

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

FRIDAY 24 APRIL 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 23 January 2026 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.	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, and Adam Walsh, EA FCRM Programme Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L).</i>	For information and discussion and approval
11:00	5.	2025/26 Investment Programme Successes <i>Presented by Richard Knight, EA FCRM Manager, Cumbria, Nick Pearson, EA FCRM Manager, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) and Carl Green, North West and North Wales Coastal Group Chairman</i>	For information and discussion and approval
11:20		BREAK	
11:30	6.	National Coastal Adaptation Pilots Funding <i>Presented by Tom De La Rosa, EA National Coastal Adaptation Lead</i>	For information and discussion
11:55	7.	RFCC Role in Co-ordination of NFM Project Development (Paper) <i>Presented by Dave Kennedy, EA FCRM Senior Advisor, C&L and Dave Brown, EA Senior FCRM Advisor, GMMC</i>	For information and discussion
12:30	8.	National FCERM Strategy Refresh (Information Item F) <i>Presented by Adrian Lythgo, NW RFCC Chairman</i>	For information and discussion
12:45	9.	RFCC Meeting and Workshop – 10th July 2026 <i>Presented by Adrian Lythgo, NW RFCC Chairman</i>	For information and discussion
12:55	10.	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	RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting Papers	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	National FCERM Strategy Refresh	National EA
Info item G	Project Aurora Update	National EA

Future RFCC meetings

10 July 2026 (face to face meeting & workshop)
23 October 2026 (face to face meeting)
22 January 2027 (virtual meeting)

Future RFCC Finance & Business Assurance Sub-group meetings

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

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

24 APRIL 2026

UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM THE NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 JANUARY 2026

	ACTION/ MATTER ARISING	ACTION TAKEN
1.	A reflection on 10 years since Storms Desmond and Eva Accessing Data on the Uptake of ELMS 'Aimee Brough advised of the need to scale up NFM interventions and that it has been helpful to see what has happened since the two named storms, noting the huge amount of investment that has been made. With regard to land managers and farmers in the upper reaches of our catchments, it has been seen at the start of the year that Defra do plan to increase the amount of Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) funding that farmers can access for things like NFM through the Sustainable Farming Incentive, and Countryside Stewardship. She asked how we can make sure that land managers can genuinely access those funds and deliver the NFM that we need to make our catchments resilient. Aimee highlighted there are many organisations, including the EA and charities who do great engagement work with farmers to encourage sign-ups, but that funding for those resources is very limited and really stretched. She asked if the Committee could receive a regular update to understand the uptake on those ELMS schemes, so it can understand where the uptake is working, where it's not working and what other support is needed to achieve the scale of intervention required.'	Investigations on how this can be progressed are underway.
2	Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group Meeting 'Councillor Giles Archibald questioned the timing and sequencing of programme development for 2026/27 given that the funding framework is not yet clear, and asked whether the timescales can remain flexible allowing new or revised projects to be added to the programme, or whether it would be more appropriate to delay the timing until we have more certainty. Adrian responded, firstly assuming Giles was referring to 2026/27 Levy funded projects, clarifying that the rules for allocating Local Levy are slightly different to the national investment policy, with more direct control for the Committee. Therefore there is the desired flexibility in the Levy programme to update the programme on a quarterly basis throughout the year. Giles sought clarity, stating that he understood that the detailed funding rules for FCERM were not confirmed.'	Though government policy is now confirmed guidance on the application of the rules in more detailed guidance is emerging. The position will be covered more fully as part of the April RFCC agenda and a workshop is planned for the July meeting for the RFCCs members to discuss its future approach within this guidance. While the 26/7 FDGIA programme has now been confirmed by the EA Board the 2026/27 levy programme will continue to be subject to review on a quarterly basis. The RFCC will also consider any necessary changes to its agreed "Levy Strategy" following the July workshop.

3.	AOB RFCC Support for legacy and learning from the North West FCRIP Projects 'Carolyn Otley reported back from a recent National Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation programme face-to-face meeting and advised that it is now clear the national evaluation of the innovation projects will be very much a programme level evaluation. Individual FCRIP projects will be identifying their lessons learnt and how they might want to embed them but the timescales will not line up for the national teams to support this work. This presents a challenge for the individual projects and she suggested there is a role for the RFCC to make sure that we don't lose the learning that has taken place through those projects and help find ways to support building it into our business as usual. Adrian recognised this is a point well-made and thanked Carolyn for her comment. He noted this is something that's been discussed previously and he would certainly support, if colleagues were in agreement, that this comment be included within the minutes for the meeting and to then take forward more local learning and evaluation.'	A meeting of the three FCRIP projects and RFCC representatives is being arranged for June 2026.
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North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Draft Minutes of the meeting held on Friday, 23 January 2026

Attendees:

Members

Adrian Lythgo, Chairman
Councillor Giles Archibald, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor James Shorrocks, Lancashire 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 Tony Brennan, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Daniel Barrington, Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Terri McMillan, EA Appointed Member – Business and Assurance
Carolyn Otley, EA Appointed Member – Communities
Susannah Bleakley, EA Appointed Member – Coastal Issues
Kate Morley – EA Appointed Member - Conservation
Amy Cooper, EA Appointed Member - Water and Sewerage Industry
Aimee Brough, EA Appointed Member – Agriculture & Land Management (Catchment Based Approaches)
Paul Barnes, EA Appointed Member – Agriculture & Land Management (Farming)
Stewart Davies – EA North West Board Member

Environment Agency Officers:

Ian Crewe, Area Director, Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire (GMMC) (part)
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
Adam Walsh, FCRM Programming Manager, Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)
Andy Tester, FCRM Programming Manager, GMMC
Rachel Harmer, RFCC Secretariat
Sarah Fontana, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Co-ordinator, GMMC
Gary Hilton, FCRM Local Authority Capital Projects Advisor, GMMC
Ayush Sheth, FCRM Programming Team Advisor, GMMC
Stuart Mault, FCRM Local Authority Project Advisor, C&L
Mia Mullender, FCRM Local Authority Project Advisor, C&L
Iwan Lawton, FCRM PSO Senior Advisor, C&L

Local Authority Observers (Councillors and Officers):

Councillor Bob Kelly, Cumberland Council
Ali Harker, Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Jason Harte, Westmorland and Furness Council
Matthew Waning, Westmorland and Furness Council
Nick Rae, Cumberland Council
Andrew Harrison, Cumberland Council

Graeme Innes, Cumberland Council
Clare Nolan-Barnes, Blackpool Council
John Davies, Lancashire County Council
Lorah Cheyne, Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Gerald Mirfin, Lancashire County Council
Fran Comyn, Rochdale Borough Council
Jill Holden, Greater Manchester Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Councillor Jacqueline Owen, Tameside Council
Matt Winnard, Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Guy Metcalfe, Cheshire East Council
Gareth Owen, Cheshire East Council

Presenters:

Katie Eckford, NW RFCC Shoreline Management Plan Co-ordinator
Sarah Wardle, Partnership Co-ordinator, Merseyside
Jill Holden, Partnership Co-ordinator, Greater Manchester
Marina Powell-Currie, EA FCRM PSO Team Leader
Dermot Smith, EA FCRM Senior Advisor
Dave Brown, EA FCRM Senior Advisor
Megan Creek, DWMP Plan Development Manager, United Utilities
Shannon Gunning, EA FCRM PSO Advisor, GMMC

Observers:

Alice Denholm, Project Engagement Lead, Corporate Affairs, United Utilities
Ian Kell, Benson and Sandes Flood Action Group, Kendal

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

Adrian Lythgo opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, including presenters, Ian Kell and other observers.

Adrian conveyed apologies from: Councillor Mark Goldsmith and Councillor Sam Naylor, both from the Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership; Councillor Mhairi Doyle and Councillor Elizabeth Grey, (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Chris Findley (RFCC EA Appointed Member – Development and Sustainable Investment); and Carol Holt, EA Area Director (Cumbria and Lancashire (C&L)).

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

- Guy Metcalfe representing the Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on behalf of Councillor Mark Goldsmith.
- Gareth Owen representing Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership on behalf of Councillor Sam Naylor.

Adrian advised no declarations of interest have been received.

Adrian highlighted Defra's recent announcement that Councillor Elizabeth Grey will be the new Chair of the NW RFCC starting in September. He recognised and welcomed the benefits of having a new Chair who has had an involvement and an interest in flooding for quite some time. He said that as the commencement date is some time off, he would advise the Committee in late Spring/ early Summer of more detail on the transition. He advised that Councillor Grey had given her apologies for today, due to a clash in meetings, but was keen to have access to the recording, and no objections to this were raised.

Adrian advised he had circulated his quarterly update to Members just before Christmas, which included the transition arrangements from the old funding policy to the new one. He had hoped that further detailed guidance around the new funding policy would be available and enable further discussion with the RFCC, but unfortunately this has not yet been provided. We should be able to take a closer look at this at our April meeting.

Adrian remarked on the importance of looking back to Storm Desmond, its impact and what has happened since, at today's meeting.

No further comments were raised.

26 (02) Minutes of the RFCC meeting held on 24 October 2025 and matters arising

The minutes of the 24 October 2025 RFCC meeting were proposed by Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin and seconded by Councillor Philip Cusack.

No comments or questions were raised.

The minutes of the 24 October 2025 RFCC meeting were approved by the Committee.

26 (03) Recent Flooding Incidents

Adrian Lythgo referred to the quarterly flood incidents report which shows it has been a very wet quarter. Although not confirmed, there are likely to have been over 300 properties flooded internally, which has been particularly significant in both the local authority areas in Cumbria, and across Lancashire. He recognised that even though there have been small numbers of properties flooded in different areas, the cumulative number is significant.

Councillor Giles Archibald commented it has been a particularly harsh period in Cumbria. There were no further comments.

Adrian highlighted the importance of the RFCC continuing to note the scale of the flooding and to take this into account when assessing where we can work with communities and in securing investment to be able to increase resilience to flooding. The extent of recent flooding provides good context for the next agenda item, which is a reflection on Storms Desmond and Eva which had very significant impacts on the North West. At the time most of us thought that Storm Desmond was going to be exceptional, but since then we have seen dozens of named storms in the last 10 years.

There were no further comments or questions.

26 (04) A Reflection on 10 years since Storms Desmond and Eva (December 2015)

Richard Knight and Nick Pearson provided a reflection on Storms Desmond and Eva, their impacts on homes, communities and infrastructure, and the work to reduce the risk of flooding across the North West since 2015. Due to time restrictions Richard invited conversations and questions on the presentation to be taken outside of the meeting.

Members recalled the 5th and 6th December Storm Desmond and the Boxing Day flooding of Storm Eva, where over 16,000 properties were flooded across the North West region. The West Coast main trainline was closed and parts of key infrastructure such as the bridge at Pooley Bridge was washed away and the A591 in Cumbria severely damaged. December 2015 still holds the wettest month on record and 14 catchments across the North West recorded their highest ever river flows.

Since 2015 there has been over £600 Million invested across Cumbria and Lancashire in improving the standard of protection for communities, which has supported around 599 projects.

Members noted a number of completed projects in Cumbria since 2015 including: Carlisle phase 1, 1a, 1b and 2; Rickerby Park (EA); Carlisle, Gosling Sike (EA); Warwick Bridge PFR (EA); Egremont, Skirting Beck (EA); Ulverston, Town Beck (EA); Glenridding (EA); Keswick, Elliot Park Pumping Station (LA); Keswick, Penrith Road (LA); Low Crosby (EA) Warwick Bridge PFR (EA); Winster Embankment (EA); Gategill Beck, Threlkeld (EA); Troutbeck Bridge PLP (LA); and, North Road, Holme Village Flood Alleviation (LA).

Schemes still under construction include Kendal, Wyre Beach Management Scheme, Preston South Ribble Scheme, Garstang Gates and the Wyre Catchment Readiness Programme. Further projects in the pipeline include Bispham, Blackpool Beach Nourishment, Anchorsholme, Hambledon and Glasson Dock.

Councillor Giles Archibald raised his concern regarding the upstream phase of the Kendal Scheme and asked if this part of the project will be completed in line with what we are currently expecting. Richard advised information is being collected which will be fed into the ongoing detailed scheme design. He could not absolutely confirm that this part of the scheme will go ahead but there is a commitment to get through the design process as soon as possible.

As a meeting observer, Councillor Gerald Mirfin enquired about the pipeline projects in Lancashire and advised he has been campaigning for Whalley and Billington for a number of years. He asked for a report to be provided for himself and Lancashire County Council as to why work has not started to progress. Adrian Lythgo thanked Councillor Mirfin for his contributions and referred him to the new funding policy advising that some of the changes that have been made now allow a greater breadth of interventions. He also highlighted there is an APPG (All Party Parliamentary Group) with respect to flooding where MPs can become involved should they wish.

Councillor Mandie Shilton-Godwin recalled that during the October RFCC meeting the Lancashire Strategic Partnership had wanted to vote for a 0% increase in Local Levy. She expressed that, since funding for schemes is often challenging, greater contributions to Local Levy need to be made by the strategic partnerships.

Nick Pearson provided an overview of the impacts of Storm Eva, within the Greater Manchester Merseyside and Cheshire area, which occurred over Christmas Day and Boxing Day 2015. With the heaviest rainfall recorded over the Irwell and Glaze catchments, 2250 properties were flooded internally, 500 business premises flooded, 7 damaged substations and 31200 properties were left without power, 18,000 in Rochdale. Eight of the ten Greater Manchester authorities were affected. There was other significant flooding in Prestolee, Stoneclough and Salford. There were also large amounts of sediment deposited in areas of Manchester city centre and a pub alongside the River Irwell was so severely damaged that it never reopened.

Since then there has been significant investment and a number of schemes have been delivered including the Salford Castle Irwell Scheme, the Resilient Roch project, large NFM projects in Smithills and Bolton, and on the Upper Roch near Littleborough. On the Radcliffe and Redvales Flood Alleviation Scheme, the first two phases are now complete. The Rochdale and Littleborough Scheme is progressing well, which now encompasses a large flood storage area.

Members noted further schemes which continue to be progressed, such as Poise Brook in Stockport, and there is also work underway to look at the South Manchester Strategy.

Councillor Alan Quinn gave thanks to the work done by Nick Pearson, Pete Costello and their teams. He advised Radcliffe flooded in 2012 and the EA approached Bury Council to see if there was any funding available to provide defences. A £3 Million Local Levy contribution was provided. Further lobbying of Parliament took place in 2018 and additional funding was provided which enabled the scheme to go ahead.

Carolyn Otley recalled how Storm Desmond was the time people started to talk about climate change happening now and that the impacts of Storm Desmond were far beyond what had been anticipated. Since then there has been a really impressive volume of capital schemes put in place, however she raised her concern that some of the wider work around NFM, property level protection, community engagement takes place as bits of project work rather than as fundamentals. She reflected that we're not making the progress needed to mainstream that work, even with the new funding formula. We need to make sure that we're building and retaining the skills to do that within the flood risk management system.

Aimee Brough advised of the need to scale up NFM interventions and that it has been helpful to see what has happened since the two named storms, noting the huge amount of investment that has been made. With regard to land managers and farmers in the upper reaches of our catchments, it has been seen at the start of the year that Defra do plan to increase the amount of Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMs) funding that farmers can access for things like NFM through the Sustainable Farming Incentive, and Countryside Stewardship. She asked how we can make sure that land managers can

genuinely access those funds and deliver the NFM that we need to make our catchments resilient. Aimee highlighted there are many organisations, including the EA and charities who do great engagement work with farmers to encourage sign-ups, but that funding for those resources is very limited and really stretched. She asked if the Committee could receive a regular update to understand the uptake on those ELMS schemes, so it can understand where the uptake is working, where it's not working and what other support is needed to achieve the scale of intervention required.

Adrian Lythgo advised it would be good if this can be picked up under AOB.

Councillor Giles Archibald highlighted water pollution and issues around combined sewers, which still need to be addressed. He expressed significant concern about the weakening AMOC (Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation), which will create a significantly different climate and asked if any work is being done on this.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin supported the points being raised and the need for significant scaling up and expansion of the work we are doing, particularly about NFM. She advised that in the long term this will have a greater impact, but will also take a lot longer for the impact to be felt in terms of reducing the amount of flooding that people are feeling downstream. She highlighted her concern over the lack of investment at scale, particularly when, with other hats on, she looks at the plans for growth and the densification of population and development activities planned in Greater Manchester. She remarked that the two timetables are not aligned.

Adrian Lythgo reflected on the significant learning since Storm Desmond including it being clear that the processes RMAs have had to work within take too long. The investment policy changes coming aim to simplify the system and make it quicker. The Committee is going to have an important role in understanding how that works and supporting progress at pace. He referred to the point raised by Carolyn Otley about what we've learnt beyond the engineering investment. He advised that the Committee has got a really important ongoing role in helping to shape and influence the impact of the new funding policy and the investment that we can secure. He made a link to the next agenda item where Members would hear about the allocation to the North West for 2026/27, the first year under the new programme. The allocation of £160 Million is the highest we have ever had and still there has been a shortfall across the spectrum of interventions that we could have invested in. Members noted the RFCC has a very active role in working with the new funding policies and helping all the agencies to get the most out of it.

There were no further comments or questions.

26 (05) Report from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group meeting

As Chair of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup, Terri McMillan referred Members to the 9th January draft Finance Sub group Minutes and summarised the items that are recommended for RFCC approval, to be discussed today.

Adam Walsh provided an overview of the investment and resource maintenance programmes. On spend, he reported 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 lower 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.

Members 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.

On outcomes, the current forecast indicates that 6,756 properties will be better protected across the North West this year, against a target of 5,716. Members noted this is a great achievement that has involved a lot of people over a number of years. Adam reported 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 projects where completion and outcome delivery have been reprofiled to future years, such as the Radcliffe & Redvales scheme and a number of LA schemes. Importantly, those properties will benefit from ongoing investment.

Members noted the 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.

Adam reported that the EA and LAs have only achieved around half of their efficiency targets. There were limited submissions in Quarter 3 and there is only one quarter left to make any ground towards target. He advised 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. The current position of achieving around 5% efficiency savings roughly aligns with the national position.

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

Adam advised that ongoing review of Levy funding needs for schemes since the last meeting has revealed a small discrepancy in the 2024/25 income figure, with the income and resulting balance 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 the forecast Levy balance graph provided includes all the Local Levy requests to be discussed today.

Councillor Giles Archibald questioned the timing and sequencing of programme development for 2026/27 given that the funding framework is not yet clear, and asked whether the timescales can remain flexible allowing new or revised projects to be added to the programme, or whether it would be more appropriate to delay the timing until we have more certainty.

Adrian responded, firstly assuming Giles was referring to 2026/27 Levy funded projects, clarifying that the rules for allocating Local Levy are slightly different to the national investment policy, with more direct control for the Committee. Therefore there is the desired flexibility in the Levy programme to update the programme on a quarterly basis throughout the year.

Giles sought clarity, stating that he understood that the detailed funding rules for FCERM were not confirmed.

Adrian confirmed that the national investment policy is confirmed but the guidance isn't yet. He suggested to Giles that he may wish to raise the question again on the next part of the agenda about the FCRM national investment programme for next year.

Resource Maintenance Programme 2025/26

Paul Bowden reported that the resource maintenance programme is progressing well and forecasting to deliver to budget by year-end.

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

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.

In terms of funding availability, Members were 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 GMMC and C&L Areas are 93.4% and 97.7% respectively. GMMC Area are close to achieving their asset condition target at 93% (7 assets requiring improvement), with C&L below target at 97% (35 assets requiring improvement). The national target is 92%.

There were no further comments or questions.

Local Levy Funding Request

Low Hall Flash and Victoria Fields NFM - £71,799k in 2026/27

Dermot Smith provided a brief overview of the project. The request was recommended for approval by the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup.

Adrian Lythgo advised a full presentation for this project had been provided at the recent Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup meeting and he asked Members who were not in attendance at that meeting if they had any questions. None were raised.

Vote: Approved: There were 16 Members in support of this £71,799k Local Levy funding request.

RFCC Business Plan Update

Sally Whiting provided a brief overview of the RFCC Business Plan dashboard, advising of the required ongoing investment and providing an outline of the two Local Levy requests for continuation of support. Members noted the additional information is detailed in the information papers and also on the North West RFCC Sharepoint site.

Building Community Resilience – Newground £818k Local Levy funding request

Members noted the long-established relationship with Newground, who since 2016 have hosted, managed and maintained 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. The Committee were advised an open market tender process is now required to select the supplier for maintaining this service. This process and the new contract will be led by GMCA early in 2026, ensuring compliance with procurement rules. Sally advised that the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup had recommended the approval of ongoing Local Levy support for another three years to 2029 totalling £818k. Members 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.

Vote: Approved: There were 15 Members in support of this £817.8k Local Levy funding request.

NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager Resource £163k Local Levy funding request

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

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

The Committee were reminded of the recent reforms to FDGiA meaning more funding will be available to NFM projects, but recognised that the current programme is very tight, there will

be a delay in the increased availability of 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. Sally advised £163k of Local Levy support is being requested for another 4 years of funding to 2030, as recommended by the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup.

Vote: Approved: There were 15 Members in support of this £163k Local Levy funding request.

Upper Irwell Integrated Water Management and nature-based Solutions Strategy - £100k Local Levy funding request – New project proposal

Sally provided a brief overview of 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 was fully supported by the Cumbria Strategic Partnership in advance of this coming before the Committee.

Members noted the Upper Irwell Strategy 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 catchment partners 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.

Sally advised the project has broad applicability to other areas and catchments and advised £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. This had been recommended for approval by the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup.

Vote: Approved: There were 15 Members in support of this £100k Local Levy funding request.

Members were then asked to approve the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2026/27, totalling £7.421 Million, including for Business Plan projects, as set out in Appendix K.

Vote: Approved: there were 14 Members in support of this £7.421 Million Local Levy programme allocation for 2026/27.

There were no further comments or questions.

Property Flood Resilience (PFR) – Project Allocation Proposals

Shannon Gunning provided a summary of the PFR project allocation proposals following the approval of Local Levy funding for the delivery of a three-year programme.

A short application period had been open for RMAs and the EA to put forward projects. A summary of the applications and the conclusions of the PFR Pipeline and Assurance subgroup had been presented to the Finance and Business Assurance Subgroup. Members were advised of the seven projects proposed to receive funding through the agreed prioritisation criteria for Year 1 of the programme.

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

Shannon also highlighted the request for flexible use of the PFR Local Levy funding allocation across the three-year programme to account for any risks and as learning develops.

Vote: Approved: 16 Members endorsed the funding allocation towards the proposed seven schemes.

Vote: Approved: 15 Members endorsed the flexible use of the PFR Local Levy funding allocation across the three years.

Resolved: The North West RFCC:

(2025/26 investment programme)

- Noted the progress on delivering the 2025/26 investment and resource asset maintenance programmes.

(Local Levy Programme)

- Noted the update in delivering the 2025/26 Local Levy programme
- Approved continued Local Levy funding for Building Community Resilience for a further 3 years (£817.8K)
- Approved continued funding for the NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource for a further 4 years (£163K)
- Approved Local Levy funding of £100K for the Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy.
- Approved the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2026-27, totalling £7.421 million, including for Business Plan projects (Appendix K)

For the PFR Project Funding Allocations:

- Endorsed the flexible use of the PFR Local Levy funding allocation across the three years
- Approved the funding allocation towards the proposed 7 schemes.

There were no further comments or questions.

26 (06) Investment and Resource Maintenance Programme 2026/27

Adam Walsh reminded Members of the allocation process for 2026/27 which saw indicative allocations shared with RMAs (Risk Management Authorities) in early October 2025, and programmes following Local Choices endorsed by the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group on 28th November 2025. The final allocations for 2026/27 were then received on 9th January showing a total investment of £160.3 Million Grant-in Aid funding and £14.91 Million for revenue maintenance for the North West, to protect 9,698 properties. Members noted 2026/27 will be the first year of a three-year national £4.2 Billion investment programme.

The GiA final allocation for the investment programme received on 9th January 2026 aligns with the indicative allocation and Local Choices endorsed at the meeting of the FBASG in November. The only exception is capital salary costs for EA staff. This was allocated by the national EA team and is the only element of the allocation that has not been discussed previously. This takes the total investment programme GiA allocation to £160.3 Million as noted in the national paper.

In terms of over-programme, the NW was indicatively allocated £17.77 Million by the national team in October for specific projects. Following feedback from the Areas, this over-programme based on an assessment of risks associated with our ability to use it, was reduced to £6.7 Million. The over-programme and opportunities to bolster the over-programme nationally, from the £28 Million, or 3% current position, to 10%, will be discussed over the coming months. EA Area Programming teams will be advised by the national team and conversations with all RMAs will take place.

