at managing rainwater, so expands beyond just flood risk management to areas like town regeneration and highways.
- Sankey Bridges, Warrington, is the first project to have received SWF funding and is now on its final financial milestone. Three projects are at the contract signing stage.
- Further webinar open to Local Authorities and strategic partners in February – please email Sharma.jencitis@uuplc.co.uk if you would like to be included on the distribution.
- The first Steering Group for the Preston Master Plan has taken place. Master Plan steering groups for Bolton and Oldham will be taking place over the next 4 weeks.
- As part of our ambition to deliver 400 Rainwater Management projects in schools across the North West, we have delivered 15 school projects to date across Greater Manchester and have plans to deliver an additional 40 across the region by the end of March 2026. Engagement plans around our schools programme with LLFAs are currently in progress and we will be in touch soon.

RFCCs | Environment Agency FCERM Update

December 2025

NW RFCC Meeting – 23 January 2026

Information item E

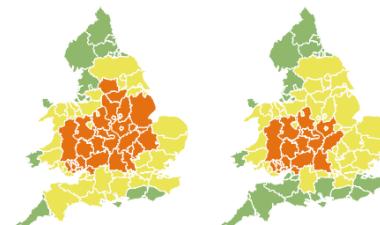
Weather events	1
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Working with FCERM stakeholders	3
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Ways to keep in touch with our work	6

Weather events

Storm Claudia and weather outlook

Storm Claudia brought widespread heavy rainfall, flooding and strong winds across the UK on 14 November 2025, following earlier impacts and fatalities in western Europe. The Met Office issued Severe Weather Warnings for rain and wind across the country. At the peak we had 97 Flood Warnings in place across England, concentrated in the Midlands and South West. Areas at specific flood risk in England and Wales were identified in the Flood Forecasting Centre's daily flood guidance.

Flood Guidance Statement
10:30hrs Friday 14 November 2025



73 properties were reported flooded, mainly in Cumbria and Herefordshire, and approximately 30 properties were evacuated in Chesterfield. Flood barriers operated on key rivers (e.g. Foss, Severn), protecting over 19,000 properties. 71,793 properties received Flood Warnings, with extensive public communications via media and social channels. Our forecasting centres and incident rooms were activated nationwide, with MPs briefed and national media interviews conducted.

Proactive measures began ahead of the storm, including clearing trash screens, deploying demountable defences, and relocating high-volume pumps. River levels remained high in slower responding catchments (Severn, Trent, Ouse, Don) as widespread snow followed the storm, with teams continuing ground operations and asset checks. We continue to be vigilant as catchments recover through the winter with river and coastal flood risk possible.

Our new 'Get Flood Warnings' service was launched on GOV.UK on 21 October 2025 to improve community resilience and accessibility for future events. This replaces the Flood Warning Service, to deliver timely flood alerts using real-time data and predictive models.

Nationally, drought conditions are improving with heavy rainfall in November 2025, following what was the driest spring in 132 years and the hottest since records began in 1884. When the National Drought Group (NDG) last met on 8 December 2025, it heard how [science, learning and collaboration](#) is equipping us to tackle drought and will strengthen resilience through winter and into 2026.

Drought planning sill continues even in wetter conditions. Without winter rain there [will be worse levels of drought next year](#) with impacts on nature, agriculture and navigation. Please see our [drought and flooding explainer](#) for more information.

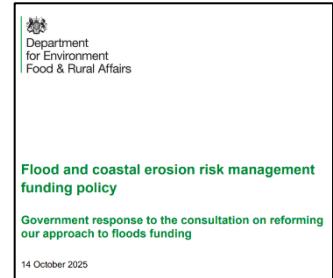
The latest [3 month outlook](#) by the Met Office, published on 22 December 2025 shows that the chance of a wet 3 month period for the UK as a whole is higher than normal, with impacts from wind and rain more likely later in the period.

FCRM capital programme update

Defra consultation on floods funding

We worked closely with Defra to develop the new flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) funding policy which was published on 14 October 2025.

It follows a public consultation (held between 2 June and 29 July 2025) which allowed stakeholders and communities to have their say on how government funds FCERM projects.



Defra and the Environment Agency worked together to account for stakeholder feedback in the final policy. Further information on the new policy can be found [here](#)

We are now developing detailed guidance for all risk management authorities (RMAs) and other organisations to put forward and deliver projects aligned to the new policy. This is due to be published in the new year, 2026. Prior to this we are inviting RMAs, delivery partners and stakeholders to sign up to a series of webinars to learn about the guidance and support available. You can sign up [here](#)

[Stakeholder webinar: Applying the new FCERM Funding Policy](#)

Flood services

Upgraded Flood Warning System

On 21 October 2025 the Environment Agency's upgraded Flood Warning System and associated [Get Flood Warnings service](#) on GOV.UK launched.