The maximum properties better protected forecast for the investment programme received on 9th January 2026 differs from that in the reports for the FBASG meetings on 28th November 2025 and 9th January. There has been a reduction in forecast and the majority of this reduction is due to properties that were forecast to be better protected in 2026/27, which will now be better protected in 2027/28.

The GiA allocation for the resource maintenance programme received on 9th January 2026 is £94k higher than the indicative allocation endorsed at the meeting of the FBASG on 28th November 2025. This is the North West's share of an additional £5.5 Million for maintenance available nationally. This takes the resource maintenance programme GiA allocation to £14.91 Million for 2026/27.

Adam advised the national investment steer and the new funding policy and guidance will be available before April to support us in building the pipeline of projects from next year. There will also be guidance for how we transition from the current to the new policy from 1st of April 2026.

Adrian Lythgo confirmed that the Committee are being asked to consent the programme today, which is based on the previous/current funding policy, as there will be transitional

arrangements.

Vote: 15 Members supported consenting the implementation of the North West investment and resource maintenance programmes for 2026/27.

Resolved: The North West RFCC consented to the implementation of the North West investment and resource maintenance programmes for 2026/27.

There were no further comments or questions.

26 (07) (RFCC Business Plan) Asset Data Sharing and Mapping – Update on exploring project recommendations

Sarah Wardle and Jill Holden provided an update on the exploration of the Asset Data Sharing and Mapping project recommendations following the presentation to the RFCC in October. They reflected that this project is an opportunity to develop a more joined-up and practical approach to asset data and mapping across the region. A summary of key challenges was provided, which includes:

- Data quality gaps - Inconsistent, incomplete data across watercourse and SuDS assets; maturity varies widely.
- Collaboration & trust Issues - Fragmented ownership, unclear responsibilities, and siloed systems make coordination difficult. These issues also highlight missed opportunities for more collaborative working and joint funding approaches.
- Stakeholder engagement insights - Engagement shows partners work differently, trust levels vary, and readiness is mixed — buy-in is essential for moving forward.
- Strong case for change - Current fragmented approaches are not sustainable. A shared view and more consistent standards are needed.
- Economic & social benefits - Better data could reduce flood incidents by 10–15%, saving millions and improving resilience.
- Recommended next steps - Start small with a simple GIS shared view layer — Councils keep their own systems but gain a shared picture.

Members received an overview of project next steps including the first critical step of stakeholder engagement - essential to build confidence, address concerns and support a collaborative approach to ensure strong partner buy-in. This is expected to include initial light touch engagement (questionnaire) to help identify stakeholders and to inform the pilot approach, and the formation of a project steering group to scope/finalise the pilot project. It is anticipated that project consultants would be asked to:

- Build on the initial engagement working with stakeholders, to identify key users and their needs in respect to managing asset data, and to shape and define the Regional Data Lead Role (Strategic role), which will drive data improvement, consistency, and collaboration.
- Develop a shared system and test shared access to asset data using a simple GIS view layer and identify future maintenance and development costs, building trust and proves feasibility.
- Develop a governance framework & MoUs including data-sharing agreements, access controls, dispute resolution, and GDPR processes, noting early clarity is vital for trust and consistency.

- With regard to Long-Term Data Institution (Dependent on national direction (e.g. NUAR (National Underground Asset Register)), explore a trusted regional body for long-term stewardship, standards, and collaboration — moving from short-term fixes to a sustainable, future-ready model.

As a meeting observer, Councillor Gerald Mirfin offered his support to the project team and highlighted the large areas of land in Lancashire owned by the MoD, Crown Estates and the Church.

Members expressed their support for the project, recognised its size and significance and the importance of its progress.

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

26 (08) NaFRA2 Update

Marina Powell-Currie provided Members with an update on NaFRA2, advising in December 2024 a report was published to explain how flood and coastal erosion risk is changing across England and why. In March 2025 the new updated flood zones and flood map for planning were launched following the January 2025 publication of the data on.gov.uk.

Members received an overview of the improved modelling data NaFRA2 now provides, which incorporates the most up to date national and local flood risk modelling for surface water.

Marina touched on the 2019 topographical data used alongside some of the LIDAR data and advised some queries have been received from developers and members of the public regarding their properties now being shown to be in the wrong risk band. As a result of this a project is to be carried out as a case study for the whole of the North West to identify areas where LIDAR is out of date and has impacted the flood risk data for some areas. The hydrology in these areas will be re-run, which will then improve the new national model in these areas. Members were encouraged to advise if they identify any locations within their strategic partnership areas where there could be an issue with the flood risk mapping. A number of locations across the North West have already been identified and these were shared with Members, who noted the data behind these areas is being reviewed to get the best available data for them for summer 2026.

NaFRA2 aims for 2026 include:

- Publishing the new flood risk information by summer 2026
- Building confidence in NaFRA2 and our ability to explain outputs to customers
- Establishing regular quarterly updates so there is continual improvement with new evidence

NaFRA2 milestones and project opportunities were also presented. Marina highlighted that alongside other evidence in investment decision-making, the national team are looking at how developers providing flood risk assessments for planning applications can provide the EA with data that would better inform the flood risk mapping once the developments have been built. Members noted there will be an extension to the use of LA surface water data. There will also be new guidance on what developers can provide to the EA to be able to get the changes made to the flood risk assessment, which will be known as Evidence Review Requests.

Marina highlighted the latest 7th January NaFRA2 dataset and the work currently underway to clarify the changes this new dataset has brought. So far, the update has identified no change of risk of flooding from surface water across Cumbria and Lancashire, but there have been some slight changes in the risk of flooding from rivers and sea, with the most notable areas being around Carlisle and in Hyndburn. For the other constituencies in Cumbria and Lancashire, there has either been no change or there's been a reduction in risk.

Members were advised that the new NaFRA2 model will not be re-run and there may be a requirement to do some local modelling, but acknowledged the challenge in identifying funding to carry this out. Marina advised there could be a future ask for some Local Levy funding to support this work in some specific localities.

As a meeting observer, Councillor Gerald Mirfin enquired regarding the changes to flood risk data for Hyndburn. Marina advised clarity is being sought on whether the outcome is from a formula change or how the modelling has been carried out, and that she will look into this and advise the Lancashire Partnership outside of the meeting.

Adrian Lythgo acknowledged the importance of the information coming from NaFRA2 and that it is important we have a really good understanding of flood risk, both as an output in its own right as it affects the North West, but also here because the NaFRA2 data is going to be even more influential in determining which projects come forward in the future. He advised the results of those relevant data investigations will be provided back to the relevant strategic partnerships, so in this case the Lancashire Partnership will receive the information as well as Councillor Mirfin. He noted if there were any similar changes to those within GMMC that the information would also be provided to their relevant strategic partnership.

With regard to the area of Barrow noting its strategic importance, Councillor Giles Archibald enquired how government agencies and government investment is coordinated and how this is being coordinated with the Shoreline Management Plan. Richard Knight recognised that Barrow is a good example of how conversations are built in with other partners such as the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and government services for the military and noted the area is a centre of growth. He advised that he will make contact with Councillor Archibald outside of the meeting to provide him with further information and noted that conversations between the various agencies should be further encouraged.

Adrian thanked Marina for her update and advised this subject will be kept in view of the Committee as the NaFRA2 output is worked through.

There were no further comments or questions.

26 (09) United Utilities Update

Amy Cooper provided an update on the United Utilities (UU) second Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP), which is a 25-year strategic plan from 2030 to 2055. It is the evidence base for all elements of the PR29 Business Plan. Through Section 79 of the Environment Act 2021 it is now a statutory requirement under section 94A of the Water Industry Act 1991 for water companies to produce a DWMP.

Members noted the DWMP must address:

- The capacity of the drainage and sewerage system
- An assessment of the current and future demands
- The resilience of the drainage and sewerage system
- The measures we intend to take or continue, in order to meet statutory obligations
- The likely sequencing and timing of such measures
- Relevant environmental risks and how those risks are to be mitigated

The draft DWMP will be published on 1st November 2027 for a 12-week public consultation, with the final draft including the changes from the consultation being published on 31st August 2028. Members noted this is the first time the DWMP has been statutory.

Following stakeholder feedback, Amy advised the following items have been incorporated into the plan:

- Embracing blue/green infrastructure, such as sustainable drainage systems
- Flooding of open spaces
- Building the options hierarchy, which was used to develop a best value plan for the North West
- A request for a simple way to share and identify mutual risks and opportunities, so the Partnership Opportunities Pipeline was developed.

Members were advised that UU have secured £50 Million targeted investment to be used for flood risk across the North West, along with unlocking £300 Million of innovative investment for smarter rainwater management, and have committed £3.1 Billion to reduce spills from over 400 combined sewerage overflows. Amy noted this is where UU are investigating combined sewers to look at targeted separation and rainwater management schemes.

Members noted the cyclical process of the DWMP. The first stage is about UU defining their strategic context regarding how performance is to be measured across the whole system and how service measures will be valued. Amy highlighted ongoing work to research historical and current trends within their systems such as pollution performance and sewer flooding performance, where they can look to improve service, understand future needs and how service measures might change with climate change. Options development is the following stage, which looks at the risks that have been identified and how they change over time and ultimately brings that together in a preferred plan to develop a best value 25-year plan for UU's customers and the environment. The final plan will then be reviewed annually on a catchment level and the reports will be published on the UU website.

Amy advised UU are keen to get an understanding of the Committee's strategic priorities and highlighted a quick survey Members can complete to advise UU of other things they think they should be considering.

Megan Creek provided Members with an overview of how the DWMP fits alongside the wider UU business and a timeline of strategic programmes was presented.

Considerations for UU to be published in the 2028 DWMP include:

- Future challenges on climate change, population growth and future development

- Priorities and ambition to reduce flooding, protect customers and communities and enhancing the environment
- Existing management plans and strategies such as NCERM, RFCC, RBMP, FRMP, LNRS and Local Plans

The DWMP will cover:

- Compliance with regulators
- First time sewerage
- Sewer network
- Resilience
- Wider environmental issues
- Asset health
- Environmental (including pollution incidents)

UU's long term ambition, priorities and the vision for the North West were also summarised.

Amy Cooper advised that UU wish to co-develop the DWMP and Members were invited to be part of the North West DWMP group to join members across economic and environmental regulators, the independent challenge group (YourVoice) and local authorities. The group will help to set the strategic direction of the DWMP considering the value of the impacts on customers, the environment, recreation and the local economy. A representative from each of the five counties aligning with the five Strategic Flood Risk Partnerships is sought and she shared the potential key areas of collaboration along with the detail of how to get in touch with UU to get involved. Members noted this is a minimal time commitment, with meet-ups expected to be three or four times a year.

Councillor Giles Archibald commented on the importance of these meetings and decisions being made. He raised the issue of surface water run-off going into combined pipes and the need to look at restricting the flow into these pipes. He also asked for UU's work on peatland restoration to be included in future presentations.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin thanked Amy and Megan for their presentation and noted the details are current live issues for the public and she would like to see UU do a lot of engagement with the wider public as part of the consultation.

Paul Barnes suggested one of UU's long-term priorities to go into the DWMP should be using the opportunities in the uplands to use their fixed assets to mitigate flooding. He advised this was mentioned at the Oxford Farming Conference on Uplands Transformation by Emma Reynolds, who advised there should be engagement with water companies right across the country.

Adrian Lythgo highlighted it would be worthwhile to have a side conversation to identify the right forums within the RFCC family to help support the development of the DWMP and he suggested that at different stages the strategic partnerships may be the right place for the conversations to take place.

Aimee Brough commented that with regard to surface water flood risk reduction there has been a lot of work going on in Greater Manchester councils with the UU Rainwater Management Team, but through the DWMP process it would be beneficial to see how

councils can align their surface water flood risk priority areas with the funding that becomes available through DWMP or the programmes. Currently there is a lack of transparency. Adrian thanked Amy and Megan for their presentation.

There were no further comments or questions.

26 (10) Coastal Update

For those new to the Committee, Katie Eckford provided a brief overview of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs). She advised they are non-statutory documents which set out how we manage flooding and coastal erosion over the next 100 years, which influence local plans, strategies and investment decisions covering open coast and estuarine environments.

Since the adoption of the SMP in 2011, it has supported significant delivery across the North West including coastal strategies and capital schemes, all using the evidence collected by the North West Regional Monitoring Programme.

An overview of the Our Future Coast project, funded through Defra's Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme, was provided which has enabled non-traditional approaches not normally fundable to be explored and trialled. Through the project, the team have been able to trial nature-based solutions; develop adaptive pathway approaches to support RMAs deliver their SMP policies; and invest time in community engagement and co-design.

The team have also tested new ways of engaging communities, including:

- Interactive tools that help people understand long-term coastal change through *Hello Coast*
- Citizen science, such as photo monitoring
- Use of gaming tools.

The Our Future Coast work and the SMP have provided a clearer picture of what the challenges are on our coastline and across the North West including how complexities or uncertainties can slow delivery down. It is not always clear when coastal policy transitions should happen and some policies simply aren't deliverable with the capacity or skills and resources that are currently available. Members also noted that work roles and responsibilities are also split across councils, the EA, landowners and different partners, which brings complexity.

The lack of dedicated adaptation funding makes long term planning challenging and there is almost no funding for long term community engagement, which is required for long term adaptation. Members noted this means it can be very difficult to move from policy into practical delivery.

Whilst on the whole the North West has a strong SMP document, in places clarity is still required regarding how to deliver its policies and sometimes the preferred adopted approach isn't obvious. Katie advised quite often there is no fall-back position if coastal change happens faster or slower than expected, which is why a structure-based process using adaptive pathways and triggers to help RMAs to deliver their SMPs more confidently is used. Adaptive Pathways help to set out what we should be doing *now* and what we might need to do later; when we may need to switch approach. They use real-world triggers such as erosion

rates, beach levels and asset deterioration. Members noted that whilst Adaptive Pathways have been used in large scale national work this will be the first time they are being applied at a local SMP policy unit scale and the use of these will help to naturally shape a phased approach to provide a realistic programme of studies, upgrades, enabling works, low regret actions and future interventions, which can be profiled in a timely and evidence-based way. Once they are developed and the pipeline of works is in place, clarification of who can deliver the works will need to be done. This is where it is intended the Coastal Centre of Excellence will be brought in to provide the capability, the skills, the shared services and technical expertise that's already being developed through the Our Future Coast project.

Susannah Bleakley provided Members with an update on the Centre of Coastal Excellence, which has been a RFCC Business Plan concept testing nature-based solutions and community engagement and other innovations along the North West coast. She advised of the learning and testing of many issues and challenges around conducting some of the more innovative work around the coast, which has not been able to be done in the past and advised the Centre for Coastal Excellence is about working together, sharing skills and taking a holistic approach to coordinate skills and deliver activities. She also touched on the Morecambe Bay Study which is one of the first initiatives which will start to form the Centre of Excellence.

In the MS Teams Chat function Councillor Giles Archibald suggested this is something that the RFCC should discuss in more depth and raised his concerns regarding how the Cumbria authorities can implement some of this work at the same time as receiving a limited financial settlement.

Adrian thanked Katie and Susannah for their presentation and acknowledged the comments raised by Councillor Giles Archibald. He advised this conversation was intended to be a call to action so the Committee can have a longer discussion at a different RFCC meeting or appropriate forum about how we can take coastal adaptation forward along with the different components that have been described today. He highlighted he will need to talk to the incoming Chair about the programme and how this might develop over time.

There were no further comments or questions.

26 (11) Any other business

Carolyn Otley reported back from a recent National Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation programme face-to-face meeting and advised that it is now clear the national evaluation of the innovation projects will be very much a programme level evaluation. Individual FCRIP projects will be identifying their lessons learnt and how they might want to embed them but the timescales will not line up for the national teams to support this work. This presents a challenge for the individual projects and she suggested there is a role for the RFCC to make sure that we don't lose the learning that has taken place through those projects and help find ways to support building it into our business as usual.

Adrian recognised this is a point well-made and thanked Carolyn for her comment. He noted this is something that's been discussed previously and he would certainly support, if colleagues were in agreement, that this comment be included within the minutes for the

meeting and to then take forward more local learning and evaluation.

In terms of agenda planning, voting Committee Members were reminded if there is anything they wish to discuss at future meetings, to forward through their items, which will be considered during the agenda planning process. Adrian advised he is yet to discuss with Councillor Elizabeth Grey how she wishes to take this forward, but any contributions will be looked at over the next three to four months. Adrian thanked Paul Barnes for his list which has already been received.

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 10 April 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 Shorrocks	RFCC Member – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Philip Cusack	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Alan Quinn	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Mandie Shilton Godwin	RFCC Member – Gtr Manchester Strategic Flood Risk P’ship
Cllr Mhairi Doyle	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
Chris Findley	RFCC Member – Planning and Development
Aimee Brough	RFCC Member – Agriculture (Catchment Based Approaches)
Carl Green	Chair of the North West and North Wales Coastal Group
Nick Pearson	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Greater Manchester
Mary-Rose Muncaster	Officer - EA Area Flood Risk Manager, Merseyside
Adam Walsh	Officer - EA FCRM Programming Manager, Cumbria & Lancs (C&L)
Paul Bowden	Officer - EA Ops Local Delivery Lead, GMMC
Rachel Harmer	RFCC Secretariat

Support Officers/Observers:

Ali Harker	Co-ordinator - Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Rebecca James	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Matthew Waning	Officer Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Nick Rae	Officer – Cumbria Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Cllr Gerald Mirfin	Lancashire County Council
Rachel Crompton	Officer – Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Lorah Cheyne	Co-ordinator - Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Sarah Wardle	Co-ordinator – Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership
Paul Wisse	Officer – Sefton Council
Fran Comyn	Officer - Rochdale Borough Council
Jill Holden	Co-ordinator – Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Thomas Mawdsley	Officer – Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Clare Nolan-Barnes	Officer – Blackpool Council
Jim Turton	Officer - Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Jonathan Parry	Officer – Cheshire Mid Mersey Partnership
Katie Eckford	Officer – North West SMP Co-ordinator
Elizabeth Griffin-Bennett	Officer - EA Commercial Business Relationship Manager
Ayush Sheth	Officer - EA FCRM Advisor, GMMC
Mia Mullender	Officer - EA FCRM Local Authority Projects Advisor
George Courtney-Jones	Officer - EA FCRM Officer, Programme and Project Development

Presenter: Shannon Gunning

EA FCRM 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 Jane Hugo (Lancashire Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Sam Naylor (Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Councillor Elizabeth Grey (Merseyside Strategic Flood Risk Partnership); Amy Cooper (RFCC Member – Water and Sewerage Industry); Kate Morley (RFCC Member – Conservation); Ian Crewe, EA Area Director (GMMC) and Sally Whiting, EA RFCC Advisor (GMMC).

We noted and accepted the correctly nominated substitute of Clare-Nolan Barnes on behalf of Councillor Jane Hugo for the Lancashire Partnership.

Shannon Gunning was welcomed, here to present the Poise Brook Local Levy item later in the meeting.

2. Feedback from the RFCC Meeting on 23 January 2026 and actions since

Terri noted the key decisions from the 23 January 2026 RFCC meeting, following recommendations from the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub Group on 9th January, where the RFCC:

(2025/26 investment programme)

- Noted the progress on delivering the 2025/26 investment and resource asset maintenance programmes.

(Local Levy Programme)

- Noted the update in delivering the 2025/26 Local Levy programme
- Approved continued Local Levy funding for Building Community Resilience for a further 3 years (£817.8K)
- Approved continued funding for the NFM Technical Appraisal and Delivery Manager resource for a further 4 years (£163K)
- Approved Local Levy funding of £100K for the Upper Irwell integrated water management and nature-based solutions strategy
- Approved the proposed Local Levy allocations for 2026/27, totalling £7.421 Million, including for Business Plan projects

For the PFR Project Funding Allocations:

- Endorsed the flexible use of the PFR Local Levy funding allocation across the three years
- Approved the funding allocation towards the proposed 7 schemes

There were no further comments or questions.

3. Programme Update 2025/26

Adam Walsh provided an overview of what has been achieved both nationally and in the North West over the 5 year programme which came to an end in March.

We noted in terms of spend this year the February forecast shows a programme underspend of £7.8 Million against the Total Project Expenditure (TPE) allocation of £135.03 Million. This is £0.6 Million more in terms of an increase in underspend to that reported to the Committee in January. As a result,

the latest forecast position remains broadly the same, and there is a current forecast to spend 94.1% of our total project allocation of £135 Million.

In terms of Grant in Aid there is a current forecast to spend 97.3% of the £122.94 Million GiA allocation, which equates to a GiA underspend of £3.24 Million. The paper provides an outline of the key reasons for this reduction, and although a number of opportunities were enacted, mainly an increase in grant claims from local authorities, these were offset by reductions across several Environment Agency led schemes.

Adam advised the total remaining spend reduced by £47.7 Million to that reported to committee in January with a further £16.4 Million EA and £2.8 Million Local Authority remaining as at the end of February. Since then these figures have further reduced and accruals have been completed to ensure spend is accounted for in 2025/26 and whilst the all the GiA available has not been spent, what we have achieved has been the largest spend in any one year.

With regard to Properties Better Protected, the current forecast is showing that 6,029 properties will be better protected across the North West in 2025/26 against a target of 5,009 with 5,715 of these claimed or receiving better protection at the end of February.

At the last RFCC it reported a forecast of 6,756 properties, with the current forecast showing a reduction of approximately 700 properties. This is mainly due to a reprofile of properties better protected by the Preston and South Ribble Scheme (707 properties) which will now deliver during this current quarter. This deferral was supported by the national team and the target was correspondingly adjusted to reflect this.

We heard the key message with regard to efficiencies is that the EA and LAs are not achieving their efficiency targets and overall have achieved approximately only 40% of the target. We noted the detail up to the end of Quarter three and advised there are limited submissions in Quarter four, with the final submission date for Quarter 4 being passed. The outcome of the submissions for 2025/26 will be reported at the July Committee meeting along with what efficiencies were realised during the 5 year programme both locally and nationally.

We noted risks to the investment programme 2025/ 2026 include:

- The forecast out-turn is below the investment programme allocation
- The efficiency savings remain significantly below the target (61% shortfall)
- Not all projects received the funding they requested for next year and this will delay some schemes from progressing

These risks are in addition to the ever-present risks such as adverse weather and poor ground conditions leading to delays in delivery on the ground, or the possibility of diverting resources in responding to incidents. These risks were the position at the end of February and have now been realised.

Resource Maintenance Programme 2025/26

Paul Bowden advised both C&L Area and GMMC Area have continued to work hard to complete their resource maintenance programmes for 2025/26 and presented the detail of the end of February actual spend position.

The national 97% target for inspections of below required condition assets has been completed on time and only a single inspection was delivered outside of its programme date. Paul advised there are approximately 2500 to 3000 inspections each quarter and both areas have exceeded the national target.

The EA national target for below required condition (BRC) assets, that are EA maintained and in high consequence systems, is 92%. Both GMMC Area and C&L Area have exceeded this target with the GMMC end of year position being 93.49% against an Area target of 93.4% and C&L being 96.5% against an Area target of 97.7%. We noted that across all assets more assets have been fixed than have failed during 2025/26, but we acknowledged that the winter this year has been reasonably mild and has allowed work to continue. However, with regard to the current funding position Paul advised if we continue with asset deterioration at the rate that we are predicting, we won't be fixing more assets than there are failing as has been done this year.

With regard to third party assets, which are not EA maintained, there are 291 more assets below required condition than at the start of the 2025/26 year period. Paul advised the figures are slightly skewed as there was no starting position for C&L Area, so the quarter 2 figure was used as a starting position. We noted for 2026/27 there will be a starting position, but it is expected that the 291 figure will increase again given the current deterioration rate that is expected.

At the January RFCC meeting it was reported that an extra £5.5 Million was being made available nationally for 2026/27 maintenance programmes. We noted out of this funding pot GMMC only received £29K and C&L received £65K. out of the £5.5 Million available. The outcome of this is that the GMMC budget is the same as it was for 2025/26 and C&L's budget has increased by approximately 1%. Paul advised the teams are working out what this maintenance allocation means for us and are finalising the local choices process, which will finish at the end of April. The maintenance programme will then be published on .gov.uk at the end of May.

For the Reconditioning Allocation C&L have received an allocation of £3.7 Million, and GMMC have received an allocation of £5.2 Million (against a GMMC bid of £11.4 Million). This is to undertake a programme of asset refurbishment works to restore Below Required Condition assets to target condition. We noted the majority of the funding will be spent on the construction phase of the current programme of works. Paul advised it is anticipated we will be able to fund a small number of asset projects through the design phase to enable full construction the following financial year – subject to funding, but the allocations mean that we're going to have to concentrate on doing the construction work this year and we won't be able to do as much design work as had been planned therefore there will be less delivery in 2027/28.

Adrian Lythgo clarified that we expect more assets to be below condition at the end of next year than there are now and advised as a Committee we need to think about what that means and what, if anything, we can do about it, noting his concern in the context of the new policy which makes more money available, in theory, at least for asset reconditioning, where it's capital funding. He highlighted this is something the Committee will need to have a conversation about and that Members will be equally concerned.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin recognised the importance of keeping assets in as good a condition as possible and welcomed a discussion regarding where we might find additional funding from.

Councillor Alan Quinn raised the issue of building inflation which will start to hit project costs as a result of conflicts in the Middle East and impacts on costs of materials.

Adam briefly mentioned the allocations for next year of £160.3 Million for the investment programme and £14.9 Million for the resource maintenance programme. This follows on from the Environment Agency Board approving the programme allocations in February, the last part of the annual bid and allocation process. This was shared with the committee, and the programmes consented, in January. He also noted that the investment programme for 2026/27 has been published on gov.uk.

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 2025/26 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.

We noted forecasts show we are forecasting to spend £5.7 Million of the £9.345 Million levy allocation or 62%. The forecast has reduced by £2.9 Million to that reported in January and is mainly a result of maximising Grant in Aid and re-profiling Local Levy into future years as noted in the paper (for the following six projects: Poise Brook; River Roch Rochdale and Littleborough Scheme; River Roch Rochdale Phase 2 FRMS; Hindley Group; Sankey Brook FRMS; and, Blackpool Manchester Square Pumping Station and Culvert).

We noted the annual year-end audit will be completed in May and confirmation of the outcome will be reported to the Committee at the June/July meetings.

Adam confirmed the detail of the expected Local Levy balances at the end of each year based on the latest forecasts. The scenario provided includes the already approved Local Levy allocation of £305k (deferred to 2027/28) for Poise Brook, but does not include the additional provisional request for in principle support for Poise Brook (2030/31) to be presented by Shannon Gunning in this meeting.

We noted the balance is projected to dip below the £2 Million minimum working balance in 2028/29, but this is several years away, during which time the programme is likely to undergo changes and Adam highlighted the minimum working balance is scheduled for review next year.

There were no further comments or questions.

The Subgroup noted the update on the Local Levy programme.

Local Levy Funding Request – Poise Brook Flood Risk Management Scheme

Shannon Gunning advised the Poise Brook FRMS is seeking in principle Local Levy support of £1.695 Million to enable the scheme to progress to outline business case and tackle severe flooding across the Poise Brook Catchment.

The scheme is currently in its appraisal stage and the project team are here to provide the Committee with early notice of a £1.695 Million Local Levy requirement for the latter phases of the scheme, to be profiled across a number of years. The scheme has previously received £305K of Local Levy funding for project development.

We noted there are currently 570 properties at risk within the Poise Brook catchment area, who have experienced several severe flooding events. The EA, working in partnership with United Utilities and Stockport Council, is now developing a capital scheme to explore how it can reduce the flood risk to these communities, whilst also enhancing the local environment and providing wider benefits.

Scheme options were provided and we noted the multiple benefits it would provide, along with attracting investment into the area, increasing biodiversity and wildlife areas and providing residents with an enhanced environment to live in.

The detailed design completion is scheduled for September 2029 with construction currently estimated to start in May 2031. The current estimated scheme cost is £30 Million and an overview potential funding gap based on cost estimates and the updated funding rules effective from April 2026 was provided.

Councillor Bob Kelly advised he is supportive of the scheme, but raised his concern that such a high contribution of Local Levy funding would put pressure on funding resources into the future.

Councillor Philip Cusack asked if the Local Levy contribution being sought is the maximum that would be needed and that work is taking place behind the scenes to reduce the potential Local Levy contribution with funding from other sources, therefore the Local Levy will be used to act as a guarantee the scheme going ahead.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin noted her support for the scheme, but raised her concern about the length of time the scheme is going to take, alongside agreeing with the comment raised by Councillor Cusack and suggested that the underpinning of schemes could happen increasingly as we move into the new funding arrangements and suggestion we may be putting the Committee in a position where we are needing to overcommit the Local Levy going forward in a way that we can't foresee.

Aimee Brough advised there is a need for more schemes in Greater Manchester to meet the scale of risk that is being seen and she raised a question about the level of Natural Flood Management (NFM) to be included in the scheme's design and to what extent that is being looked at to complement the traditional measures and hard engineering solutions that are also part of the scheme. Shannon advised the scheme options are still being shortlisted, but that NFM will be included, recognising the importance of complementary measures and also identifying the scale of NFM and the impact it will have on reducing the risk.

Councillor Alan Quinn received confirmation this will be a £30 Million scheme and suggested the Local Authority should invest more funding into the scheme.

Clare Nolan Barnes referred to the agreed Local Levy minimum balance and asked when this is due to be reached. She raised her concern that when bids for funding start to come in there could be a significant reduction in balances. We were advised in terms of what the forecast is showing currently Local Levy balances will dip below the £2 Million minimum balance in 2028/29, however the review on the minimum £2 Million in balances will take place next year.

Adrian Lythgo advised the Local Levy Strategy will need to be revisited in the context of the new funding policy, but in the meantime it is likely the minimum balance will be reached later than 2028/29 as a result of what's happening this year in that we will be able to claim FDGiA instead of using Local Levy and therefore the Levy contributions will slip into later years.

Clare Nolan Barnes enquired about the amount of the in principle ask of Local Levy funding for the scheme and Members noted the Poise Brook Scheme has benefitted as a result of the new funding rules in that there is now a 10% funding gap, rather than a 50% funding gap under the old funding rules.

Adrian Lythgo suggested that should the subgroup be minded to recommend this project for in principle support, that the scheme be brought back before the subgroup when other partnership contributions have been confirmed.

The Subgroup voted in favour of recommending for RFCC approval the in principle allocation of £1.695 Million of Local Levy funding in the latter years of the Poise Brook FRMS Project. There were 12 votes in support.

Votes in favour:

Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrocks, Cllr Doyle, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley and Aimee Brough.

RFCC Business Plan Update

Adam advised overall good progress continues to be made, with 10 projects complete, 9 ongoing and on track, and 4 which are behind schedule where issues are being addressed (Amber rated). This is an improved picture compared with last quarter when 6 projects were rated Amber. The Flood Hub website (ID5) is fundamentally back on track with steps taken to keep the website live for the next few months until new contractual arrangements are in place and the Unpave the Way project (ID12) is also back on track with adequate resources now available to maintain progress on this year's key deliverables. One project is being reported as complete this quarter – the Landscape in a Changing Climate conference event (ID20).

We noted the first three Amber rated projects are those delivering community flood resilience in conjunction with Newground CIC. Procurement rules require we now put the service out to open market tender. This tender process and the resulting contractual arrangements are being led by GMCA on behalf of the RFCC and North West RMAs. The tender process is now underway but there will be a break in service between April and around July/August. No direct community engagement support will be available to RMAs during this time, and there will be a pause in social media activity.

The limited trial with South West RFCC coming on board the Flood Hub also needs to await the outcome of the tender process.

The Flood Hub website itself is reported as Green and on track this quarter as arrangements have been made to keep the website live over the next few months and efforts have gone into making sure it is as up to date as possible.

The NFM Pipeline (Cumbria) project continues to work through financial and contractual arrangements and will now commence in 2026/27.

The Unpave the Way project is reported as Green this quarter as resourcing levels are now sufficient to enable active progression of this year's key deliverables, the Householder SuDS Guide and the LA webpage templates on paving over front gardens. The latter is now out for consultation and the SuDS Guide will be launched for consultation in April.

The spend forecast for this year is £1.097 Million against the approved allocation of £1.247 Million. £70K of the £150K underspend relates to reprofiling of Local Levy spend that is still needed, and £80K of the allocation was not required and will not be reprofiled, instead being released back to the programme.

The allocation for Business Plan projects in 2026/27, approved by the RFCC in January, is £1.544 Million. We noted the future investment needs of ongoing and high priority projects, with a small proportion currently contractually committed. The balance of benefits being provided to each of the partnerships from Business Plan investment was also provided.

Landscape in a Changing Climate conference (ID20)

We noted the Cumbria partnership was commissioned by the RFCC to carry out some engagement activity on land management. It was agreed that this would take the form of a conference style event and the 'Landscape in a Changing Climate' conference took place in 7 October 2025. The conference was attended by 108 people from 53 organisations and received overwhelmingly positive feedback with attendees valuing the opportunity to hear about what key organisations are already doing and planning, and to network and make connections. £12K of Local Levy support funded 3KQ to help design, plan, run and facilitate the event with great professionalism and effectiveness.

Following the conference, consideration has been given to how the actions and recommendations can be taken forwards and this has been captured in an action plan supported by the Cumbria partnership. There are various strands to this which will happen through developments and collaborative conversations prompted by the increased focus on NFM within the new national investment policy. The note on the next steps and how the actions and recommendations from the conference will be taken forward can be found on the RFCC SharePoint site and the project as approved for the RFCC Business Plan is therefore now complete.

Carolyn Otley advised both of the projects that are rated amber are so due to procurement issues, which appear to relate to the EA's interpretation of the new Procurement Act. She advised that as this is not a local issue is something that the Committee would wish to raise nationally, as the interpretation seems to be different to the interpretation of some other public sector organisations and the EA's interpretation is limiting and giving less flexibility to try innovative approaches that are the kind of things we are likely to need to try in the future as we face climate change risks.

Aimee Brough noted her similar concern and enquired about the NFM Cumbria Pipeline Project and what the details of those procurement issues actually are with the Environment Management. She advised she was happy to have an offline conversation to discuss this, but wondered what that means in terms of other projects that might look to do the same thing elsewhere across the North West and if there's anything we can do about that as a committee.

Councillor Bob Kelly raised his concerns about the use of the Deprivation Index and advised there are a number of fears that Cumbria is probably underestimated in the official figures. He advised we need to take into account the threat of flooding to infrastructure such as the West Coast railway line and the significance of Barrow, which is vital for the defence industry.

As a meeting observer, Councillor Gerald Mirfin advised the Ribble Valley is perceived as a fairly affluent place and as a consequence of this tends not to be the beneficiary of a number of Government Schemes. He asked if there can be further consideration of rural deprivation and not to simply focus on deprivation indices.

Adam advised that in terms of data and indices, around deprivation in particular, if more accurate or 'acceptable' data or evidence can be provided that better represents what is on the ground then this could replace the data that is currently used.

Adrian Lythgo advised with regard to the procurement point and the different interpretation of the procurement rules, this will be taken back to National through the RFCC Chairs so that it can be reported back to the Committee. He advised he understands the points being made on deprivation and advised we have to reflect on the new funding policy, whilst it does have a focus on deprivation and the most 20% deprived communities, it also has quite a large element of funding which isn't allocated. We heard there will still be open competition for both those pots of money and the guidance that has just come out makes it clear that in any specific project expression of interest, there is the ability for the person making the bid to make the case for why deprivation figures might be misleading and he also highlighted there will be some constraints on actually doing that.

2026/27 Approved Local Levy Programme

We received a summary of the £7.421 Million Local Levy programme approved by the RFCC in January, broken down by partnership and RFCC Business Plan.

The Local Levy allocation for 2026/27, approved by committee in January, totals £6.197 Million and the potential Local Levy programme forecast of £9.267 Million for 2026/27. This increase is largely a result of re-profiling of Local Levy from 2025/26 into 2026/27 in order to maximise GiA spend last year. An example of this is the Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme in Greater Manchester and a potential re-profiling of £1.5 Million from last year into this current year.

Adam advised it is important to note that the final out-turn for both Grant in Aid and Local Levy will be confirmed in May following the annual end of year audit, and this information will be reported back to the RFCC in July.

There were no further comments or questions.

Quick Wins Update

The Committee has previously agreed to continue to fund Quick Wins through Local Levy. An allocation for each of the 5 sub-regional partnerships of £160K per year for the next 3 years has been confirmed, with flexibility of 10% between financial years to reduce issues with missing year-end claims and where projects may span financial years.

Adam advised as part of the review of this funding, there was a commitment to a light touch review of the guidance, reflecting the views of the group (which was made up of representatives from each partnership), to ensure it remains as flexible as possible within the funding rules. This has now been done, and the guidance document is being finalised and will shortly be sent out widely for partners to refer to.

Key points to note are that the guidance is less restrictive than previous versions. There are additional examples of work that can be funded and clarification of what cannot be funded under the current rules. There is also a summary of Quick Win bids from the last 5 years on the RFCC SharePoint site so partners can see what has been delivered in other areas. The emphasis is on the partnerships to decide their local priorities, and we were encouraged to continue the development of pipelines of Quick Win projects, which can be prioritised for delivery at a sub-regional level.

The subgroup noted the update on the RFCC Business Plan, including the issues reported.

The subgroup voted in favour of recommending to the RFCC the approval of the formal completion and closure of the Landscape in a Changing Climate conference (ID20) as a Business Plan action. There were 12 votes in support.

Votes in favour: Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrocks, Clare Nolan Barnes, Cllr Goldsmith, Cllr Doyle; Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley and Aimee Brough.

We recommend the RFCC:

- Notes the update on the RFCC Business Plan including issues reported
- Approves the formal completion and closure of the Landscape in a Changing Climate conference (ID20) as a business plan action.

There were no further comments or questions.

5. Coastal Adaptation Readiness Actions and Funding

Susannah Bleakley advised Coastal Adaptation Pilots (CAP) funding was announced by Minister Hardy earlier in March where the Government has made £30 Million available to support communities at risk from coastal erosion and climate change.

This funding is open for bidding now until March 2029 and were advised this is the first time this funding has been seen in this form and is a great opportunity for the North West RFCC to come together to progress much needed work on adaptation on the coast.

We noted funding is split into two parts:

- £18 Million will support a new Coastal Resilience Adaptation Programme in three East Coast areas: East Riding, East Suffolk, and North Norfolk.
- The remaining £12 Million will be shared between the RFCCs to provide support for deprived households and communities at risk from coastal erosion.

Only Coastal Protection Authorities are eligible to apply for this funding and the indicative allocation for the North West RFCC is £1.686 Million, based on an estimated 3,234 households at risk.

The detail of what's included in the Adaptation Readiness Actions and also what isn't included, along with the funding eligibility criteria was received and we noted:

- **1st April 2026** – Expression of Interest (EOI) application window opens and Coastal Protection Agencies (CPAs) prepare and submit pilot submissions
- **30th June 2026** – EOI window closes
- **July – September 2026** – EOI assessment period including RFCC prioritisation
- **Autumn 2026** – Pilot projects announced and delivery begins

Carl Green provided an overview of what's been done so far including:

- Acting quickly to coordinate early work across the region as a result of the short timescales set by the CAP funding announcement.
- The SMP Coordinator, Coastal Group Chair and Coastal Group Representative have shared available information with subregional partnerships and the RFCC Chair to ensure early awareness and transparency.
- Undertaken a high level screening of sites against the criteria to identify where funding could realistically be targeted at this stage.
- Written to each of the subregional partnerships asking: For support in nominating an officer from each authority with a coast who can contribute to the initial screening of potential sites.
- Recognised the need for partner input and local knowledge to refine site selection and strengthen the evidence base, maximising the likelihood of a successful bid.
- Alongside potential individual local bids, agreed with the RFCC Chair that there is a strong case for a coordinated regional CAP bid, helping to deliver SMP policies and adaptation consistently across the coastline.
- Other avenues are also being progressed with various infrastructure providers to identify synergies and potential funding.

Carl then asked how we would like to be updated on progress; if the Partnerships can nominate and support officers to develop high quality submissions with local input on sub region strategy aligned sites; and sought agreement from the RFCC to support the bids underwritten by the RFCC Levy.

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin advised she is supportive of this and the use of Local Levy as a guarantee, but again highlighted her comment for Poise Brook and supplementing the Local Levy. Clare Nolan Barnes noted as bids need to be received by the end of June this year, is there an area that has been identified that can be worked on, and enquired as to whether the team had reached out to North Norfolk who has had previous experience with this work.

Susannah advised they have worked very closely with Our Future Coast and through day to day work with the East Coast, with North Norfolk and Yorkshire and also have strong links with other adaptation pilots.

We heard this work is an ongoing process, which is important to get right and the team have attending each of the subregional partnership meetings and asked all the Local Authorities to support this work and be a part of the process. There is also a look to how the team will work with utility companies.

Adrian Lythgo advised Councillor Kelly's comments about deprivation as well as being general were actually specifically aimed at this because of the 40% eligibility criteria, whereas Adrian's comments had been very much dealing with the broader funding policy. He advised he understood what Councillor Kelly was saying in the context of the Coastal Adaptation money, and he clarified that the process has been set up nationally is a competitive process and money could move between regions. He highlighted it is better to have a collaborative approach that everyone's on board with than competing with each other for the money that might be available for the North West, but if Regions end up in a competitive situation, the RFCC does actually have a role in ranking what does go through for consideration to the national panel.

Adrian suggested the we have a vote to see if there is broad support for the collaborative approach that Carl has suggested we should take, advising he believes this will strengthen the bid when when it is made if we are able to say that all of our subregions support this approach.

We voted on this and there were 12 votes of support.

Votes in favour:

Cllr Kelly, Cllr Shilton Godwin, Cllr Cusack, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Shorrocks, Cllr Doyle, Clare Nolan-Barnes, Cllr Goldsmith, Carolyn Otley, Chris Findley, Susannah Bleakley and Aimee Brough.

We recommend the RFCC: Supports a collaborative approach involving all of the subregional partnerships in identifying and ranking those projects to be put forward for consideration to the national panel.

There were no further comments or questions.

6. Update on the New Funding Policy and Guidance

Adam Walsh advised there will be a more comprehensive update at a future meeting and today's brief update is specifically around Natural Flood Management (NFM) and what we know right now, noting the increase in delivery of NFM is one of the aspirations of the new funding policy.

With regard to NFM we noted the upcoming webinars taking place and appointments for these should be shared shortly, if not already, with EA and Risk Management Authority (RMA) colleagues.

- For EA colleagues 6th May 2026
- For other RMAs and non RMAs 12th May 2026

We also received the detail of where to find further information and the following link was provided to sign up for the NFM webinars: [Register your interest in the NFM guidance webinar](#)

Adam presented the current timescale information for bidding for funding through to the allocation of funding for 2027/28 and 2028/29 and advised there will be more clarity around this once the guidance has been reviewed. He highlighted the timeline from November 2026 to January 2027 for RFCC engagement and RFCC agreement on a short list of projects and how that will be managed is still to be determined.

There were no further comments or questions.

7. Minutes from the 9 January 2026 meeting

Members were asked to approve the draft minutes of the RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-group meetings held on 9 January 2026.

Councillor Bob Kelly advised there is one correction that needs to be made to the draft 9 January minutes under the voting for the NFM Technical Appraisal Manager item, where he voted in favour and his vote had not been recorded.

It was confirmed this amendment will be made and once corrected Councillor Bob Kelly proposed and Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin seconded the minutes. With this correction the draft minutes were approved and taken as a true record of the meeting.

8. Any Other Business

Councillor Mandie Shilton Godwin asked if there's a process for looking again at the Local Levy. She highlighted the risk if there are insufficient amounts of Levy available to support schemes and asked what can be done to ensure Local Levy balances get sufficiently replenished.

Adrian Lythgo advised there are two pieces of the process that will pick this up. The first is the revisit of the Local Levy Strategy with respect to the new funding policy, but we can pick up other risks at the same time and this will be timetabled for discussion. He advised he intends to discuss this in part of the workshop that he hoped Members can attend around the July RFCC in-person meeting.

With regard to the quantum of the Local Levy going forwards, in particular for next year, Adrian advised there will be a specific paper developed again over the summer, so that it's available well in advance of the Local Levy vote for next year, which takes place at the October RFCC meeting. He confirmed there isn't any ability to go back on decisions that have been taken previously.

There were no further items of business. Terri thanked all for their contributions and the meeting was brought to a close.

Date of the next meeting

The date of the next RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub group meeting is 26 June 2026.

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**24 APRIL 2026****2026/27 FCRM INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ALLOCATIONS AND FUTURE
APPROACH TO PRIORITISE INVESTMENT FUNDING****Recommendations:** The Regional Flood and Coast Committees (RFCCs) are asked to:

1. Note their approved FCRM Investment Programme and Asset Maintenance Programme allocations for financial year 2026/27 and the associated targets.
2. Review and provide feedback on the new allocation principles and prioritisation approach to support the FCRM Investment Programme funding allocation for 2027/28 onwards.

Headline messages:

- The approved FCRM Investment Programme and Asset Maintenance Programme allocations for 2026/27 are set out in appendices A and B.
- The proposed new set of allocation principles and prioritisation approach for the FCRM Investment Programme are included in sections 2 and 3, along with the proposed new planning and allocation process in section 4.
- RFCC Chairs have provided their feedback at the RFCC Chairs meeting on 23 March 2026. RFCC Committees are asked to review the updated principles and the proposed planning and allocation process and **email any feedback to their RFCC Secretariat by 2 May 2026.**
- The aim for the allocation process this year is to support the ongoing funding requirements of projects in construction; develop priority projects aligning with the government's strategic objectives and National Investment steer to invest in new projects to meet our 10-year FCRM investment programme ambitions; build a long-term programme.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 On 12 February 2026 the Environment Agency (EA) Board approved the allocation of the Flood and Coastal Risk Management (FCRM) Investment Programme funding for financial year 2026/27 as described in the programmes that were consented at the January RFCC meetings. RFCC Chairs should now have received letters to confirm their allocation for 2026/27.
- 1.2 The next FCRM Investment Programme started on 1 April 2026, incorporating the implementation of the new Defra flood funding policy. The new allocation principles will steer how FCRM grant-in-aid (GiA) will be invested across the portfolio, and the prioritisation approach used to determine allocations for the Investment Programme. The new approach will be used through a revised 2026 planning and allocation process to develop a long-term programme.
- 1.3 The previous FCRM allocation principles were approved by the Environment Agency (EA) Board in October 2020 to support the previous programme. An interim set of allocation principles to support the 2026/27 allocation process were approved in summer 2025.

- 1.4 The EA's national Portfolio Management Office (PMO), in consultation with EA teams and RFCC chairs, has drafted the new allocation principles and prioritisation approach to align with the new flood funding policy.
- 1.5 The new principles and prioritisation approach take better account of new government funding policy, strategic objectives and the direction of the new programme. They also support the Environment Agency's corporate strategy (EA2030) and the goal of a nation resilient to climate change.
- 1.6 The new allocation principles and prioritisation approach will be kept under review to ensure they continue to enable the strategic objectives to be met. This would also allow changes to be made if required to align with updates to HM Treasury's Green Book guidance on appraisal.

2.0 Updated FCRM allocation principles

- 2.1 The following sets out the proposed principles to steer the allocation of GiA funding from 2027/28.
- 2.2 The key areas of change from the previous principles include:
- Splitting the principles into two sections: what we (all Risk Management Authorities) are going to do and how we are going to do it.
 - 'The What' includes updates that align with the new funding policy.
 -
- 2.3 A summarised version of the allocation principles is included in the text box below. A more detailed version of this can be found in Appendix C.