The Warning System will consistently and efficiently issue flood messages to over 2.6 million customers.

Meanwhile, the Get Flood Warnings service enables members of the public, organisations and emergency responders to independently register and customise how they receive flood alerts and warnings.

Our new National Assessment of Flood Risk (NaFRA) data plays a role in both these systems by providing more detailed information on areas at risk of flooding.



Working with FCERM stakeholders

Flood and Coast conference

The annual Flood and Coast conference will take place from 9-11 June 2026 at the [Exhibition Centre Liverpool](#).



The Environment Agency will be one of 4 strategic partners for the event, alongside the Association of SuDS Authorities (ASA), Association of Drainage Authorities (ADA), and the Rivers Trust.

The FCRM events team are in discussion with the Exhibition Centre to review the layout and plans, ensuring a smooth transition to the new venue. Key highlights for the event include the Environment Agency Excellence Awards and Women in FCERM Awards taking place on the evening of Day 2. We will also host an exhibition stand throughout the conference, led by the FCRM Events Team.

Flood Action Week

The Environment Agency's Flood Action Week (FAW) took place from 13–19 October 2025 to raise awareness and support communities at risk of flooding.



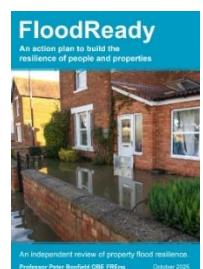
We engaged with our partners to publicise the week, sharing FAW messages, with downloads of our FAW partner pack exceeding last year's figures.

We issued 12 national and local press releases, supported Defra's Flood Funding Formula policy announcement, and delivered over 80 social media posts, resulting in over 180,000 views. Local media success was driven by community-specific stories, reinforcing the insight that people act when they see flood risk in their own neighbourhoods.

We hosted a parliamentary reception in the House of Commons to raise awareness with MPs and Peers about the risk the public faces from flooding. The Secretary of State, Minister and our staff were out during the week visiting flood and coastal schemes and promoting FAW messages through the media.

Property flood resilience review

On 16 October 2025, the [FloodReady Report](#) was published following an independent review led by Professor Peter Bonfield. The report identified how the take up of practical and affordable property flood resilience (PFR) measures can be accelerated.



This builds on progress since the 2016 PFR action plan, identifying gaps and opportunities to expand the market. It provides an action plan for stakeholders across the construction, finance, housing, research, and skills sectors to collaborate on delivering flood resilience at the property level. The recommendations will be taken forward by a core leadership group, who will work closely with relevant stakeholders to prioritise and implement the key actions. The group will report on progress to the Flood Resilience Taskforce.

Launch of CoastCraft

CoastCraft was [launched](#) on 3 October 2025 and is a new educational game which has been developed for the Minecraft Education Edition (MEE). It has been delivered by Cornwall Council as part of the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Innovation Programme (FCIP).



Developed for users between 9 and 14 years of age, players can learn about coastal landscapes, how sand dunes are used as a nature-based solution, and can explore strategies to respond to climate change and sea level rise. They can also visualise a range of potential futures in places such as Bude, Cornwall, influenced by choices they make in the game.

The release of CoastCraft follows the success of the Environment Agency games Rivercraft and Rivercraft 2, which provide an innovative educational resource for flood risk management and nature-based solutions to flooding. It is estimated that between 2-3 million users have experienced Rivercraft and Rivercraft 2 in schools and at home.

Professional qualifications in engineering recognition day

On 5 November 2025, the Environment Agency hosted a Professional Qualifications in Engineering Recognition Day, led by Ian Hodge (Chief Engineer & Director of Standards, Asset Management & Engineering). This event celebrated the growing achievement of professional engineering qualifications across multiple institutions and grades - a trend that has seen consistent year-on-year growth among our staff and more than 50 newly qualified officers in the last 2 years.

This success is more than a milestone; it is a strategic investment. Professional qualifications assure our partners, stakeholders, and the public that Environment Agency engineers are competent, accountable, and equipped to deliver safe, sustainable, and resilient infrastructure. This capability is critical as we invest in flood risk management and climate adaptation projects that protect communities and enhance environmental resilience.