FCRM allocation principles – The What

The overarching guidelines for the allocation of GiA start with the government's funding policy and strategic objectives:

- Reduce risk from, and increase resilience to, flooding and coastal erosion
- Value for Money (VfM)
- Guarantee deprived communities receive at least the same share of investment
- Ensure government investment goes further
- An increasing level of investment in natural flood management solutions
- Ensuring appropriate balance between spend on larger projects and smaller scale repairs to existing assets

Within the scope of the funding policy, we also recognise that we need to:

- Fully fund legal obligations
- Invest to achieve a wider range of outcomes:
 - An effective Flood Warning System to warn and inform people
 - Enhance the environment
 - Support economic growth

FCRM allocation principles – The How

The following principles will be applied to how we allocate funding across all RMAs to ensure we achieve the best possible benefits for the delivery of our FCRM Investment Programme:

- Manage public money effectively
- Work in partnership through effective engagement to empower communities with greater choice and make every £1 of government investment go further
- Invest in establishing and maintaining long term collaborative partnerships
- Support EA's carbon and sustainability ambitions

- Remain agile and responsive to change, incidents and risks to ensure maximum outcomes from investment

3.0 Updated prioritisation approach for the FCRM Investment Programme

- 3.1 The criteria for allocating funding were amended for the first year of the new Investment Programme to align with the updated interim principles. These have now been reviewed and included for approval alongside the final version of the allocation principles.
 - 3.2 Prior to the prioritisation process, which will focus on identifying which projects to progress, there will be a screening process led by the EA National Strategy and Adaptation (S&A) Team. New projects can be submitted for consideration from the EA, RMAs and non-RMAs from 01 July 2026, following the new project funding guidance.
 - 3.3 S&A will screen all new capital investment opportunities against the 'National Investment Steer' / pipeline evidence and the new Flood Funding Policy objectives. This will create a list of eligible early project opportunities to share with RFCCs for their feedback. Ineligible/poor VfM opportunities will be screened out.
 - 3.4 The screening process will encourage specific project types where there are gaps in the future programme such as for more capital refurbishment and replacement and smaller resilience projects such as natural flood management and property flood resilience. RFCCs will have the opportunity to suggest the removal of unviable opportunities from the list of eligible early project opportunities based on local knowledge and identify funding contributions where partnership funding is required.
 - 3.5 Once screened, the following sets out the updated prioritisation approach to be used by EA Portfolio Management for allocating GiA funding from the year 2027/28 and for the remainder of the 3-year programme:
 - Projects are **prioritised*** for investment
 - Must do work – legal compliance
 - Projects in construction
 - New projects through a value for money approach, using net present value (NPV) divided by the total Defra FCERM funding. This provides a “return on government investment” score that enables consistent comparison between projects.
 - Programmes are **balanced*** to achieve strategic outcomes – resilience measures, deprivation, asset condition etc. This balancing exercise is another component in demonstrating value for money, to achieve strategic objectives, in line with the HMT Green Book.
 - Programmes are **optimised*** for delivery
 - Increasing opportunity for local choice
- *These are terms being adopted in line with the Teal Book (project delivery in government) and Management of Portfolios (part of governments project delivery capability framework).
- *Shows where updated terminology is being adopted in line with the Teal Book (project delivery in government) and Management of Portfolios (part of governments project delivery capability framework).
- 3.6 Through the process of screening, prioritisation, balancing and optimisation, it is anticipated that we will strengthen our development of an affordable and deliverable long-term programme.

3.7 This prioritisation approach will be reviewed at the end of the investment period (2026-2029) to make sure it meets strategic objectives and supports new ways of working to support the Aurora transformation programme.

4.0 Updated planning and allocation process

4.1 The aim for the allocation process this year is to:

- Support the ongoing funding requirements of projects in construction
- Develop priority projects aligning with the government's strategic objectives and National Investment steer to invest in new projects to meet the 10-year FCERM investment programme ambitions.
- Build a long-term programme

4.2 The 2026 planning and allocation process will be formed of three main components. This approach has been taken following feedback from last year's process, to implement new funding policy and to accommodate the timeline for system updates.

4.3 The components are as follows:

- Component 1 – In-construction projects (largely the 2026/27 consented programme)
- Component 2 – Projects not in construction (Gateway 0-3)
- Component 3 – Early project opportunities (Pre GW0) – these are the projects screened by S&A (see paragraphs 3.2-3.4)

4.4 Appendix C includes the early thinking for the planning and allocation process for 2027/28 in a timeline. This is subject to change through engagement with key stakeholders.

5.0 Recommendations

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

1. Note their approved FCRM Investment Programme and Asset Maintenance Programme allocations for financial year 2026/27 and the associated targets.
2. Review and provide feedback on the new allocation principles and prioritisation approach to support the FCRM Investment Programme funding allocation for 2027/28 onwards by 2 May 2026.

6.0 Next steps

6.1 Once representations from RFCC Committees have been meaningfully considered, approval will be sought from the Environment Agency Board on 7 May 2026 before the allocation principles and prioritisation approach can be implemented.

Dan Bond
Deputy Director, Portfolio Management Office
7 April 2026

Appendix A: FCRM GiA Investment Programme allocation by RFCC for 2026/27

Appendix B: FCRM GiA resource (RDEL) asset maintenance allocation by RFCC for 2026/27

Appendix C: Draft FCRM allocation principles and prioritisation approach, March 2026

Appendix D: Draft 2026 Planning and Allocation Process timeline

Appendix A: FCRM GiA Investment Programme allocation by RFCC for 2026/27

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
Anglian Eastern	46.9	43.8	3.1	422
Anglian Great Ouse	15.3	9.1	6.2	136
Anglian Northern	106.3	96.6	9.7	4,911
North West	160.3	145.6	14.7	10,519
Northumbria	26.4	24.5	2.0	760
Severn and Wye	19.0	12.3	6.7	336
South West	51.9	46.8	5.1	973
Southern	86.7	78.2	8.5	8,474
Thames	71.1	56.8	14.3	1,169
Trent	66.9	63.5	3.3	688
Wessex	128.9	121.9	7.0	445
Yorkshire	66.0	55.9	10.0	2,017
Total	845.6	755.0	90.7	30,850

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 for 2026/27

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: Draft FCRM allocation principles and prioritisation approach, March 2026

FCRM allocation principles – The What

The overarching guidelines for the allocation of GiA start with the government's funding policy and strategic objectives:

- **Reduce risk from, and increase resilience to, flooding and coastal erosion** and deliver environmental outcomes that are intrinsic to meeting this ambition. Invest to ensure communities and infrastructure are resilient and can adapt to future flooding and coastal risks in a changing climate.
- **Value for money** – weighing a project's costs against its benefits making sure it supports strategic objectives and government policy. This is in line with HM Treasury's Green Book guidance (UK Government guidance on appraisal) and optimising the **return on government investment**.
- Guarantee **deprived communities** receive at least the same share of investment as their representation in the population, as these communities struggle more to recover from flooding. A minimum of 20% of FCRM investment will go to the most deprived quintile and a minimum of 40% to the 2 lowest quintiles combined, over both the next 3 and 10 years.
- **Ensure government investment goes further**. This includes using public money to unlock additional contributions from public, private and charitable sources and encourage joint working.
- An **increasing level of investment in natural flood management solutions**. A minimum of 3% of FCRM investment will go to natural flood management over the next 3 years and a minimum of 4% over the next 10 years.

Within the scope of the funding policy, we also recognise that we need to:

- **Fully fund legal obligations** to continue to comply with all our legal duties, including any in relation to asset operation, maintenance and response, health and safety, creating compensatory habitat for new projects, and complying with biodiversity net gain requirements.
- **Invest to achieve a wider range of outcomes:**
 - An effective **Flood Warning System to warn and inform people** at high risk of flooding from rivers or the sea **and respond to incidents** so as to save lives and property.
 - **Enhance the environment**. Continue to contribute to biodiversity net gain, creating and improving habitat and rivers alongside flood and coastal projects, including delivery of nature-based solutions.
 - **Support economic growth**. Deliver projects which help **benefit the economy**, through working in partnership with local authorities.

FCRM allocation principles – The How

We want the below principles to be applied to our projects and programmes across all RMAs to ensure we achieve the best possible benefits for the delivery of our FCRM programme across the spectrum below:

- **Manage public money** effectively. Ensure capital (CDEL) and resource (RDEL) funding is invested in line with accountancy rules and is compliant with accounting standards.

- **Work in partnership and make every £1 of government investment go further** by working with Local Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, water companies, environmental non-government organisations, partners and stakeholders through effective engagement to **empower communities with greater choice**. Local priorities are fully considered by Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs), from the early stages of project development to help build balanced programmes.
- Invest in establishing and maintaining **long term collaborative partnerships** to deliver multiple benefits and maintain an adaptive pipeline of local investment needs, balancing expenditure between preserving existing assets and developing new projects. Maximise benefits of multi-functional assets to achieve multiple outcomes, such as navigation improvements.
- **Support our carbon and sustainability ambitions**. Commit investment and delivery to support the UK Government's target to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions from across the UK economy by 2050. Encourage innovation to support the Environment Agency's ambition to meet a 45% carbon reduction target by 2030. Support all Risk Management Authorities to meet their carbon reduction ambitions.
- **Remain agile and responsive** to change, incidents and risks to ensure maximum outcomes from investment and stability in the overall investment programmes. Continue to deliver innovative approaches and solutions, following the government functional standards.

Prioritisation Approach

Proposed approach for funding allocations

The list below outlines the proposed approach to prioritising funding:

1. **Moderation and legal obligations:**

Projects with statutory or legal requirements, or those subject to moderation, are prioritised to ensure compliance and continuity. Tighter controls on moderation will be applied through the use of a panel to scrutinise. A new role for the Chief Engineer's team in understanding works relating to reservoir measures in the interest of safety (MIOS).

2. **Projects in or starting construction: *Optimise***

Projects already in or starting construction are prioritised to avoid disruption, cost escalation, reputational risk and delivery delays. This will apply to all EA projects, and RMA projects >£50million past Full Business Case (FBC), and RMA projects <£50million past Outline Business Case (OBC) as RMA projects are not required to submit an FBC for EA independent assurance for projects under £50million as stated in the Grant Memorandum.

3. **Return on government investment score: *Prioritise***

This is based on value for money. "Value for money is based on both monetised and non-monetised benefits. Monetisable benefits are appraised as set out in the Environment Agency's FCERM Appraisal Guidance, which is Green Book compliant". This accounts for partnership funding contributions and allows these contributions to influence the ranking of projects incentivising those projects that secure partnership funding.

4. **Strategic objectives alignment: *Balance***

If targets for the following strategic objectives are not already met after the first three steps, then the programme is balanced to ensure they are:

- reducing risk from, and increasing resilience to, flooding and coastal erosion and delivering environmental outcomes that are intrinsic to meeting this ambition
- guaranteeing deprived communities receive at least the same share of investment as their representation in the population, as these communities struggle more to recover from flooding. A minimum of 20% of FCERM

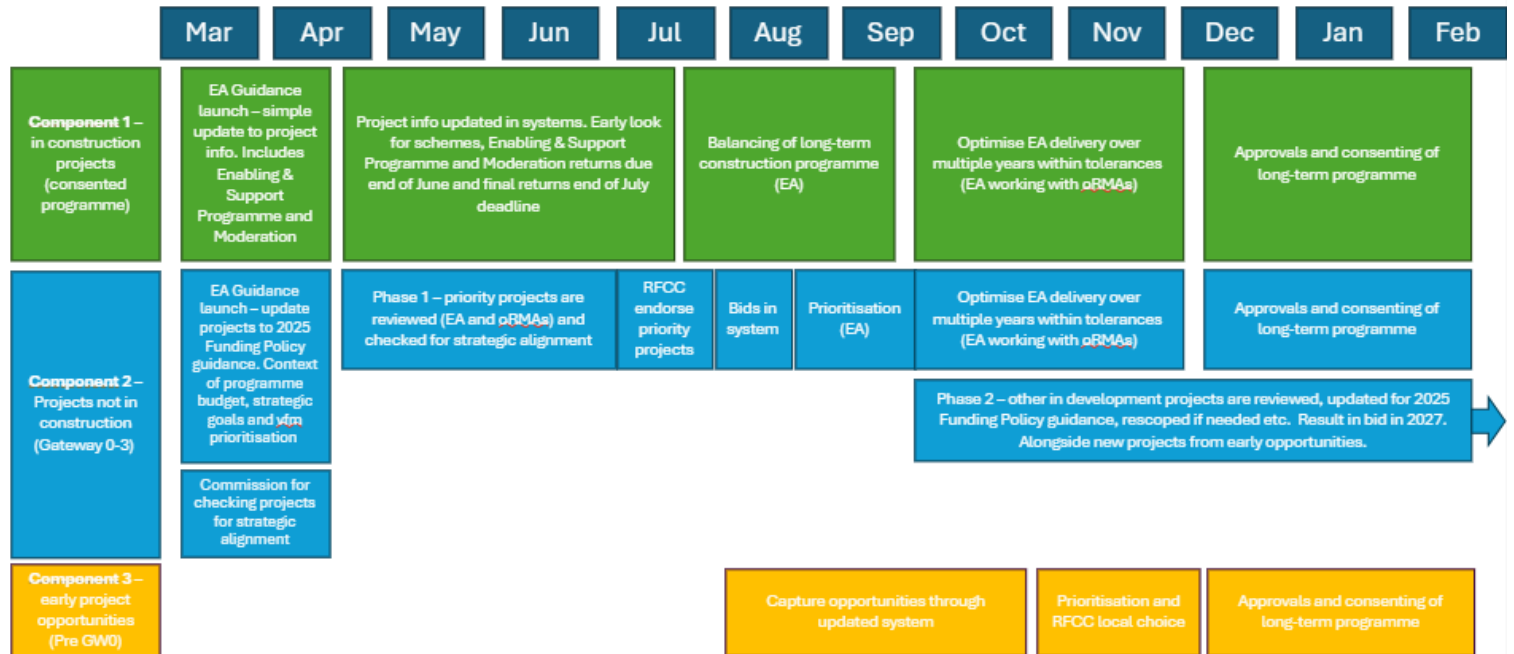
investment will go to the most deprived quintile and a minimum of 40% to the 2 lowest quintiles combined, over both the next 3 and 10 years.

- guaranteeing a minimum of 3% of FCERM investment will go to natural flood management over the next 3 years and a minimum of 4% over the next 10 years.

Appendix D: Draft 2026 Planning and Allocation Process timeline

The timeline shows the early thinking for the 2026 planning and allocation process. This is subject to change through engagement with key stakeholders.

This proposal is for a 3-component approach, to allow for systems updates and screening. Please note that this proposal is an interim measure and will be for 2027/28 only, ahead of finalising the process for 2028/29 onwards.





NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

24 APRIL 2026

MAKING THE MOST OF NATIONAL NFM FUNDING PROPOSED ROLE FOR THE NORTH WEST RFCC IN FACILITATING PARTNER COLLABORATION

Recommendation:

We are asking the RFCC to advocate the above approach to facilitation and collaboration, to achieve the best quality outputs from this opportunity, which is too significant an opportunity to be missed.

Background

The new national funding policy for flood risk management looks to facilitate natural flood management (NFM) projects, with a lower threshold on the need for evidence on flood risk reduction. The other significant change is that any legal entity can now apply for funding directly.

What do we understand of the policy so far?

The full guidance is still awaited. However, we understand that:

- Co-ordination of proposed projects between partners is not included in the initial guidance and we don't expect it to be a feature of the final guidance.
- Each RFCC will have a role in screening a final list of projects.
- Projects will be prioritised for funding based largely on value for money
- While projects under £3 million will be eligible for full GIA funding, there will be competition. Additional funding contributions will be taken into account within the benefit/cost prioritisation of projects and will strengthen any bids.
- Some national mapping (heat spots) has been released, the funding is not restricted to just those sites, other areas can be included but may need additional information.

How do we best adapt to that?

We suggest the following phased approach to partner engagement and collaboration. The aim of encouraging facilitation and collaboration between RMAs and NFM delivery bodies/applicants is to spread costs, develop stronger outcomes from projects (better value for money), and effectively target flood risk reduction for communities at risk. It also allows alignment with local strategic aims and direction.

First Phase:

At a strategic level, EA and LLFAs will engage with partners, outlining priority areas for NFM, and ensuring we maximise collaborative opportunities between RMAs and wider partners. EA and RMAs can share specific flood risk information for a prioritised list of communities.



Second phase:

At a catchment scale level, we engage with potential NFM deliverers/applicants via the CaBA Catchment Partnerships to help aid delivery partners in applying for projects.

Projects can be drawn up and a lead partner(s) determined. Timescales, dependencies, etc can be mapped out.

This also provides the opportunity to involve the EA Environment Programme teams who interface with the Catchment Partnerships to ensure that the multiple benefits are captured.

What EA and LAs can provide

- The EA can provide prioritised lists of communities at risk of flooding from rivers that are suitable for NFM by geographical area. We can help with interpreting the NFM priority hotspots data.
- Local authorities can include their surface water hotspots.
- We can help develop better understanding of some of the flood risk benefits from the Multi-coloured Manual (a requirement included in the guidance).
- We can provide the latest guidance on maintenance funding requirements (which is specifically excluded from the new policy), and on landowner agreements.
- We can help with guidance on the application process.

There is no obligation for potential NFM funding applicants to be a part of this coordinated and collaborative engagement process. Any legal entity can apply for NFM funding individually. However, we feel that collaborating at this stage will greatly assist in the quality of any applications. It will reduce the likelihood of multiple bids for the same locations and enhance the strength of the bids.

Recommendation:

We are asking the RFCC to advocate the above approach to facilitation and collaboration, to achieve the best quality outputs from this opportunity, which is too significant an opportunity to be missed.

Dave Kennedy, EA FCRM Senior Advisor, Cumbria and Lancashire Area

Dave Brown, EA FCRM Senior Advisor, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire Area

April 2026

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE
24 APRIL 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 January 2026 to 31 March 2026.

The data provided by United Utilities covers the period 7 January 2026 to 2 April 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 be not be interpreted as confirmed numbers.

Cumbria Strategic Partnership

Following the flooding incidents experienced across Cumbria in late 2025, January 2026 opened with a return to more typical seasonal conditions. The North West recorded some of the lowest rainfall totals nationally, albeit still within the expected “normal” range. Notable rainfall occurred between 8–9 January as a result of Storm Goretti, with further elevated daily totals on 11 January. Several Flood Alerts were issued during this period, predominantly in South Cumbria, though no property flooding was reported.

In February, North West England received 111% of the long-term average (LTA) rainfall. However, the generally light and frequent nature of the rainfall, punctuated only by occasional heavier showers, meant fluvial responses remained limited. Flood Alerts were confined to two high-tide sequences at the beginning and end of the month, and again no property flooding was reported.

March has continued with a notably wetter pattern, with the Northwest receiving higher rainfall totals than much of the rest of England. This was particularly evident on 12 March, when Cumbria, especially the north-eastern quarter, experienced significant short-duration rainfall. Flood Alerts were issued across the affected areas, and Flood Warnings were put in place for the Lower River Eden as a precaution. Early indications suggested a potential risk of property flooding in Appleby, prompting operational mobilisation. Ultimately, river levels peaked below forecast, and no reports of flooded properties were received.

On 24 March, forecasts indicated the potential for substantial rainfall across Cumbria and Lancashire, albeit with low confidence. In practice, rainfall totals exceeded initial predictions, leading to the issuance of multiple Flood Alerts across both counties and precautionary Flood Warnings for the Burrow Beck area in Lancaster and several cells in Wigton. These warnings were issued due to forecast uncertainty, and no reports of property flooding were received.

The EA have advised no significant impacts were reported to them across the period. Minor localised impacts to the road network due to standing surface water were reported during the late March rainfall in North Cumbria.

INFORMATION ITEM A

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

Local Authority area	Event Date	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
			Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Cumberland Council	05/01/2026	Dearham				1 External residential (s/w from highway)			
Cumberland Council	08/03/2026	Heads Nook						1 External residential	Source not yet known
Cumberland Council	12/03/2026	Torpenhow				1 External residential			Surface water from highway
Cumberland Council	24/03/2026	Kirkbampton			1 Internal residential				Impact to garage
Cumberland Council	24/03/2026	Camerton (Workington)			1 residential				Unknown Impact
Cumberland Council	24/03/2026	Little Corby				2 External residential			
Cumberland Council	24/03/2026	Seaton				1 External residential			
Cumberland Council	24/03/2026	Flimby				1 External residential			
Cumberland Council	25/03/2026	Workington				1 Internal commercial			
Cumberland Council Totals					1 internal res 1 unknown res	1 internal com 6 external res		1 external res	

Merseyside Strategic Partnership

Nil return for properties flooded for Q4 2025/26 from the LLFAs.

Cheshire Mid Mersey Strategic Partnership

Nil return from LLFAs/EA.

Greater Manchester Strategic Partnership

For this quarter the partnership have advised a NIL return for properties flooded (with the exception of the internal cellar flooding in Levenshulme). The table below details flooding of gardens and basements reported to Manchester City Council.

*The two properties in Levenshulme are separate reported incidents on different dates.

Local Authority area	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
		Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Manchester City Council	*Levenshulme			1 (external/garden only)			1 internal (cellar only) from groundwater.	Some highway flooding reported, no major impacts reported.
Manchester City Council	Blackley				1 (external/garden only)			No wider impacts reported.
Manchester City Council	Chorlton						1 (external/garden only) possible highway drainage.	Some highway flooding reported, no major impacts reported.
Manchester City Council	Longsight						1 (external/garden only) – reported private burst pipe.	No wider impacts reported.
Manchester City Council	Moston						1 internal (basement only) from groundwater.	No wider impacts reported.
Manchester City Council	Gorton						1 (external/garden only) possible highway drainage.	Some highway flooding reported, no major impacts reported.

INFORMATION ITEM A

Lancashire Strategic Partnership

In the Lancashire Partnership there was one flooding incident – dated 24/03/2026 – significant surface water runoff due to continuous heavy rainfall resulting in highway flooding across the borough and internal flooding of 1 residential building and 1 public building.

There are no flooding reports for Blackpool Council LLFA and Lancashire County Council LLFAI Authority area	Community	Number of properties reported as flooded						Wider impacts (e.g. on transport and other infrastructure, on the environment)
		Sea	River	Ordinary Watercourse	Surface water	Sewer	Combination of sources or source not yet established	
Blackburn with Darwen	Borough Flooding				Y			Highway flooding across the borough and internal flooding.

United Utilities Summary

Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 7th January 2026 to the 2nd April 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	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	0	0	0
Greater Manchester	0	5	0	0
Lancashire	1	6	0	0
Cumbria	1	7	0	0

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE

24 APRIL

NORTH WEST AND NORTH WALES COASTAL GROUP CHAIR'S REPORT

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

There has been a whirlwind of changes and updates this period that offer better alignment and opportunities for flood and coastal resilience within the region and the nation. New funding pathways offer better integration between environmental improvement, community aspirations and coastal flood and erosion resilience. Learning outputs from Our Future Coast are finding their way into business as usual and stretching the boundaries of possibilities for coastal resilience. In particular, Nature Based solutions and putting communities at the heart of everything we do.

The actions on the coastal protection authorities and the Environment Agency within the FCERM National Strategy are well on the way to being delivered. This delivery will continue through the Shoreline Management Plan Refresh into Action Project which will support the RFCC in reducing risk and building climate resilient communities. It will also contribute to the FCERM National Strategy by providing practical deliverable and adaptive plans.

Over the next three months there is a significant opportunity to put forward an expression of interest for schemes towards the Coastal Adaptation Pilots (CAP). The RFCC Finance and Business Assurance sub group were provided with an update on the opportunity by the Coastal Group on the 10 April at which support for a collaborative approach in the North West for this competitive process was given. This approach has several benefits including: improving regional capabilities, developing skills and knowledge for now and for the future. By working together, we can provide a solid bid for a proportion of the available allocation to the North West.

The CAP bid will build upon the experience and proven ability to deliver. The successful delivery throughout the North West Region, by the sub regional partnerships, the Coastal Group members and through Our Future Coast will form the foundation of the bid. Successful delivery through our partnerships is recognised as best practice nationally, we will continue to work to promote good practice throughout the region and beyond. I am delighted that Our Future Coast was recognised at the iNetwork Innovation award for Partner Excellence. A great reflection on the OFC team, partners and what we can achieve by working together.

Coastal Group Activities During the Period

Since the last RFCC update, the Coastal Group has moved forward with many projects and priority themes. This includes the coordination of a regional Coastal Adaptation Pilot funding Expression of Interest, practical testing of adaptive pathways as a delivery tool, the development of a formal SMP policy change process, and early piloting of a Centre of Coastal Excellence (now named Future Coast North West) for the North West. Together, these activities represent a clear shift towards readiness and the strengthening of the future delivery pipeline.

1. The Coastal Adaptation Pilot funding represents one of the first national funding opportunities explicitly focused on enabling adaptation rather than delivering traditional defences. A coordinated regional approach positions the North West strongly, but success will depend on clear prioritisation, political support, and alignment with future investment decisions. RFCC support in championing the regional approach and reinforcing the strategic importance of adaptation will be critical.
2. The Adaptive Pathway work places the North West at the forefront of national practice, moving adaptive pathways from policy into a practical, repeatable delivery process that can be embedded widely across the North West.
3. The SMP Refresh into Action project highlights that while SMPs have now been refreshed, a significant proportion of policy units will require further evidence, engagement, and in some cases formal policy change to remain credible and deliverable in a rapidly changing climate. The identification of 34 policy units requiring further work illustrates the scale of the challenge ahead and reinforces why a structured, consistent and coordinated approach is essential.
4. The challenge for the coast is not a lack of innovation, but how to embed adaptive, nature-based and collaborative approaches into everyday practice, while securing funding, overcoming delivery barriers and supporting communities to adapt to climate change. With local authority capacity under increasing pressure and further change anticipated through local government reform, this challenge cannot be met by organisations working in isolation. Future Coast North West provides a practical mechanism to respond by pooling expertise, developing skills once, and supporting consistent, evidence-based decision-making across boundaries.
5. 2026 represents a critical transition year for Our Future Coast, shifting from innovation delivery to embedding learning, influence and legacy into business as usual across the North West. A key focus for the final year will be ensuring that the methods, relationships and tools developed through Our Future Coast are sustained through Future Coast North West, CAP funding, and mainstream FCERM activity.

Key messages for RFCC Members

- The region is moving into practical enabling work, testing approaches and building a clearer pipeline to support future delivery.
- Coastal adaptation is now a central focus, with Coastal Adaptation Pilot funding offering a key opportunity to support long-term change rather than short-term interventions.
- Significant further work is needed to keep Shoreline Management Plans credible, deliverable and aligned with the latest climate change evidence and national datasets.
- Regional collaboration through Future Coast North West provides a practical and proportionate response to capacity pressures and the challenges of local government reform.
- Continued RFCC advocacy, political support and strategic alignment will be critical to maintaining momentum and securing future investment for the coast.

How Coastal Group Activities Align with RFCC and FCERM Priorities

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.

1. Coastal Adaptation Pilot Funding – A Regional Approach

Following the announcement of the Coastal Adaptation Pilots (CAP) funding, there is a strong case for a coordinated regional bid alongside individual Expressions of Interest. At the latest RFCC Finance and Business Assurance Sub-Committee, members expressed support for a regional approach. The North West North Wales Coastal Group, supported by the Our Future Coast team, is coordinating the development of a regional Expression of Interest, to strengthen the region's case for funding, ensure alignment with Shoreline Management Plans, and support consistent and coordinated coastal adaptation planning across the coastline.

Why this work is needed

- **Limited use of adaptive, trigger-based decision-making** - While adaptive pathway planning exists for some large, strategic schemes, there is limited support for developing adaptive pathways at a local policy unit scale, constraining proactive decision-making.
- **SMPs must remain live and relevant** - Shoreline Management Plans require ongoing investment to reflect evolving evidence, climate risks, and policy direction. Without this, they risk becoming static documents that cannot support long-term, adaptive coastal management.
- **Complex policies are difficult to deliver** - Policies such as Managed Realignment involve long lead-in times, multiple dependencies, and local sensitivities. Without early funding for planning, engagement, and evidence, delivery can be delayed or stalled.
- **Uncertainty around policy transitions** - Identifying when to transition between policies (e.g. Hold the Line to Managed Realignment) remains challenging. Coastal change is uncertain in both timing and rate, making fixed timescales unreliable.
- **Inconsistent understanding and use of SMPs** - SMP policies are not always consistently understood or applied across sectors, reducing their influence on planning, infrastructure, and investment decisions.
- **Limited capacity for early community engagement and adaptation conversations** - There is insufficient capacity within local authorities to engage communities early and to hold conversations about coastal change and adaptation. A lack of training and resources can delay engagement, reduce trust, and constrain effective long-term planning.

What we have done so far

Given the short timescales associated with the CAP funding announcement, the Coastal Group has acted quickly to coordinate early activity across the region.

- The SMP Coordinator, Coastal Group Chair and Coastal Group representative have shared available information with sub-regional partnerships and the RFCC Chair, to ensure early awareness.
- Officers have attended the introductory Environment Agency webinar on the CAP funding.
- The CAP EOI guidance and application packs have been reviewed following publication by the EA.
- The eligibility criteria for the funding have been reviewed. To be eligible, locations must:
 - have a medium-term SMP policy (2025–2055) of No Active Intervention or Managed Realignment;
 - be located in areas of coastal erosion risk, as identified by the national NCERM dataset;
 - **should** be within the top 40% most deprived communities; and
 - and **should** include a meaningful number of properties at risk (used by the EA to inform indicative allocations).

- A high-level screening exercise has been undertaken against these criteria to identify locations where funding could realistically be targeted at this stage.
- It has been recognised from the outset that local knowledge and partner input are essential to refine site selection and strengthen the evidence base, maximising the likelihood of a successful bid.

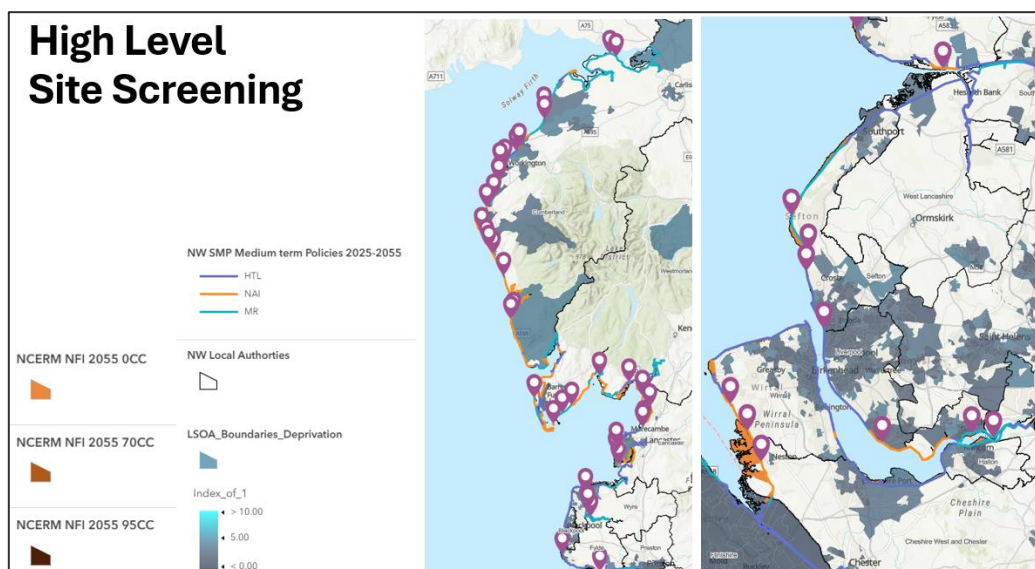


Figure 1: High-level screening of potentially eligible sites within coastal erosion risk zones, with the top 40% most deprived areas overlaid to inform eligibility.

What we will do

- Refine the longlist of potential sites to a preferred shortlist, informed by local knowledge, partner input and strategic fit.
- Work with partners to develop high-quality proposals focused on strategically important sites within each sub-region.
- Prepare and submit a regional Expression of Interest for Coastal Adaptation Pilots (CAP) funding, led by the Coastal Group with support from nominated officers providing local input.
- Finalise and submit the regional CAP bid, led by the Coastal Group and submitted by the agreed Coastal Protection Authority on behalf of partners across the North West.
- Provide regular updates and share learning through existing RFCC and Coastal Group governance arrangements.

The work would be enabling rather than delivery-led, helping to strengthen the pipeline of future FCERM and adaptation activity and improve consistency of approach across the region. Early community engagement and training for local authority officers are essential to build capacity and ensure effective, consistent conversations about coastal change.

The project is expected to run from 2026/27 to 2028/29. A minimum of 10% match funding will be required, and we will explore with partners how this could be met, including whether in-kind contributions such as staff time can be counted as match funding.

Outline timetable

- Circulate the longlist of eligible sites to relevant partners by 17 April
- Create a preferred short list by 1 May
- Finalised preferred site list and project plan by mid-May
- Internal approvals and detailed EOI by mid-June
- Final review of bid and bid documents prior to submission by end of June

2. Adaptive Pathways – A future planning tool

Funded by Our Future Coast

Coastal Group Activity: Adaptive Pathways for future coastal planning

Goal: To develop **adaptive pathways** as a practical tool to help plan for the future that:

- supports long-term adaptation
- supports the delivery of the Shoreline Management Plan
- uses data-driven triggers to inform decisions
- responds to uncertainty arising from climate change

Why this matters

Climate change means flood and coastal risks will increase and become more uncertain over time. We need a way to plan ahead, avoid costly last-minute decisions, and support communities to adapt gradually rather than react in crisis. One of the Environment Agency's key messages is that Shoreline Management Plans should not sit on a shelf, but remain live, relevant and actively used as conditions change.

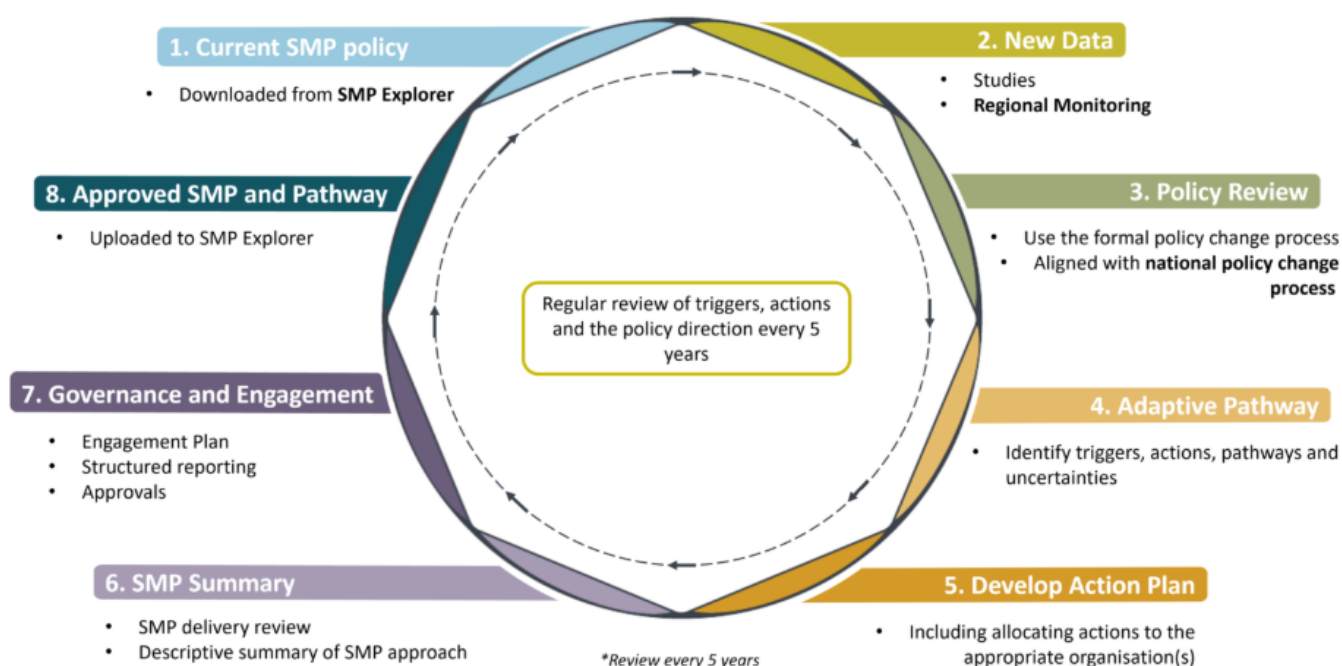
The adaptive pathways approach directly supports this by turning policy into an ongoing process. Rather than treating the SMP as a fixed, one-off decision, adaptive pathways use SMP policies as a long-term direction of travel. Specific actions are reviewed and updated over time as risks, funding, and community needs change.

Linking evidence, monitoring and decisions

Adaptive pathways rely on:

- monitoring of coastal change
- new data and modelling
- experience from delivered schemes and strategies

As this information improves, it feeds back into decisions about when and how SMP policies are implemented, keeping them up to date and evidence-led.



What we've done:

- Further developed the adaptive pathways delivery process, clarifying how triggers, monitoring data and review points link to SMP policies in practice.
- Begun shaping the structure and content of guidance and training materials, informed by practitioner feedback.
- Strengthened links with Environment Agency colleagues to ensure the work aligns with national adaptation priorities and contributes to wider learning on keeping SMPs live.
- Collaborating with the University of Liverpool, with the intention of embedding this work into their future teaching syllabus.
- Started drafting case studies for locations where the approach has been trialled. These case studies will provide real, place-based examples to support learning, training and future guidance.
- This work places the North West at the forefront of national practice, moving adaptive pathways from policy aspiration into a practical, repeatable delivery process that can be embedded across future strategies and schemes.

What we will do:

- Document 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.
- Seek to roll out the adaptive pathways approach more widely through a Coastal Adaptation Programme (CAP) funding bid
- This will provide a replicable model that can be shared nationally, supporting the Environment Agency's ambition to mainstream adaptive planning across coastal England.

This work 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.

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.

3. Shoreline Management Plan Refresh into Action Project (RIA)

Funded by the Environment Agency

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 CCMA's.

What we've done

- The SMP Coordinator has worked collaboratively with Coastal Group partners to understand the complexity of potential SMP policy changes.
- Completed an initial review, identifying 34 SMP policy units requiring formal policy change - all dependent on further technical evidence and engagement.
- Within the 34 Identified, 15 Policy Units appear to have a clear case for changing SMP policy, with a relevant strategy supporting the change.
- The SMP Coordinator and SMP steering Group have developed a draft policy change process and are testing this in Cumberland.

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 CCMA's.

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

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

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.

4. **Future Coast North West (Centre of Coastal Excellence) Scoping**

Funded by RFCC and OFC

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

Future Coast NW aims to:

- Build and retain specialist coastal skills and expertise.
- Make better use of existing resources.
- Build a lasting legacy from the Our Future Coast programme, including its learning and legacy pipeline.

What we've done

- Established a new Name – Future Coast North West
- Delivered a programme of targeted engagement to test and develop Future Coast NW
- Used this engagement to explore:
 - A phased approach to development
 - Identified a suite of potential pilot projects
- Established pilot steering groups, including:
- Pipeline development supporting a more coordinated, visible and investable regional coastal pipeline
- Morecambe Bay Strategy exploring opportunities for joined-up, cross-boundary working
- Governance, testing practical governance arrangements

What we will do

- Test and refine governance, resourcing and delivery models in a planned and intentional way
- Use learning from the pilots to:
 - Demonstrate value and build confidence among partners and decision-makers
 - Inform decisions on the long-term structure, scope and function of the Centre of Coastal Excellence
 - Identify where regional coordination adds genuine value alongside local delivery
- Build on Our Future Coast learning, relationships and momentum to:
 - Embed collaboration as a long-term, business-as-usual approach, rather than a time-limited project
 - Support sustained skills, capability and capacity across the North West coast

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.

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

5. Our Future Coast

What we've done

- Huge congratulations to the entire Our Future Coast team and partners for winning the iNetwork Innovation award for Partner Excellence at the March ceremony. We were delighted to be recognised for our commitment to sustained partnership and collaborative working. We have learned so much from each other and been able to deliver so much because of our ability to work together. Congratulations to all!
- The recruitment exercise in early 2026 has been successful and the new candidate will be starting in mid-April, joining the PM at Wyre Council.
- OFC held an in-person Partner's workshop at The Midland Hotel in Morecambe in early March. The aim was to begin evaluating the project and processes to assist with final year outputs and evaluation in the wider FCIP programme. The day was a great success and facilitated much needed discussions about what not to do next time, especially considering the Future Coast North West and CAP funding ambitions
- We are delighted to release the green finance report that Jacobs were commissioned to complete. The report considers green finance options for salt marsh creation on the North West coast. It considers Millom Marshes, Humphrey Head and Pilling as managed realignment sites and the funding that could potentially be available, and highlights the gaps in funding and the reality of green finance being able to pay for MR schemes
- The feasibility and options studies are now back for Millom Marshes, Humphrey Head, Roa Island, Seagrass at Roa Island, as well as the Cocker Channel investigative study outputs.

What we will be doing

- Our Future Coast will be prepping for three presentation sessions at Flood and Coast 2026; our work with Lancaster University for Morecambe Area Gaming Environment (MAGE) and co-designing sediment traps at Hest Bank with Coastal Nature Lab, as well as the Adaptive Pathways work undertaken with the SMP co-ordinator
- We will be on-boarding new OFC officer
- We will be presenting posters on aspects of OFC at the Coastal Practitioners conference in May and also looking ahead to ReMeMaRe in July, dissemination of the lessons and outputs from OFC will be key in this final year
- Assisting our partners with CAP funding bid.

Our Future Coast programme Team

- Carl Green, Project Sponsor (carl.green@wyre.gov.uk)
- Ellie Brown, Programme Manager (ellie.brown@wyre.gov.uk)
- Ellie Brome OFC Project Officer (Wyre Council) – start date mid April (ellie.brome@wyre.gov.uk)
- Weronika Sroka, Nature Based Solution Lead (Contractor- weronika.sroka.consulting@gmail.com)
- Graham Lymbery, Monitoring Lead & Adaptation Pathways Co-Lead (Contractor- 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)

Our Future Coast Strategic Alignment

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.

The next quarter offers significant opportunities through the Coastal Adaptation Pathway funding to better prepare and equip our coastal communities for the future. I very much welcome the RFCCs support for a collaborative bid in line with the processes outlined above. It is a real strength of the North West Region that we work together so successfully. This partnership working was recognised by iNetwork Innovation for Our Future Coast programme and it is this foundation of delivering outcomes for our communities that bodes well for the future of the North West.

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

North West Investment Programme

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

10 April 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 confirmation of the final allocations for 2026-27. The latter follows approval of next years allocations by the Environment Agency Board for the investment and resource maintenance programmes.

Key Headlines:

- The investment programme forecast is currently showing an underspend and although opportunities were enacted during the last quarter of the year, project forecasts across the programme have reduced resulting in the most likely out-turn for this financial year being largely the same as the forecast reported to committee in January
- Forecasts show 6,029 properties will be better protected this year against an updated target of 5,009. The environmental outcomes (rOM4a/b) forecast are close to completion
- The resource maintenance programmes have been completed and are forecasting to deliver to within 1% of budget by year-end
- For Environment Agency maintained assets, GMMC achieved their below required condition (BRC) target of 93.4% with CLA narrowly missing their 97.7% target this year

Financial Performance:

- Total Project Expenditure (TPE) forecast is showing a programme underspend of £7.8m against the TPE allocation of £135m
- FCERM GiA forecast shows a programme underspend of £3.24m, which is 2.7% below our North West allocation
- Latest local levy forecasts show we are spending 62% of the allocation this year due to re-profiling of local levy spend into future years and maximising GiA spend (further details mentioned in the Local levy section)

Risks, Issues & Pressures:

- Forecast out-turn is below the investment programme allocation
- Efficiency savings remain significantly below target (61% shortfall)
- Not all projects received the funding they requested for next year, and this will delay some schemes from progressing

Strategic Planning:

- Following RFCC consent in January, the investment programme and resource maintenance programme allocations for 2026/27 were approved by the EA Board in February (next years investment programme has been published on gov.uk)
 - £160.3m GiA has been allocated to the investment programme in the North West better protecting 9,698 properties
 - £14.91m GiA has been allocated to the resource maintenance programme

RFCC Business Plan:

- Routine update this quarter. Improved performance since last quarter with another

project complete and two projects which were previously rated Amber now on track.

- No new project or investment proposals
- Subgroup are asked to formally acknowledge completion of project ID20 – Landscape in a Changing Climate’ conference

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- This report to the Finance & Business Assurance Sub-Group provides progress on delivering the in-year (2025/26) investment and resource maintenance programmes

ACTIONS REQUESTED FROM THE FBASG

- Note progress on delivering the 2025-26 Investment and Resource Maintenance programmes
- Note the progress on the 2025-26 Local Levy programme spend and forecasts
- Note the update on the Local Levy programme.
- Provide in principle support for the allocation of additional Local Levy funding for the Poise Brook scheme
- Note the update on Business Plan projects, including the issues reported
- Formally acknowledge the completion of project ID20 – ‘Landscape in a Changing Climate’ conference

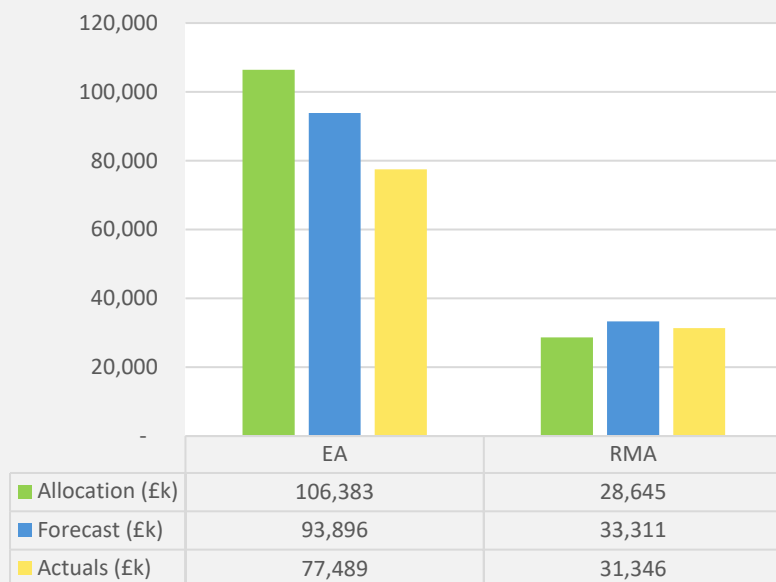
INVESTMENT PROGRAMME OVERVIEW (2021–2026)

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.	£191.3m efficiency savings achieved (vs. £345m target).
North West Overview	16,823 properties better protected (2021-22 to date).	10% of programme funded through partnerships.	£18.7M efficiency savings (21-22 to Q3 of 2025-26).

NORTH WEST TOTAL PROJECT EXPENDITURE (TPE) 2025-26

NW RFCC TPE - In-Year Capital Programme



Top 10 TPE Spending Projects (by Forecast)

Project Name	Lead	Allocation TPE (£)	Forecast TPE (£)	Actuals TPE (£)
River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough Flood Risk Management Scheme	EA	17,815,276	18,303,972	15,304,546
Kendal Appraisal Package Kendal FRM Scheme	EA	19,012,000	18,092,462	14,980,330
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	EA	10,000,000	16,500,000	16,500,000
Preston and South Ribble	EA	10,660,000	12,521,516	11,238,586
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	5,090,000	6,975,739	6,266,057
Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	EA	2,953,153	4,917,322	4,520,563
Anchorsholme Coast Protection Scheme	LA	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000
CLA - Reconditioning Programme	EA	4,324,000	3,834,649	2,538,535
Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	LA	1,950,000	2,950,000	2,950,000
Blackpool Beach Nourishment Scheme	LA	1,500,000	2,500,000	2,500,000

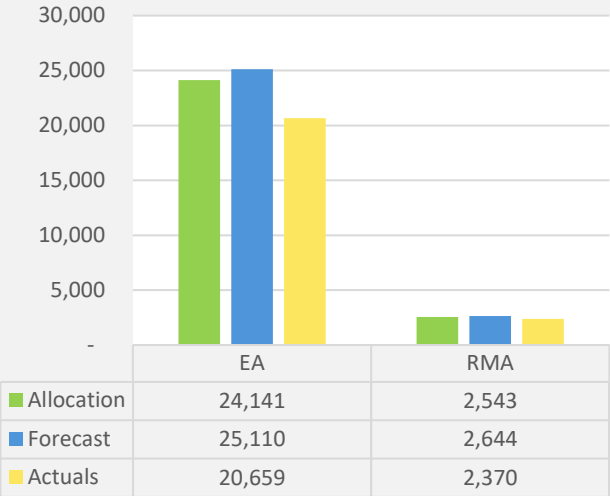
Commentary and Risk:

- The February forecast indicates a programme underspend of **£7.8m** against the **Total Project Expenditure (TPE) allocation of £135m**, representing an increase of **£0.6m** compared with the position reported to the committee in January.
- In the previous paper, we anticipated further forecast increases and opportunities in Q4 that could bring the programme back to allocation by year end. Although there were additional FCERM GiA grant claims from oRMAs — including **Wyre Beach Management (£1.5m - in addition to a previous grant claim of £5m)**, **Millom (£1m)**, **Blackpool Beach Nourishment (£1m)** and **Little Bispham to Bispham (£1m)** — these were offset by reductions across several Environment Agency led schemes. As a result, the latest forecast position remains broadly unchanged
- There is **£16.4m of remaining Environment Agency spend** and **£2.8m of Local Authority grant claims/spend** still to be delivered. Further detail, including a partnership level breakdown, is provided in **Appendix B**.

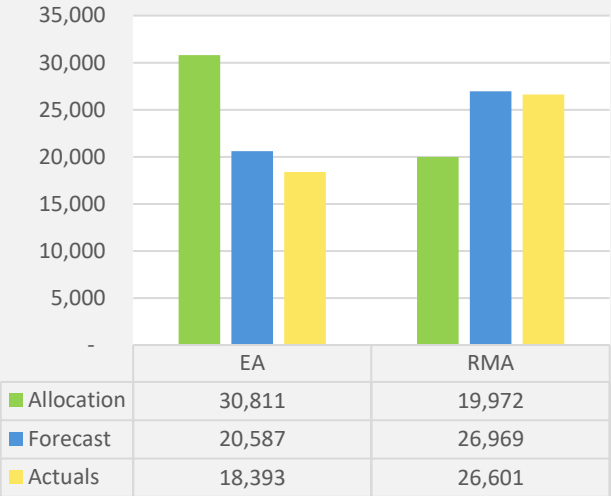
Please refer to Appendix B for the summary of all in-year funding sources in terms of budget, forecasts and actuals.