We need engineers who are:

- **Trusted** – Delivering safe, functional, and inclusive flood and coastal risk management assets while maintaining vital infrastructure.
- **Sustainable** – Embedding carbon management and nature-positive principles into engineered solutions.
- **Innovative** – Applying technology ethically and effectively, including Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), to drive efficiency and resilience.

By prioritising professional development, the Environment Agency strengthens its ability to respond to climate change impacts and deliver infrastructure that meets the highest standards of safety, sustainability, and innovation.

RFCC recruitment campaign

We have recently held a round of recruitment for 19 new independent member RFCC posts across 9 of the RFCCs. This recruitment period ran from 13 October to 16 November 2025. We received over 100 applications for the posts. Our teams are currently working on shortlisting and planning for interviews. Successfully candidates will be confirmed in the new year.



Events

EFRA Committee

Since September 2025 we have provided several pieces of evidence for ministerial and senior leaders' appearances in front of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee (EFRA) committee and for written submissions to inquiries:



- 9 September 2025 – [Minister Hardy appeared](#) in front of the EFRA committee to discuss her entire portfolio, including flooding.
- 10 October 2025 – we [submitted written evidence](#) to EFRA's call for evidence on coastal erosion and landslips.
- 28 October 2025 – [Alan Lovell and Philip Duffy appeared](#) in front of the EFRA committee to discuss the work of the Environment Agency as part of the committee's inquiry into the work of the Department and its Arm's-Length Bodies.
- 11 November 2025 – [The Secretary of State appeared](#) in front of the EFRA committee to discuss the work of the Department. We provided evidence requested on investment in coastal flooding and coastal erosion
- 18 November 2025 – [Julie Foley appeared](#) in front of the EFRA committee to discuss coastal erosion.

FCERM publications and announcements

Environmental Audit Committee report on flood resilience

On 13 October 2025, the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) [published a report](#) following their inquiry into flood resilience in England.



The report acknowledges the increasing risk of flooding and welcomed government investment but calls it insufficient relative to the risk. It criticises the overall flood and coastal risk management system for being fragmented and reactive, calling for a strategic and integrated approach that is locally led and catchment level.

Through the report, the Committee makes 21 recommendations. These come under the headings:

- A strategic, system-wide approach to flood resilience
- Embedding flood resilience across Government policy and public investment
- Making investment fairer and more inclusive
- Supporting people, places and preparedness

Most prominently, the report calls for a single, widely promoted national flood reporting and information service - an expansion of Floodline - by March 2026. The government will now consider the report and respond to the committee's recommendations. The Environment Agency is currently supporting with this. You can find the full report [here](#) and the associated press release [here](#).

Latest Innovation magazine

The [December 2025 edition](#) of the Innovation Magazine showcases how the Environment Agency and its delivery partners are driving sustainable change across the industry. The magazine includes articles on how digital processes are enabling construction efficiency and decarbonisation, inventive solutions like eel-friendly flood defences, and drone surveying that saves time and carbon.



Flood scheme openings and updates

- [Essex wetland project will reduce flooding and restore nature](#)
- [Essential Somerset reservoirs upgraded to prevent flooding](#)
- [Congresbury reservoir turns village fear into award-winning work](#)
- [New flood scheme launched in Great Shefford](#)
- [New 'talking signs' help Folkestone prepare for flash flooding](#)
- [Construction of improved flood defences near Goole gets underway](#)
- [Major flood risk management scheme completed in Bewdley](#)



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Environment Agency

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December 2025

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2026

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PROJECT AURORA TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME UPDATE

Recommendation: The Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (RFCC) is asked to:

1. Note the ambitions, timelines and benefits of the Aurora Transformation Programme
2. Review “Appendix 1 – Environment Agency: Aurora Transformation Programme External Messages” provided within this pack and use it to inform conversations with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) and other partners accordingly.

1. Introduction

The Environment Agency is preparing to deliver a new FCERM investment programme from April 2026 and transform its approach to asset management. These preparations are being made under an ambitious and time bound transformation programme internally referred to the ‘Aurora Transformation Programme.’

The programme will make improvements to the way the Environment Agency plans, manages, and delivers flood and coastal erosion risk management and asset management activities, primarily in its Operations and Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Directorates.

Under the programme there are eight workstreams which are organised around asset transformation and investment programme transformation.

Some aspects of the Aurora Transformation Programme are relevant for external stakeholders and partners including RFCCs and RMAs – especially LLFAs (Lead Local Flood Authorities), LAs (Local Authorities) and IDBs (Internal Drainage Boards).