 TOTAL PROJECTS EXPENDITURE BY PARTNERSHIP 2025-26

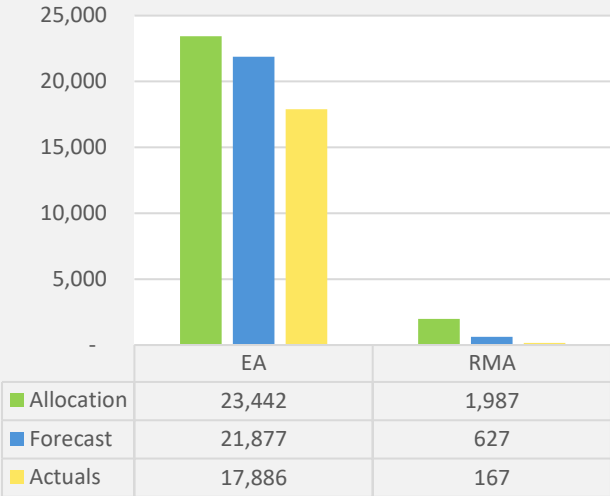
Cumbria Programme



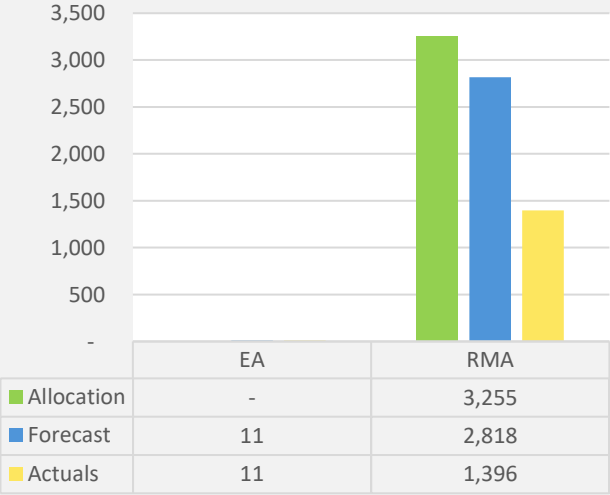
Lancashire Programme



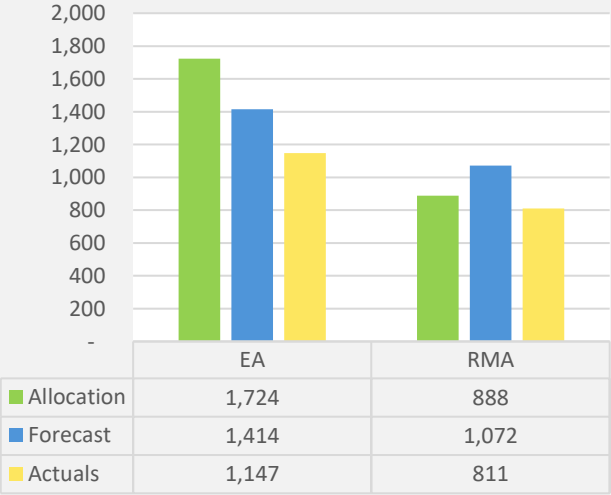
Greater Manchester Programme



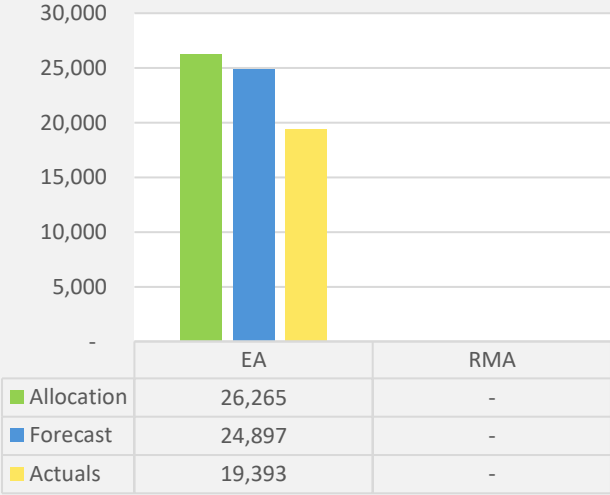
Merseyside Programme



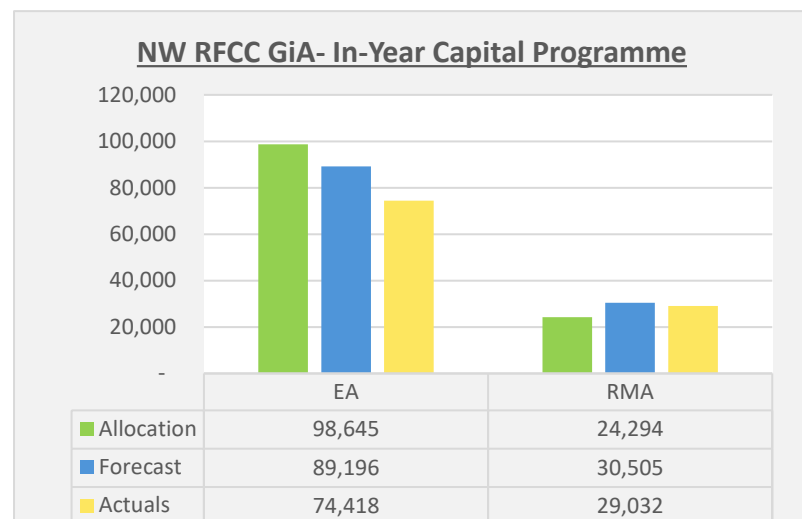
Cheshire Programme



Cross-Partnership Programme



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



FCERM GiA Capital (CDEL) / Resource (RDEL) splits

Area	Resource (RDEL)		Capital (CDEL)	
	Budget (£k)	Forecast (£k)	Budget (£k)	Forecast (£k)
Cumbria and Lancashire	5,237	6,200	76,044	71,699
Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Cheshire	5,960	6,116	35,698	35,690
North West Total	11,197	12,316	111,742	107,389

Commentary and Risk:

Programme Forecast Position:

- The latest FCERM GiA forecast indicates an anticipated programme underspend of **£3.24m**, or **2.7% below** the North West allocation. The January papers highlighted potential opportunities in Quarter 4 to increase expenditure and return the programme to full allocation by year-end. These opportunities were enacted but forecast reductions against other projects have resulted in a marginal increase to the overall programme forecast which is largely the same to that reported in January
- GMMC is forecasting a **balanced year-end position**, while aiming to **maximise FCERM GiA expenditure** to support both individual projects and the wider programme. Current **CDEL and RDEL positions remain strong**.
- National guidance is to work to the **February Most Likely Outturn (MLO)**. This reflects a position of approximately **£2m under budget for Cumbria and Lancashire Area (CLA)**, with GMMC projected to be slightly **over allocation**, which is supported by the national programme management office
- CDEL / RDEL Forecast Split Requirements:**
We are required to provide a clear split of FCERM GiA expenditure between **Capital (CDEL)** and **Resource (RDEL)** and ensure alignment with overall allocation. The February forecast shows an **RDEL overspend of £1.2m** and a **CDEL underspend of £4m**. The RDEL overspend has been supported by the national programme management office

NORTH WEST LOCAL LEVY PROJECT EXPENDITURE 2025-26

Top 10 Local Levy Spending Projects (by Forecast)

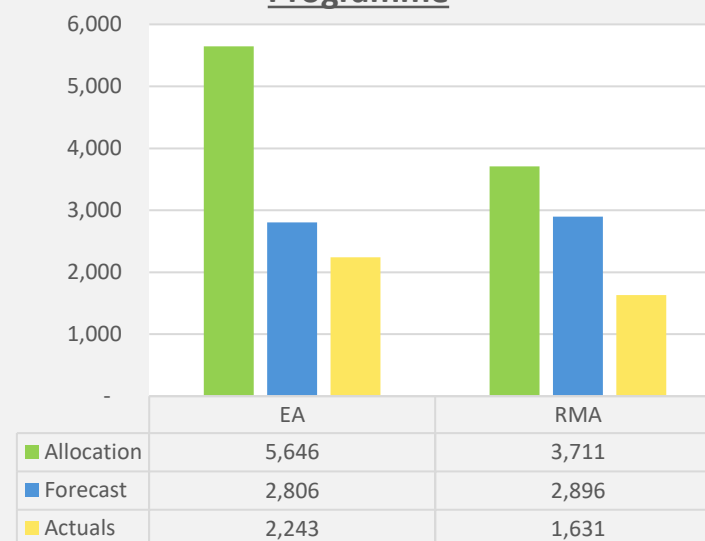
Project Name*	Lead	Allocation LL (£)	Forecast LL (£)	Actuals LL (£)
Carlisle Appraisal Package Appleby Town Centre	EA	0	1,500,000	1,320,106
Millom and Haverigg Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	500,000	500,000	500,00
Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	0	400,000	143,876
Little Bispham to Bispham Coast Protection	LA	350,000	350,000	350,000
Blackpool Beach Nourishment	LA	350,000	350,000	350,000
River Winster Rehabilitation Project	LA	164,000	164,000	164,000
Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	90,000	120,000	0
Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	0	70,000	0
Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	EA	50,000	50,000	0
Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	EA	30,000	30,000	0

*Excludes Quick Win projects and RFCC Business plan projects, all forecasting £250,000 for each partnership

Commentary and Risk:

- The graph above incorporates investment related to both the **'Quick Wins'** initiatives and the **RFCC Business Plan**. Further details on the RFCC Business Plan are provided in a separate section of this report (see *NW RFCC Business Plan*)
- The latest financial forecasts indicate that we expect to spend **£5.7m of the £9.345m** Local Levy allocation for the current year, representing **62%** of the total allocation. The forecast has decreased by **£2.9m** compared with the position reported in January 2026. This reduction is primarily due

NW RFCC Local Levy - In-Year Capital Programme



AGENDA ITEMS 3 and 4

to maximising GiA spend and re-profiling local levy into future years for the projects noted in the table below

- The annual year-end audit which will confirm final out-turn and the re-profiling of local levy, will take place by the end of May and the outcome of this will be reported back to committee in June/July

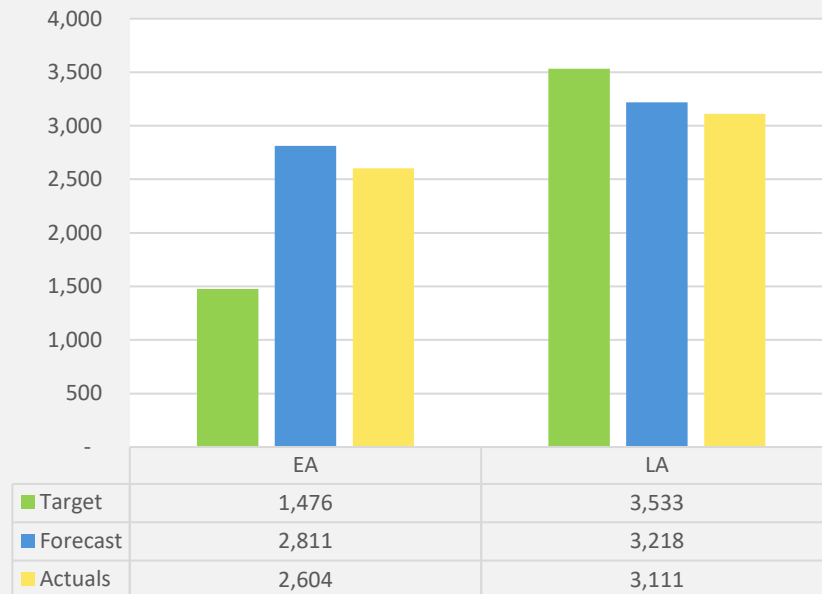
Partnership	Scheme Name	RMA Type	2025/26 RFCC Jan forecast (£k)	2025/26 latest Forecast (£k)	Comments
Greater Manchester	Poise Brook	EA	305	0	deferred to 27/28
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	EA	1500	0	deferred to 26/27
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	EA	380	0	deferred to 26/27
Greater Manchester	Hindley Group	EA	275	0	deferred to 30/31
Cheshire	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	EA	161	0	deferred to 26/27
Lancashire	Blackpool Manchester Square Pumping Station and Culvert	LA	250	0	deferred to 27/28

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'

NW RFCC rOM2+3 (Properties)
In-Year Capital Programme



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	3,000
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	0	2,588	2,588
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	47
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	16
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	LA	0	12	0

Commentary and Risk:

- The North West Properties Better Protected latest forecast indicates that 6,029 properties will be better protected against a target of 5,009, with 5,715 claimed so far. At the last RFCC we reported a forecast of 6,756 properties, so a reduction of approximately 700 properties. This is mainly due to a reprofile of properties better protected by the Preston and South Ribble Scheme (707 properties) into next year, as explained below
- Change in target and forecast of 707 properties is due to reprofile of Preston and South Ribble. We are currently on track to exceed the national target of 52,000 properties better protected. To help reduce pressure on the programme, the National Delivery Portfolio Board asked project teams to identify projects where meeting the current scheduled property claim dates, might lead to inefficient or more expensive delivery, or create avoidable health and safety risks on site. This exercise produced a list of projects (including Preston) where property claims could be

AGENDA ITEMS 3 and 4

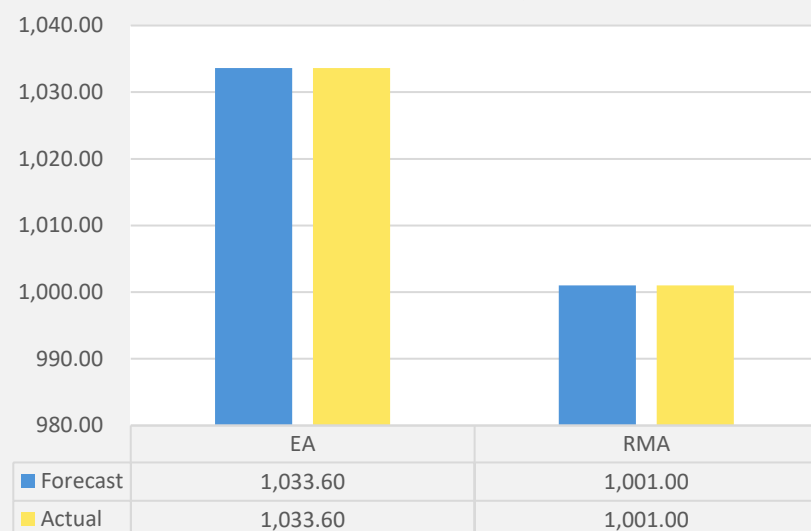
deferred into the next programme, which starts April 2026. Where National and Area decide to defer property claims, National did not want this to stop areas from meeting their local, pre-approved, properties better protected targets. Therefore, where deferrals have been agreed and are taken forward, Area targets have been reduced in line with the number of properties being deferred

- 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

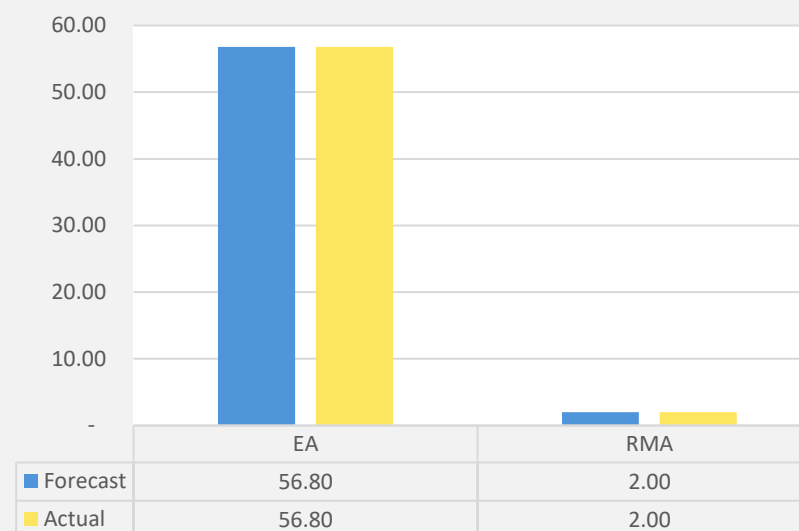
Please refer to Appendix D for the detailed list of properties better protected in FY 2025–26.

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

**NW RFCC rOM4a (Hectares of improved habitat)
In-Year Capital Programme**



**NW RFCC rOM4b (Kilometers of rivers improved)
In-Year Capital Programme**



There is no set target for environmental outcomes 4a and 4b, however we are required to record the delivery and claim the benefits. Definitions for Outcome Measure 4a and 4b can be found in appendix A.

Environmental outcomes - Contributing projects in 2025-26

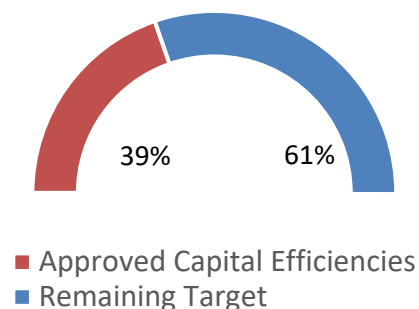
Row Labels	Partnership	RMA Type	rOM:4A Forecast (Ha)	rOM:4A Actual (Ha)	rOM:4B Forecast (km)	rOM:4B Actual (km)
Cumbria River Restoration Package*	Cumbria	EA	1,028.80	1,028.80	56.80	56.80
Preston and South Ribble	Lancashire	EA	4.80	4.80	0.00	0.00
River Winster (Local Levy funded)	Cumbria	RMA	1,001.00	1,001.00	2.00	2.00

AGENDA ITEMS 3 and 4

*Delivery over years 21-22 to 25-26 and claimed in 25-26	Total	2,034.60	2,034.60	58.80	58.80
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NORTH WEST CAPITAL EFFICIENCIES – OVERALL PROGRAMME

NW Capital Efficiency Countdown



The North West has achieved £18.72m against a target of £47.4m. There is still a shortfall of ~£28m, which is 61% of the North West target. The five-year investment programme runs from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

The table below shows efficiency reporting from 2021-22 to Q3 2025-26. Efficiencies reporting is once per quarter and the outcome of any efficiencies submitted in Q4 2025-26 will be confirmed at the committee meetings in June/July.

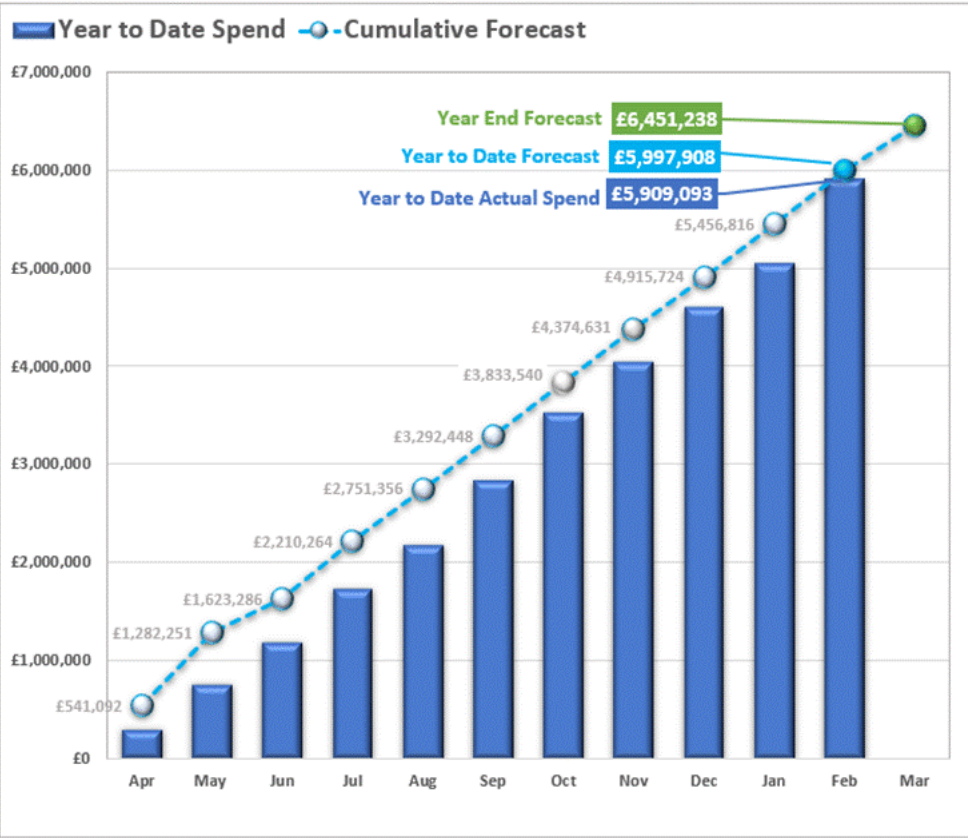
As of end Q3 (Dec) 2025-26					
Area	5 Year Total GiA Spend	5 Year Programme Target (10% all GiA spend)	5 Year Programme Realised Efficiencies	Variance (Target vs Realised)	Variance (Target vs Realised) %
Cumbria and Lancashire	£317,275,920	£31,727,592	£10,658,840	-£21,068,752	34%
Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and Cheshire	£156,982,730	£15,698,273	£8,061,337	-£7,636,936	51%
Total	£474,258,650	£47,425,865	£18,720,177	-£28,705,688	39%

As of end Q3 (Dec) 2025-26					
Authority	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	£384,550,730	£38,455,073	£15,584,730	-£24,936,073	41%
Local Authority	£89,707,910	£8,970,791	£3,135,448	-£5,804,678	35%
Total	£474,258,640	£47,425,864	£18,720,178	-£30,740,751	39%

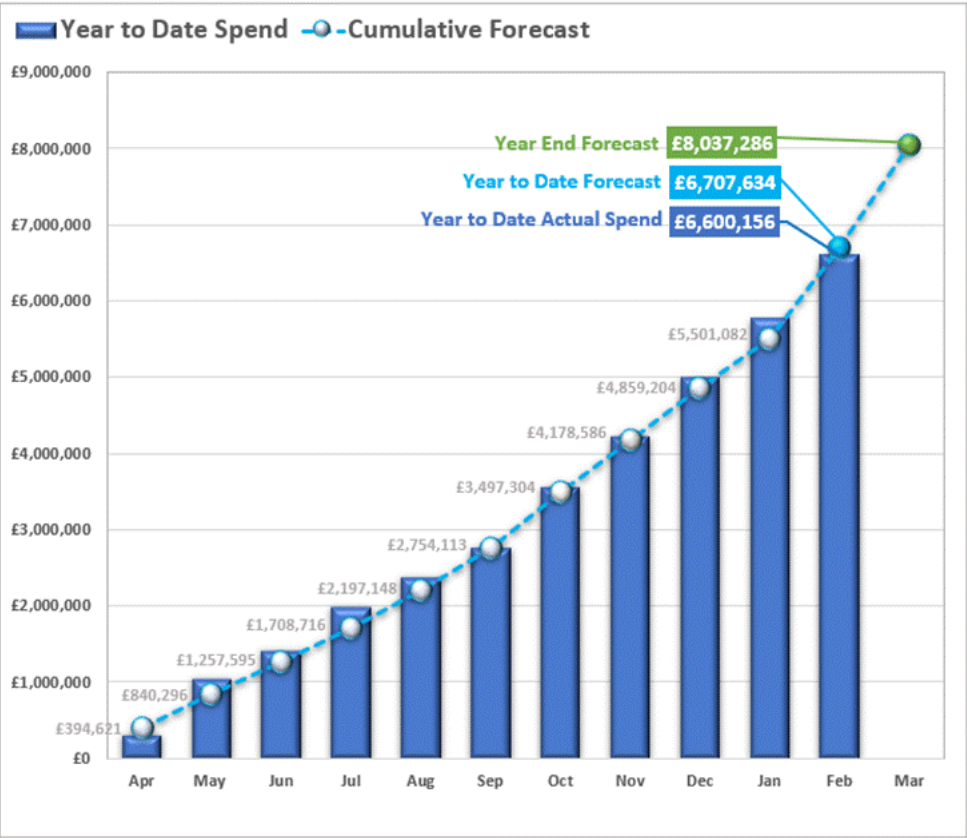
RESOURCE MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2025-26

Our resource maintenance programmes for 2025-26 are completed. Our spending to the end of February is **£12,509,249** against a total North-West end of year forecast of **£14,488,524**. This is 1% above our initial allocation of **£14,264,694**

Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire



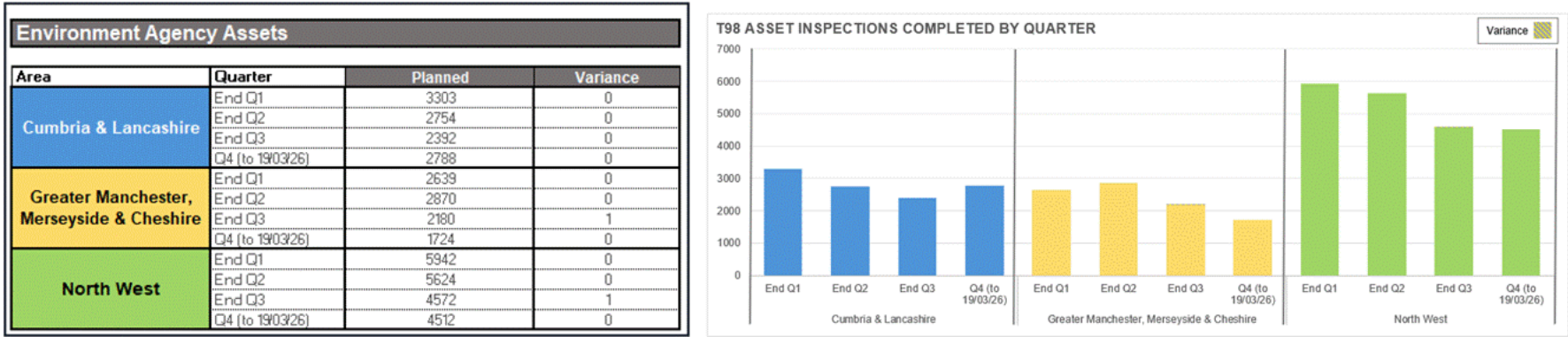
Cumbria & Lancashire



Looking ahead to 2026-27 and as reported in January, the Northwest received £94k, split £29k GMMC and £65k CLA, of the £5.5m of extra funding made available nationally above initial allocations. The revised allocations are £6,312k GMMC (no increase on 2025-26) and £8,602k CLA (less than 1% increase on 2025-26).