This paper provides an overview of:

- the workstreams that make up the programme
- the key benefits
- the timeline for delivery

1.1. Asset Management Transformation

The asset management transformation workstreams will enable the Environment Agency to deliver and embed the changes outlined in its asset management strategy which was launched in 2023. The Environment Agency asset management vision is published here:

[Environment Agency asset management vision - GOV.UK](#)

The workstreams will improve how the Environment Agency manages its assets for flood, navigation and water, from modernising its approach, to enabling innovation.

Many of these workstreams build upon great work that began following the launch of the strategy in 2023. However, the Aurora Transformation Programme is an opportunity to accelerate the pace of delivery, which is important now due to aging and deteriorating assets and the government's commitment to invest more into the maintenance of existing assets.

Workstream 1: Integrated asset management planning

- This workstream will integrate whole life asset management planning at a catchment scale
- It includes activities such as the roll out and adoption of new Asset Management Planning software (AIMS: AMP), the creation of Asset Type Plans, Process Mapping and Environment Agency ISO 55001 re-accreditation.

Workstream 2: Asset health

- This workstream will move the Environment Agency beyond condition-based assessments of assets - which has served well for over 15 years – to a more proactive, reliability centered approach.
- It includes activities such as the creation of a new methodology for measuring asset health, as well as new metrics to measure against.

Workstream 3: Harnessing data and technology for asset management

- This large and cross-cutting workstream will modernise the Environment Agency's approach to data and technology to enable integrated, more effective and cost-efficient asset management.

Workstream 4: Asset management and operations

- This workstream will ensure the Environment Agency has the right people, with the right skills, in the right places. This will be delivered through the creation of integrated area team structures (which includes FCERM, Navigation, and Water Land and Biodiversity functions) to enable cost-effective, integrated whole life asset management.

1.2. Investment Programme Transformation

The investment programme workstreams are set to deliver the changes required to successfully deliver the next FCERM investment programme starting in April 2026.

The next investment programme will look different to the current one, with more focus on maintenance, natural flood management and property flood resilience measures. To deliver this we will need new tools and systems, with capability and capacity building in these areas.

Following several recommendations from the Infrastructure Project Authority (IPA) and National Audit Office (NAO) reviews, the Environment Agency is also making changes to enable more efficient and effective delivery.

Workstream 5: Funding and pipeline development

- This workstream sets out to ensure government investments reflect where current and future flood and coastal erosion risks are greatest, delivering the best value for money whilst also enabling government priorities.
- It includes activities such as the development of a new investment pipeline tool as well as new funding policy and guidance.

- This workstream held an externally facing webinar on the 4 December which outlined the upcoming support which will be made available to apply the new FCERM funding policy. This is available to all Risk Management Authorities on the [Supporting Flood and Coast SharePoint page](#).

Workstream 6: Project classification and development

- This workstream sets out to reshape how the Environment Agency's Project and Programme Delivery (PPD) department oversees FCERM projects under the new investment programme by introducing a more flexible delivery model.
- This will be achieved by ensuring that governance, standards and processes are appropriate to the level of risk being managed – in turn reducing the time between project inception and delivery for simpler projects and assisting complex projects with improved structure and support.
- It includes activities such as the delivery of a 'tiered' approach to project delivery based on complexity.

Workstream 7: Management and delivery of the investment portfolios

- This workstream sets out to design and embed improvements to the portfolio, programme, and project management elements that enable the Environment Agency to manage and deliver its investment portfolios.
- It includes activities such as:
 - producing a governance and management framework that aligns with government standards,
 - reviewing, designing, and aligning how the Environment Agency's Portfolio and Programme Management Offices operate
 - redesigning and landing a new operating model for delivery
- The new programme management model will be made up of three geographical programme management hubs. This workstream will shortly be considering design options for management of the RMA portfolio and will seek Chairs' views on this.

Workstream 8: Resourcing the investment programme

- This workstream sets out to translate the new operating model and demand forecasts into a sustainable, agile workforce strategy.
- It will ensure that the Environment Agency has the capacity, skills and leadership to successfully deliver future investment programmes whilst building a workforce that is adaptable and fit for the future.

2. Benefits

These workstreams taken as a whole will deliver benefits in three broad areas:

1) Strategic benefits: people and communities

- Increased community resilience
- Improved value for money across multiple activities
- Greater focus on more proactive and efficient asset maintenance and refurbishment

2) Benefits for the organisation

- Improving metrics, better use of data and technology and integrating maintenance activities across all asset types: flood, navigation and water assets

- Increasing efficiency, consistency and simplifying governance in the delivery of our investment portfolios by working in accordance with the Project Delivery Functional Standards and aligning with guidance in the Government's Teal Book.