Environment Agency Below Required Position Assets

All assets undergo visual inspection by our asset inspectors as part of a rolling program to assess their health and condition. If an asset falls below its target condition score, it is classified as below the required standard. The table below shows the total number of programmed quarterly inspections across the Northwest. We have a target of 97% of inspections completed on time. Only a single inspection was delivered outside of its programmed date.



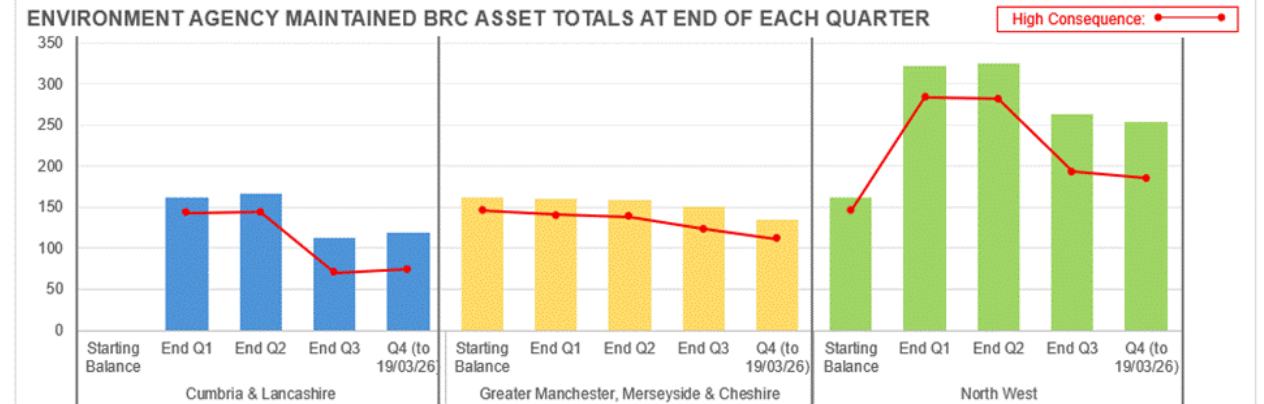
Where assets are classified as below required condition (BRC) and cannot be rectified quickly using available resources we initiate further investigation and prepare a funding bid for refurbishment. Environment Agency maintained assets have a nationally set target for asset repairs. This is an individual target for each Area. GMMC achieved their BRC target of 93.4% with CLA narrowly missing their 97.7% target this year.

The Reconditioning funding budget has been allocated for 2026-27 and is intended to deliver planned fix's in that year but also design for delivering fix's the year after, but is below the funding required to meet our asset fix targets. ***A paper has been prepared explaining the process around BRC assets in more detail and is contained in the Appendix G to this report.***

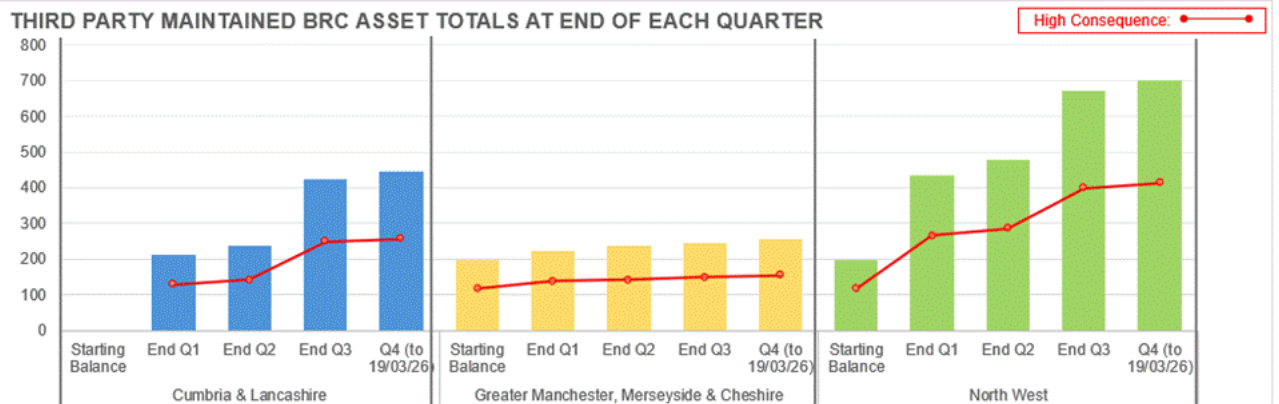
The tables below show the current BRC asset numbers and how many of those are in high consequence systems split into EA and Third Party maintained assets. The graphs show the progress in reducing the total numbers of BRC assets across the year bearing in mind new failures are constantly being added during the year as asset inspections are completed.

AGENDA ITEMS 3 and 4

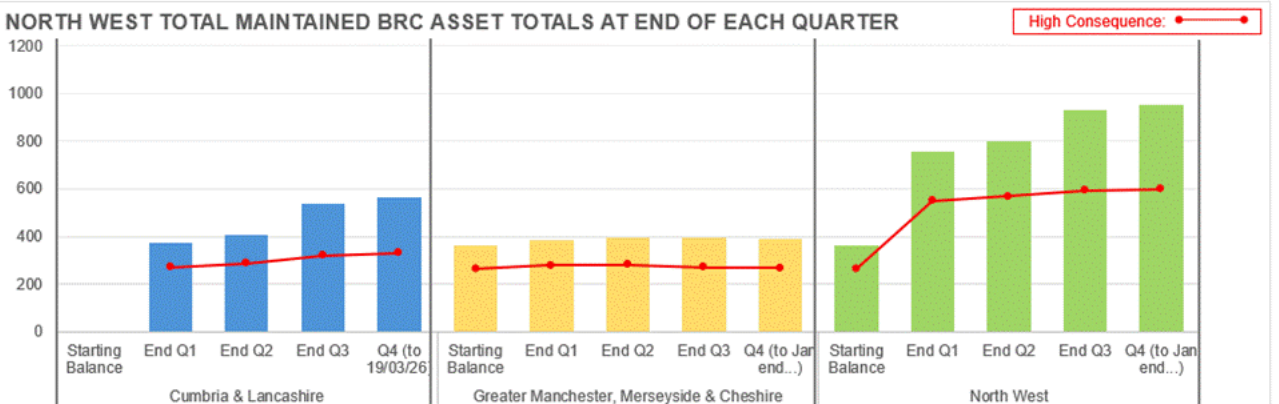
Environment Agency BRC Assets			
Area	Quarter	Below Required Condition	High Consequence
Cumbria & Lancashire	Starting Balance		
	End Q1	162	143
	End Q2	166	144
	End Q3	113	70
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	119	74
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Starting Balance	162	146
	End Q1	160	141
	End Q2	159	138
	End Q3	150	123
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	134	111
North West	Starting Balance	162	146
	End Q1	322	284
	End Q2	325	282
	End Q3	263	193
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	253	185



Third Party BRC Assets			
Area	Quarter	Below Required Condition	High Consequence
Cumbria & Lancashire	Starting Balance		
	End Q1	213	129
	End Q2	239	143
	End Q3	424	250
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	446	258
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Starting Balance	198	119
	End Q1	222	138
	End Q2	238	143
	End Q3	246	149
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	256	156
North West	Starting Balance	198	119
	End Q1	435	267
	End Q2	477	266
	End Q3	670	389
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	702	414



North West BRC Assets			
Area	Quarter	Below Required Condition	High Consequence
Cumbria & Lancashire	Starting Balance		
	End Q1	375	272
	End Q2	405	287
	End Q3	537	320
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	565	332
Greater Manchester, Merseyside & Cheshire	Starting Balance	360	265
	End Q1	382	279
	End Q2	397	281
	End Q3	396	272
	Q4 (to 19/03/26)	390	267
North West	Starting Balance	360	265
	End Q1	757	551
	End Q2	802	568
	End Q3	933	592
	Q4 (to Jan end...)	955	599



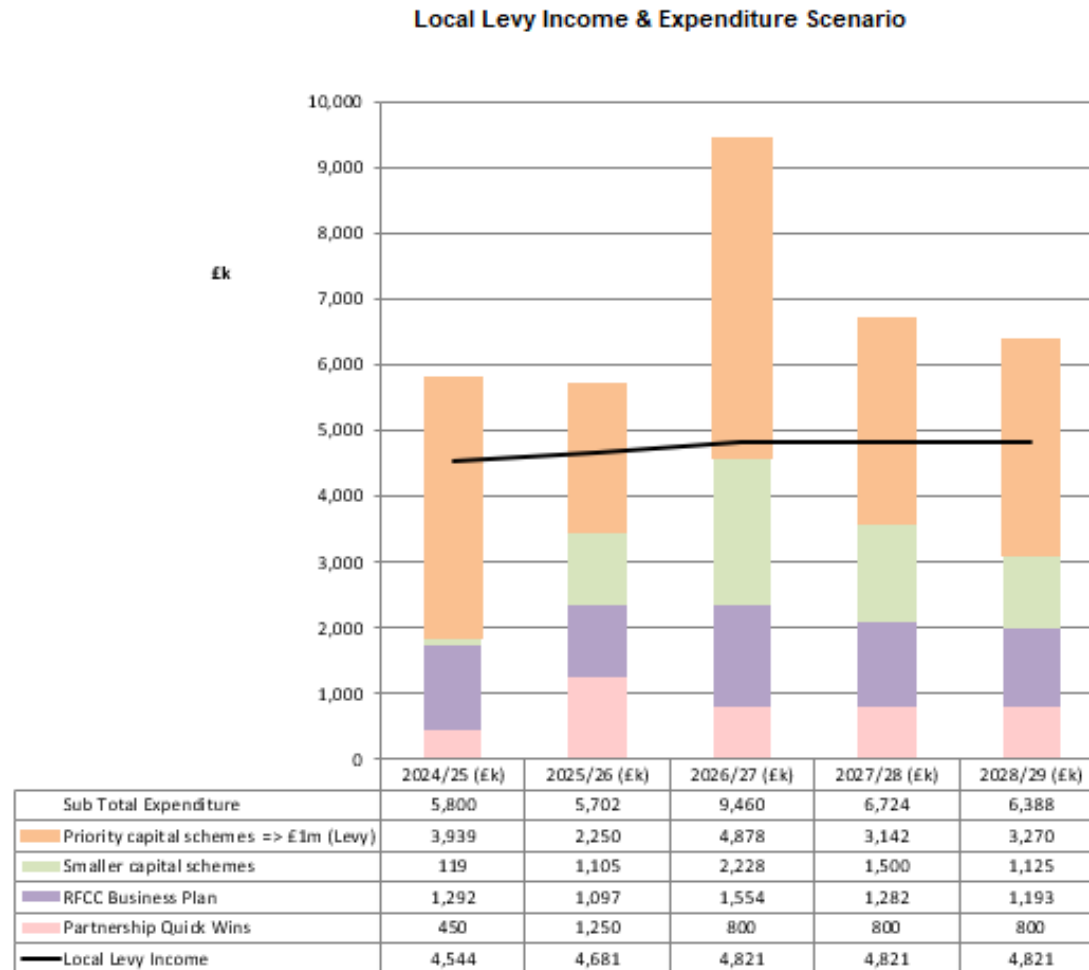
The FBASG are asked to:

- 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

NW RFCC LOCAL LEVY PROGRAMME FOR 2025-26

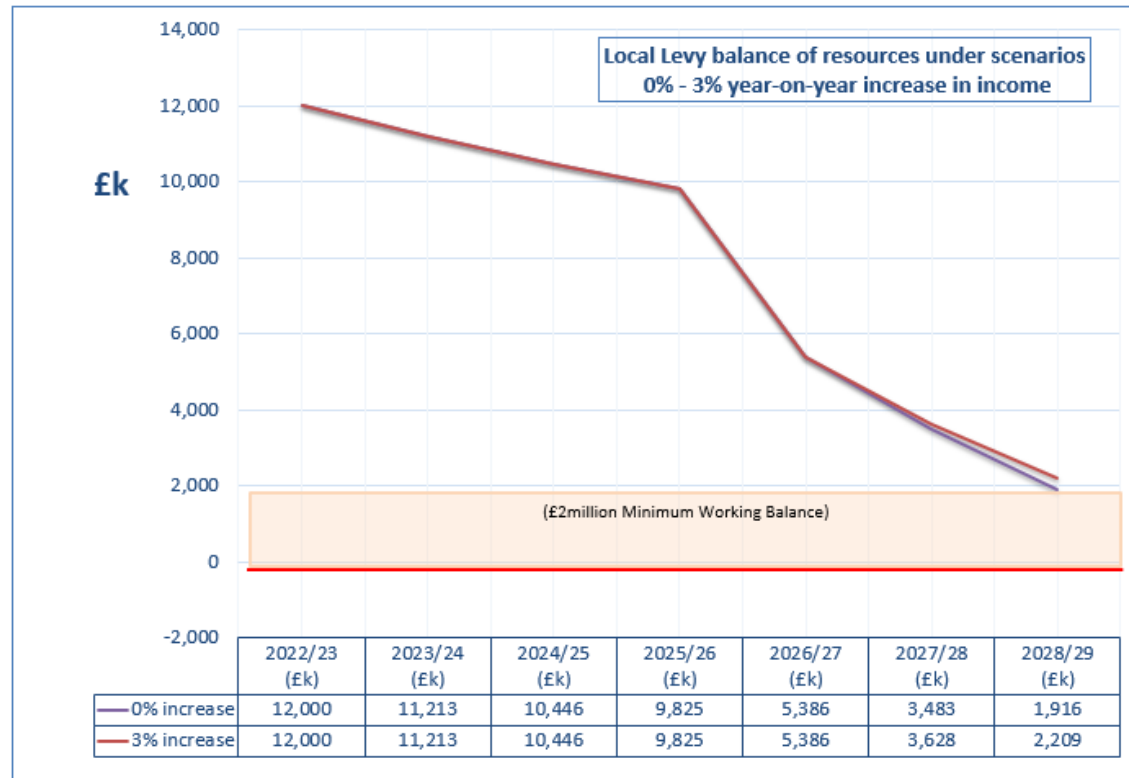
Local Levy Expenditure Scenario

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 does not include the new local levy request for Poise Brook FRMS (Appendix F)



The Levy balance is projected to drop below the £2 million minimum working balance in 2028/29. 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 – Poise Brook FRMS in Stockport. This request is provided for information at this stage as the funding requested is not required until 2030/31 to 2032/33. The Committee has previously approved Local Levy funding of £305k for the scheme, which was profiled for spend in FY 2025/26. This will now be deferred to FY 2027/28.

The funding for the above request is **not included** in the above charts and figures on the previous page as the Levy requested is further ahead of the current programme new three-year investment programme (2026/27-2029/30)

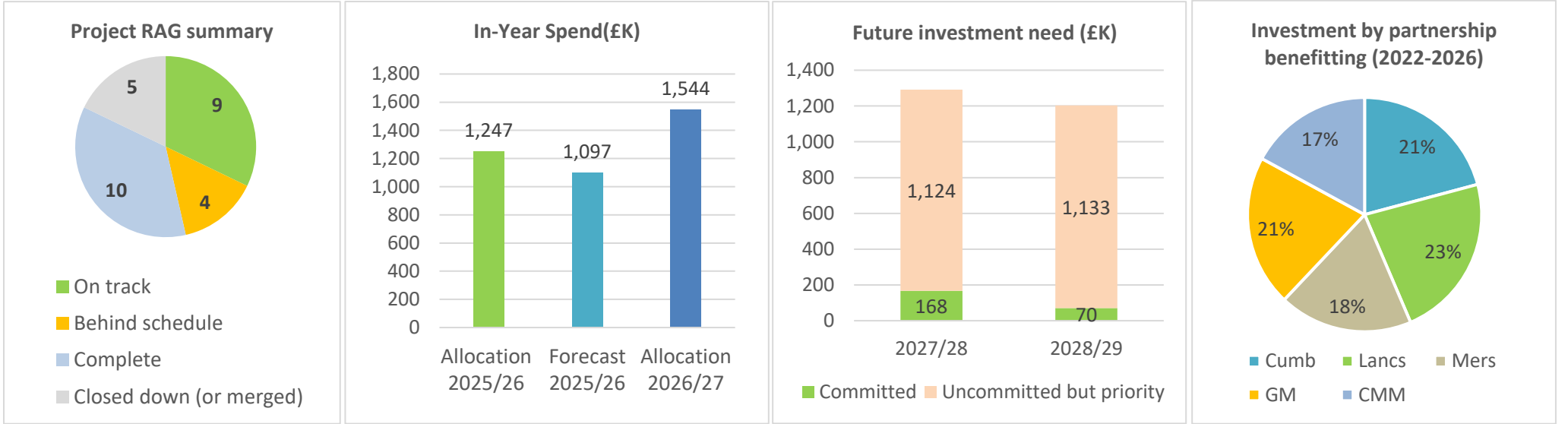
Local Levy Programme 2026-27

The Local Levy allocation for 2026-27, approved by committee in January, totals £6.197 million. Further details can be found in Appendix H.

The FBASG are asked to:
• Note the update on the Local Levy programme • Provide in principle support for the allocation of additional Local Levy funding for the Poise Brook scheme

Dashboard

See Appendix I for full project level detail



Ambition	Projects	On track	Behind schedule	Not started/ On hold	Complete	Closed down (or merged)	Allocation 2025/26	Forecast 2025/26	Allocation 2026/27	Total investment 2022-2027 (£K)	Committed Local Levy need 2027/28	Additional indicative funding need 2027/28
Accessing investment and funding	5	1	0	0	1	3	52	53	55	219	58	0
Building community resilience	5	1	3	0	1	0	257	257	265	1,304	0	273
Managing water at catchment scale with nature	7	3	1	0	3	0	137	79	394	617	45	40
Achieving climate resilient planning, development & infrastructure	6	1	0	0	3	2	79	66	65	483	65	0
Increasing RMA capacity and collaboration	5	3	0	0	2	0	722	642	716	3,003	0	711
Unallocated/indicative									50			100
	28	9	4	0	10	5	1,247	1,097	1,544	5,626	168	1,124

Summary

Overall good progress continues to be made, with 10 projects complete, 9 ongoing and on track, and 4 which are behind schedule where issues are being addressed (Amber rated). This is an improved picture compared with last quarter when 6 projects were rated Amber. The Flood Hub website (ID5) is fundamentally back on track with steps taken to keep the website live for the next few months until new contractual arrangements are in place (see update below). The Unpave the Way project (ID12) is also back on track with adequate resources now available to maintain progress on this year's key deliverables. One project is being reported as complete this quarter – the Landscape in a Changing Climate conference event (ID20).

Issues (Amber rated projects)

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

- Contractual arrangements for 2025/26 between the EA and Newground are now in place. This covers The Flood Hub website, support on community engagement, and social media. The current service provision will end on 31 March 2026.
- An open market tender process to select the future supplier is being led by Greater Manchester Combined Authority and this has now commenced with a preliminary market engagement exercise underway. Based on GMCA's procurement requirements and timelines, it is expected that a new contract should be in place in July 2026.
- To minimise the impact of the break in service for 3-4 months from April – July, arrangements have been made to cover the web hosting costs so as to keep The Flood Hub website live, even though it will not be updated during this period. Efforts have been made during March to ensure all pages are up to date. Therefore, The Flood Hub (project ID5) is considered to be sufficiently back on track and Green.
- The related projects (ID5A/6/7) which are other parts of the service currently provided by Newground (including a limited expansion trial with South West RFCC) will not be available/progressed until at least July so these remain rated as Amber.

NFM Pipeline (Cumbria) (ID22)

- The project has been re-scoped taking account of developments and tools elsewhere in the country and considering the new national investment policy. To maximise opportunities, the project is seeking to use the Environment Agency's research framework and combine Local Levy with CiFR funding, which would allow more flexibility and support research outputs.
- The procurement and financial management processes to enable this are still ongoing. Work will now commence in 2026/27.

Completed projects – Landscape in a Changing Climate conference (ID20)

The Cumbria partnership was commissioned by the RFCC to carry out some engagement activity on land management. It was agreed that this would take the form of a conference style event. The 'Landscape in a Changing Climate' conference took place in October 2025. The conference was attended by 108 people from 53 organisations. The event received overwhelmingly positive feedback with attendees valuing the opportunity to hear about what key organisations are already doing and planning, and to network and make connections. £12K of Local Levy support funded 3KQ to help design, plan, run and facilitate the event with great professionalism and effectiveness.

Following the conference, consideration has been given to how the actions and recommendations can be taken forwards and this has been captured in an action plan supported by the Cumbria partnership. There are various strands to this which will happen through developments and collaborative conversations prompted by the increased focus on natural flood management within the new national investment policy. The [note on next steps](#) and how the actions and recommendations from the conference will be taken forward can be found on the RFCC SharePoint site. The project as approved for the RFCC Business Plan is therefore now complete.

The FBASG are asked to:
• Note the update on Business Plan projects, including the issues reported • Formally acknowledge the completion of project ID20 – the Landscape in a Changing Climate conference

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	FINAL ALLOCATION INCLUDING APPROVED OVERPROGRAMMED DETAIL
Appendix F	LOCAL LEVY REQUEST – POISE BROOK FRMS (for information only)
Appendix G	ENVIRONMENT AGENCY BRIEFING NOTE ON BELOW REQUIRED CONDITION ASSETS
Appendix H	LOCAL LEVY APPROVED PROGRAMME 2026-27
Appendix I	RFCC BUSINESS PLAN - PROJECT SUMMARIES

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

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

2) CDEL / RDEL

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

3) RAG (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.