3) Benefits for Environment Agency staff

- Clearer career pathways enabling progression
- Streamlining of systems and process to make day to day work more gratifying
- Improvements in health and safety

3. Timeline for Delivery

The programme is being delivered in three principal phases:

- The first phase includes work being delivered before the start of the next Investment Programme in April 2026. Some outputs have already been delivered, for example Workstream 5 have:
 - Held a webinar on the upcoming support available to help Environment Agency stakeholders apply the new FCERM funding policy.
 - Published a briefing note outlining the key changes in the new FCERM funding policy
 - Both are available here: [Defra's new Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Funding Policy](#)
- The second phase encompasses work to enable the transition to the next investment programme and to deliver our asset management ambitions and is being implemented by April 2027.
- The third phase incorporates elements of work required to deliver our asset management strategy ambitions, which will take longer to implement and embed, and will be complete by April 2028.

4. Summary and recommendations

The Aurora Transformation Programme is preparing to deliver a new FCERM investment programme from April 2026 and transforming our approach to asset management. These preparations are being made under the Aurora Transformation Programme. Some elements of the programme are relevant to RFCCs and other external stakeholders.

The committee is asked to acknowledge the ambitions, timelines and benefits of the Aurora Transformation Programme and use the below "Appendix 1 – Environment Agency: Aurora Transformation Programme External Messages" to inform conversations with other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) and other partners accordingly.

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Date: *2 January 2026*

Appendix 1 – Environment Agency: Aurora Transformation Programme External Messages

Author: Josh Scholes

Intended Audiences: Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Members

Date: 2 January 2026

Contact: RFCC_Correspondence@environment-agency.gov.uk

Key messages

- The Environment Agency is preparing to deliver a new FCERM investment programme from April 2026 and transforming its approach to asset management. These preparations and changes are being made through a programme internally referred to as the ‘Aurora Transformation Programme’
- The programme will make improvements to the way the Environment Agency plans, manages, and delivers flood and coastal erosion risk management and asset management activities for all asset types.
- Key areas of work in this programme include moving to an asset health approach (beyond the current ‘condition’ based asset assessment), producing a government aligned governance and management framework, aligning programme management offices to government standards and streamlining access to grant funding for Risk Management Authorities.
- Within the Environment Agency, local Area teams will continue to lead the relationship with RFCC Chairs and Members, and officers from Risk Management Authorities.

Outcomes

By 2028, the new investment programme will include a broader range of projects with varying levels of complexity, alongside an increase in property Flood Resilience, Natural Flood Management, and Sustainable Drainage Systems. Under this programme, the Environment Agency will continue to build new flood schemes, but with a greater focus on maintaining existing assets. The Environment Agency (EA) will take a more modern, technology-enabled approach to asset management for all asset types, including flood, navigation, and water assets.

This work will deliver a number of benefits to the Environment Agency, people and communities:

- **Strategic Benefits:** Increased community resilience, better value for money and more efficient asset maintenance.
- **Organisational Benefits:** Improved metrics, application of data and technology to integrated maintenance activities and more efficient delivery of investment portfolios that is consistent with Project Delivery Functional Standards.
- **Practical Benefits:** Clearer career pathways, streamlining of systems and processes, improvements in health and safety.

Programme Drivers

- With increasing risks posed by a changing climate, combined with aging infrastructure, the Environment Agency must adapt the way it works to collectively meet the challenges we face now and in the future.
- The funding rules for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management projects, in place since 2011, have changed significantly, as announced on 14 October 2025 (the Defra FCERM Funding Policy contains full details [Flood and coastal erosion risk management funding policy](#)).
- Government guidance on the management and delivery of projects and programmes has also evolved. The EA will adapt, working in accordance with the [Project Delivery Functional Standards](#) and aligning with guidance in the Government's [Teal Book](#).

Timeframes

We will deliver changes under the new FCERM investment programme from 2026 -2028 in three principal phases:

- The first phase incorporates work that is already underway, and which can be delivered in advance of April 2026.
- The second phase encompasses work to enable the transition to the next investment programme and to deliver the Environment Agency's asset management strategy ambitions, this will be implemented by April 2027.
- The third phase incorporates further elements of work required to deliver the Environment Agency's asset management strategy ambitions, which will take longer to implement and embed, and will be complete by April 2028.

Some deliverables are dependent on others and implementation dates may be adjusted over time to reflect changes in the programme.

Further Information:

[Supporting Flood and Coast Projects - Home Page](#)