AGENDA ITEMS 3 & 4

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	£98,645	£89,196	-£9,449
	RMA	£24,294	£30,505	£6,211
	TOTAL	£122,939	£119,701	-£3,238
LOCAL LEVY	EA	£5,646	£2,806	-£2,840
	RMA	£3,711	£2,896	-£815
	TOTAL	£9,357	£5,702	-£3,655
PF	EA	£2,641	£2,353	-£288
	RMA	£940	£180	-£760
	TOTAL	£3,581	£2,533	-£1,048
TPE	EA	£106,383	£93,896	-£12,577
	RMA	£28,645	£33,311	£4,636
	TOTAL	£135,028	£127,207	-£7,941

Partnership	Full Year Forecast (£k)	Spend/claimed to date (£k)	Variance (£k)	EA Remaining Spend (£k)	LA Remaining Spend (£k)
Cumbria	£27,754	£23,029	-£4,725	£4,451	£274
Lancashire	£47,556	£44,994	-£2,562	£2,194	£368
Greater Manchester	£22,504	£18,053	-£4,451	£3,991	£460
Merseyside	£2,010	£1,408	-£602	£0	£602
Cheshire	£2,486	£1,958	-£528	£267	£261
Cross-Partnership	£24,897	£19,393	-£5,504	£5,504	£0
Total	£127,207	£108,835	-£18,372	£16,407	£1,965

AGENDA ITEMS 3 & 4

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	0
Lancashire	Wyre Investment Readiness Project (ID2)*	EA	45	53
Lancashire Total			3,320	1,454
Cheshire	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	LA	250	250
Cheshire	Lindow Community Primary School Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	30	0
Cheshire	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	EA	161	0
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			441	250
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	0
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	EA	1,500	0
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	EA	380	0
Greater Manchester	Hindley Group	EA	275	0
Greater Manchester Total			2,780	250
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

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	113
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	67
RFCC Business Plan	North West RFCC Floods Conference	EA	12	12
RFCC Business Plan	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	EA	60	0
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	66
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	1,044
Total Local Levy - North West			9,357	5,702

*Part of RFCC Business Plan

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

Forecast (£k)	2025-26	
	EA	LA
Cumbria	1,540	914
Lancashire	504	950
Greater Manchester	0	320
Merseyside	0	250
Cheshire	0	250
Cross-Partnership	966	78
Total	3,010	2,692

AGENDA ITEMS 3 & 4

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
Liverpool Road, Gt Sankey Surface Water Management Project	LA	Cheshire	62	0	0
Hooton Green, Ellesmere Port	LA	Cheshire	26	0	0
Falcondale Road, Winwick, Warrington	LA	Cheshire	23	0	23
Clifton Villas, Backford	LA	Cheshire	16	0	16
Abbots Mead Industrial Estate, Chester	LA	Cheshire	12	0	0
Carlow Close, Hale Village	LA	Cheshire	9	0	9
St Marys Close, Appleton	LA	Cheshire	5	0	5
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	2
West End Road, St Helens	LA	Cheshire	0	11	0
Lower Risk Debris Screen Programme - GMMC	EA	Cross-Partnership	2588	0	2588
Lower Screens Programme 2022-2023	EA	Cross-Partnership	207	0	0
Warwick Bridge PFR scheme	EA	Cumbria	16	16	16
Spittal Farm, Wigton	LA	Cumbria	9	0	9
Etterby Terrace, Carlisle	LA	Cumbria	0	16	0
Guildrey Lane, Sedbergh	LA	Cumbria	0	15	0
Kirkland Road, Ennerdale Bridge	LA	Cumbria	0	21	0
Low Crosby	LA	Cumbria	0	20	0
Maryport Harbour Gates	LA	Cumbria	0	26	0
River Annas, Bootle, Cumbria	LA	Cumbria	0	12	0
Tebay Surface Water Alleviation	LA	Cumbria	0	16	0
Bolton Inlets and Screens Improvement	LA	Greater Manchester	47	0	47
Longford Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme	LA	Greater Manchester	0	76	0
Radcliffe & Redvales FRM Scheme	EA	Greater Manchester	0	1460	0
Turf Hill	LA	Greater Manchester	0	21	0
Wyre Beach Management Scheme	LA	Lancashire	3000	3000	3000
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	LA	Lancashire	0	22	0
Chester Close , Blackburn	LA	Lancashire	0	58	0
Darwen Central , Darwen	LA	Lancashire	0	59	0

AGENDA ITEMS 3 & 4

Parbold Village Options appraisal and Scheme Delivery	LA	Lancashire	0	40	0
Pendle Level 2 Brierfield Surface Water Management Plan	LA	Lancashire	0	85	0
Preston and South Ribble	EA	Lancashire	0	0	0
Whalley Surface Water Improvement Scheme	LA	Lancashire	0	35	0
Coronation Park Greasby Flood Relief	LA	Merseyside	0	0	0
Total			6029	5009	5715

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	47
Merseyside	1	0	0	0
Cheshire	11	162	11	55
Cumbria	9	25	142	25
Lancashire	8	3,000	3299	3000
Cross-Partnership	2	2,795	0	2588
Total	35	6,029	5,009	5715

AGENDA ITEMS 3 & 4

Appendix E	Northwest Investment Programme – Final Allocation – Including Over Programme Detail sorted by TPE 2026-27 (highlighted top 10 projects)
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Project Name	Lead Risk Management Authority - Name	Project Type	Final Allocation core GiA 2026-27	Final Allocation All GiA 2026-27	Final Allocation 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, Padiham*	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
Anchorsholme 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

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	0	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
Egremont SUDS works	Environment Agency	Defence	375,000	375,000	375,000
Poise Brook - Offerton Green and Hazel Grove	Environment Agency	Defence	357,000	357,000	357,000

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Croston FRMS Modelling Project*	Environment Agency	Modelling and Forecasting	350,000	350,000	350,000
Brecon Road Scheme, Blackburn	Blackburn with Darwen Borough council	Defence	339,000	339,000	339,000
Hindley	Environment Agency	Defence	324,000	324,000	324,000
PFR - Stockdalewath	Environment Agency	Property Level Protection	250,000	250,000	317,000
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
Modelling & Forecasting Capital Projects – CLA	Environment Agency	Modelling & Forecasting	254,000	254,000	254,000
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
Altmouth Pumping Station - Bridge Remedial Works	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	150,000	150,000	150,000
Lessonhall PS MCC	Environment Agency	Capital Maintenance	150,000	150,000	150,000
Skirting Beck, Egremont	Environment Agency	Defence	145,000	145,000	145,000
Cumbria River Restoration Package	Environment Agency	Environmental (no households)	135,000	135,000	135,000

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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	160,000
Merseyside Quick Win Projects	Liverpool City Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	160,000

Cheshire Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	Cheshire West & Chester Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	160,000
Cumbria Quick Win Projects	Cumberland Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	160,000
Lancashire Quick Win Projects	Lancashire County Council	Capital Maintenance	0	0	160,000
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

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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

		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

*

Poise Brook Flood Risk Management Scheme

Project Background:

The Poise Brook Flood Risk Management Scheme is seeking Local Levy support from the RFCC to progress to Outline Business Case and tackle severe flooding across the Poise Brook catchment.

The catchment spans Windlehurst and High Lane, Hazel Grove and Torkington Park, and the Offerton Green estate, areas repeatedly hit by damaging floods. Around 570 properties are at fluvial flood risk, including 236 homes with an annual exceedance probability (AEP) of 1% and 165 at more frequent risk, with 10% AEP.

The community has experienced major flooding, including the June 2016 events that flooded over 120 properties, and more recently 21 homes on New Year's Day 2025. This repeated disruption is eroding community confidence and risks long-term decline.

The scheme offers the opportunity to reverse this trajectory, reducing flood risk, unlocking growth, and delivering benefits typically seen in communities protected by modern flood defences.

We are working in close collaboration with Stockport Council, United Utilities, and Mersey Rivers Trust under a Tripartite Agreement, demonstrating strong partnership commitment to tackling flood risk across the catchment.



Scheme Development

We are currently progressing through the appraisal stage of the Poise Brook Scheme. To date we have assessed flood risk across the catchment, produced a long list of potential measures that could help reduce flooding or its impact, and we are assessing these to create a short list of options, potentially in combination.

At this point, no preferred option has been selected. Options currently include:

- Temporary storage of water during heavy rainfall within Torkington Park
- Linear defences, such as walls or embankments
- Upgrading and extending the existing Minsmere earth embankments
- Culvert improvements to increase capacity and reduce blockage risk
- Property Flood Resilience (PFR)
- Targeted Natural Flood Management (NFM) interventions



Scheme Benefits

Appraisal work shows the catchment faces £79 million in potential damages. A 1% AEP scheme could prevent £75 million of this loss, with the 2% AEP option still delivering £72 million in benefits.

Flood storage in Torkington Park will significantly reduce flood risk and create opportunities to enhance park facilities and social value. Environmental improvements will boost biodiversity, improve river access, and support community wellbeing.

Flood scheme implementation will reduce stress for residents, protect property values, and strengthen confidence in the area. While businesses and schools do not flood directly, repeated events sever key transport routes, disrupting education, work, emergency access, and daily life.

Without intervention, continued flooding threatens to drive decline, displacement, and loss of confidence in the catchment.

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Funding and External Contributions

Estimated scheme costs are currently £30 million. The table below outlines the potential funding gap based on the cost estimates and the updated funding rules effective from April 2026. These figures are based on if a 1% AEP is to be achieved.

1% AEP SoP (Standard of Protection) for 100 years Duration of Benefits	
Benefit Cost Ratio	2.4
Benefits	£75m
Properties Better Protected	227
Funding	
Total GiA eligibility	£27.3m
Local Levy contribution previously approved	£0.305m
Potential Other Contributions	£0.7m
Funding gap being requested from Local Levy	£1.695m
Total Cost	£30m

Securing Local Levy funding at this stage is vital to maintaining the positive progress of the scheme and maximising the wider investment opportunities currently emerging through our partnership discussions.

We are already engaged in constructive and encouraging conversations with multiple potential contributors. Stockport Council are actively exploring the level of financial support they can provide towards the later phases of the programme, demonstrating their commitment to the scheme and recognising its long-term value. In parallel, we are also progressing promising discussions with United Utilities, who have identified aspects of the scheme that strongly align with the priorities of their Climate Resilience Fund.

Recommendation:

The project team requests Committee support for a £1,695K Local Levy contribution. The funding would not be required until the latter years of the current investment programme, starting in 2027/28 and spread over several years.

Local Levy Contribution Requested	Financial Year
£305K	27/28*previously secured local levy
£440K	2030/31
£815K	2031/32
£440K	2032/33

As we gain more certainty on partners' contributions, we are hopeful that the Local Levy ask may be able to be reduced. Our priority remains on securing external contributions to reduce or fill the funding gap.

This additional Local Levy funding will be instrumental in unlocking £27.3 million of FCRM GiA investment and in demonstrating the local commitment necessary to secure this major investment. It will act as a strategic catalyst, accelerating progress and ensuring the project remains firmly positioned to draw down the full GiA funding opportunity.

Environment Agency Briefing Note on Below Required Condition Assets

March 2026

This note is to be shared with our Partners and Councillors at the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Finance Sub-Group. Its aim is to give an overview of how we, the Environment Agency manage Flood Risk Assets.

Visual Inspections

We inspect our flood risk assets through a programme of visual inspections, called our T98 programme. We have specially trained asset inspectors whose job is to walk our defences, embankments and other assets providing us with a visual inspection condition score for our assets.

Condition Grade Score

Our assets are scored on a scale of 1-5, any asset assessed as being a grade 4 or 5 is classed as below required condition. Our Asset Advisors will investigate and bid for funding to repair and make sure it is included within a future year's investment programme.

Action Plan

Once an asset falls below required condition, it is investigated and an agreed improvement plan with contingency measures (if considered necessary) is developed. This action plan is signed off by our Chartered Engineers to ensure governance and technical assurance for our assets.

Repair Deadline

As part of the assurance process our below required condition asset is given a repair deadline date. This is the date by which we aim repair the asset to prevent it deteriorating further, these are not linked to funding and therefore may alter.

Asset Management Board

As part of our internal governance we have an Asset Management Governance Board, this addresses the risks our assets pose and provides a decision making framework for asset issues. Any asset that is urgent or more challenging will be presented to the board to highlight the risk and seek decisions.

BRC Targets

The Environment Agency have three Key Performance Indicators based on our Below Required Condition Assets, these are:

- Homes at risk from our below required condition assets
- No. of assets repaired before their agreed repair deadline date
- Overall number of below required condition assets (this target only covers Environment Agency High Consequence Flood Assets)

Funding

Three main funding streams:

- Resource Maintenance for inspections, asset maintenance and routine maintenance of watercourses
- Asset Reconditioning for bringing our Below Required Condition Assets back up to operational standard (<£500k)
- Capital Investment Programme – for new build schemes or for larger capital maintenance projects (>£500k)

All these funding streams are under pressure, there are always more bids than money allocated. We prioritise those assets that have been funded and try and maximise our allocation with innovation, seeking efficiency's or with internal delivery

Delivery & Decommissioning

Some Below Required Condition assets are small in nature and are classified as 'Quick Fix's'. These are usually delivered by our internal workforce and we prioritise to ensure we have undertaken these works within prescribed deadlines. More complex or 'Significant Fix's' are delivered by our supply chain and may take more than 12 months to deliver or be part of a larger Capital replacement scheme with the current investment program.

Assets that are classified as Below Required Condition but are no longer economic to fix or provide a Flood Defence benefit can be decommissioned. There is a process which includes discussions with land owners but funding is extremely limited and therefore a number of assets remain logged as below required condition with limited options for decommission.

Third Party Assets

At third party assets we follow the same visual inspection process, however rather than including any repairs on our asset investment programme we do issue landowners with a notice informing them of the problem and recommending they rectify.

You can designate flood assets on third party land under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to prevent alteration or removal. It is not simple process, and the landowner can challenge the designation, therefore it has low success rate. It can be time consuming. Lead Local Flood Authorities and District Councils also have the power to designate flood risk assets.

Legal and responsibility

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authorities, District and Borough Councils, Water and Sewerage Companies and Highway Authorities to co-operate with each other, act in a manner that is consistent with the National Strategy and exchange information. They have the flexibility to form partnerships and to act on behalf of one another.

Riparian Responsibilities – owners must keep the bed and banks of watercourses clear, including trees, shrubs and debris to ensure natural flow is not impeded.

Asset Maintenance – if a structure (e.g. bridge, outfall, culvert) is within your landownership then it is the yours (landowners responsibility) to maintain to help prevent any blockages that might cause flooding.

Legal Liability – Landowners may be liable for damages if a failure to maintain their assets leads to flooding of neighbouring properties.

Appendix H	LOCAL LEVY APPROVED PROGRAMME 2026-27
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Partnership	Scheme Name	RMA Type	2026/27 RFCC scenario (£k)	2026/27 Project Forecast (£k)
Cumbria	Cumbria Quick Win Projects	LA	160	160
Cumbria	Lyth Valley Drainage Investigations	EA	10	10
Cumbria	South Ulverston Integrated FRMS	EA	300	300
Cumbria	Waver Wampool Pumping Station Investigation	EA	10	10
Cumbria Total			480	480
Lancashire	Alt Crossens Drainage Investigations	EA	30	30
Lancashire	Preston and South Ribble	EA	2,000	2,000
Lancashire	Lancashire Quick Win Projects	LA	160	160
Lancashire	PFR Thurnham	EA	0	254
Lancashire	Pegs Pool and Wardleys Pool, Hambleton	EA	0	765
Lancashire	Wyre Investment Readiness Project (ID2)*	EA	55	55
Lancashire Total			2,245	3,264
Cheshire	Cheshire/Mid-Mersey Quick Win Projects	LA	160	160
Cheshire	Sankey Bk FRM Scheme	EA	141	302
Cheshire/Mid Mersey Total			301	462
Greater Manchester	Greater Manchester Quick Win Projects	LA	160	160
Greater Manchester	Low Hall and Victoria Fields NFM (Hindley, Platt Bridge and Abram FRM Scheme and Wigan Greenheart NFM)	EA	72	72
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Rochdale & Littleborough FRM Scheme	EA	500	2,000
Greater Manchester	River Roch, Phase 2 Rochdale FRMS	EA	0	380
Greater Manchester	Hindley Group	EA	0	275
Greater Manchester Total			732	2,612
Merseyside	Meols Parade Coast Protection, Wirral	LA	113	113

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Merseyside	Merseyside Quick Win Projects	LA	160	160
Merseyside Total			273	273
Cross Partnership	Property Flood Resilience - North West	EA	675	675
Cross Partnership Total			675	675
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - GMMC (ID16)	EA	233	233
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Local Authority Project Delivery - C&L (ID16)	EA	169	169
RFCC Business Plan	Building Community Resilience - C&L (ID5-7)	EA	132	132
RFCC Business Plan	Building Community Resilience - GMMC (ID5-7)	EA	132	132
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Partnership Officers - GMMC (ID16)	LA	126	126
RFCC Business Plan	Support for Partnership Officers - C&L (ID16)	LA	84	84
RFCC Business Plan	Strategic Coastal Monitoring Programme (SMP Co-ordinator) (ID16)	LA	55	55
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	39	39
RFCC Business Plan	North West RFCC Floods Conference	EA	5	5
RFCC Business Plan	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	EA	130	130
RFCC Business Plan	Unpave the Way (Front gardens) (ID12)	EA	65	75
RFCC Business Plan	RFCC Business Plan - Unallocated (C&L)	EA	33	33
RFCC Business Plan	RFCC Business Plan - Unallocated (GMMC)	EA	33	33
RFCC Business Plan	Peat Restoration - Programme development and delivery (C&L) (ID23)	EA	100	100
RFCC Business Plan	Peat Restoration - Programme development and delivery (GMMC) (ID23)	EA	50	50
RFCC Business Plan	Upper Irwell IWM / NBS Strategy (ID24)	EA	75	75
Cross Partnership Total			1,491	1,501
Total Local Levy – North West			6,197	9,267

Appendix I	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)	Allocation 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 was completed on target. A key objective of the project is to trial an innovative green finance vehicle. The RFCC agreed to be a 'buyer' of the ecosystem services (flood risk reduction) being provided by the NFM interventions and is contracted to make annual payments until 2030.	48	45	53	55
BUILDING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE							
ID5	The Flood Hub	Green	Although it won't be actively updated, The Flood Hub will remain live and continue to act as an important information resource for the public and communities while new contractual arrangements are established, expected to be July 2026.	315	118.5	118.5	122

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Allocation 2026/27 (£K)
ID5A	The Flood Hub – Expansion trial	Amber	We are conducting a limited trial with South West RFCC to test extending the use of the website to another RFCC. Procurement requirements mean they will enter into a separate contract with the selected supplier through an LLFA partner. Their progress is therefore dependent on the NW tender process completing and is therefore behind schedule. There is a possibility that the trial may not progress if they cannot achieve use of the site early enough for their purposes and funding availability.	0	0	0	0
ID6	Supporting community engagement on adapting to coastal change	Amber	There will be a break in service from 1 April until the new contract is in place (estimated July 2026).	30	10.3	10.3	10.6
ID7	Action campaign – Flood resilience	Amber	There will be a break in service from 1 April until the new contract is in place (estimated July 2026).	365	128	128	132
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

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Allocation 2026/27 (£K)
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. An extension for another four years was approved by the RFCC in January 2026.	108.8	35	35	39
ID23	Peatland restoration funding development	Green	Funding (from 2026/27) was approved by the RFCC October 2025 with different approaches required and being progressed with the three peat partnerships in Cumbria, Lancashire and in the south Pennines. Procurement/contractual arrangements are being worked through.	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

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ID20	Land management engagement	Complete (Proposed)	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. Action plan produced to take forward recommendations as business as usual activity.	0	12	0	0
ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Allocation 2026/27 (£K)
ID22	NFM Pipeline Development (Cumbria)	Amber	Project has been re-scoped in light of developments around the country and the revised national investment policy. 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. Procurement and financial arrangements are still being worked through. Work will commence in 2026/27.	0	60	0	130
ID24	Upper Irwell Integrated Water Mgt (and NBS) Strategy	Green	Local Levy contribution of £100K to this ongoing multi-partner project was agreed by RFCC in January 2026, for spend in 2026/27 and 2027/28.	0	0	0	75

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

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Allocation 2026/27 (£K)
ID12	Unpave the Way	Green	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. Resource limitations now largely resolved, with sufficient resources available to progress this year's key deliverables. LA webpage template is now out for consultation. The Householder SuDS Guide will be out for consultation around end March/start April.	135	79	66	65
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

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ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Allocation 2026/27 (£K)
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
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. Currently an increased need due to significant changes to investment policy but much is being provided by EA nationally. 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 met through other funding or mechanisms.	0	15	0	15

ID	Project title	Progress (RAG) rating	Update	Total investment (2022 – 2025) (£K)	Approved Allocation 2025/26 (£K)	2025/26 spend forecast (£K)	Allocation 2026/27 (£K)
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 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. Part contribution for RFCC Business Plan implementation management resource ongoing.	1,697	682	617	696
ID17	NW Coastal Centre of Excellence - Develop business case	Green	Partner engagement carried out through 2025. Using a series of pilot projects (inc Morecambe Bay Study/strategy to further develop and test the CoCE concept. Now named 'Future Coast North West'. As this develops, further work and funding will be needed to scope opportunities, delivery, and test the impact/value of the CoCE.	0	25	25	0
ID18	RFCC SharePoint site	Complete	Development of the site is substantially complete, and the site was launched to the RFCC community on 18 December 2024. The Investment Programme section of the site is still being developed, partly to reflect government investment reforms.	0	0	0	0

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

10TH APRIL 2026

COASTAL ADAPTATION PILOTS FUNDING

The Coastal Adaptation Pilots Funding CAP funding was announced by Minister Hardy earlier in March. The £30 million fund is split into two parts £18 million to develop the Coastal Resilience Adaptation Programme in three authorities on the East coast (East Ridings, East Suffolk and North Norfolk) and £12million for the remaining RFCCs indicatively split to support deprived households and communities at risk of coastal erosion. Applications for this funding are only available to Coast Protection Authorities (CPAs). The indicative allocation to the North West RFCC is £1.686m based on 3,234 households.

This paper seeks to gain support for an approach to the Expression of Interest EOI stage of the funding application. The proposed approach will maximise the support and investment to the North West.

Background

Coastal Adaptation Pilots CAP relevant to this paper are the £12 million support to coastal adaptation readiness across England. This funding will be prioritised through [Regional Flood and Coastal Committees \(RFCCs\)](#), based on the number of homes at highest risk of erosion in each area and focused in the most vulnerable coastal communities.

This three-year initiative (2026–2029) is designed to help England's most vulnerable coastal communities prepare for the long-term impacts of coastal erosion, worsened by climate change.

The criteria will focus on locations identified as **erosion risk** areas in the NCERM2 mapping, overlaid by deprivation indexed areas where the relevant Shoreline Management Plan SMP policies are **Managed Realignment** or **No Active Intervention**.

The funding is intended to support a range of coastal adaptation activities such as long term planning using adaptive pathways, engaging with communities and infrastructure providers, as well as delivering some small scale interventions such as community infrastructure relocation or habitat restoration and creation including green buffer zones (amongst others).

The SMP coordinator has written to each of the sub regional partnerships asking:

- For support in nominating an officer from each authority with a coast who can contribute to the initial screening of potential sites. While we have undertaken a high level initial screening, local knowledge is essential to help determine which areas are genuinely feasible and align with the funding criteria.

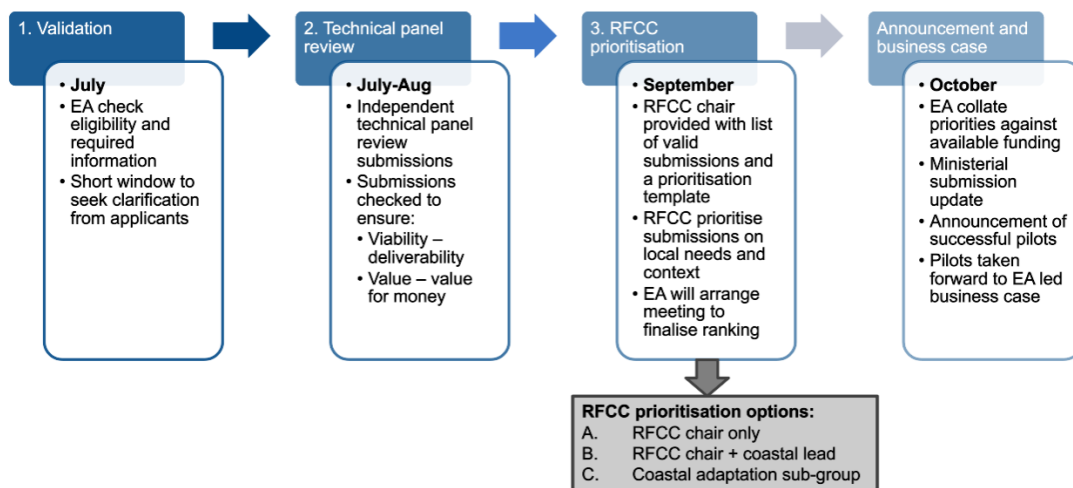
- We intend to frame the bid through an economic and growth lens, so it would be extremely helpful if your nominated officers could provide any relevant economic data for their proposed sites. This will support us in shaping a strong, evidence based bid.

Programme launch and timeline

The CAP is a multi-year programme intended to run through to March 2029. The official launch of the CAP on 1 April. was supported by an introductory webinar on the 26 March and is available on the coastal handbook website.

The indicative schedule is shown below:

Assessment and prioritisation process



Governance and selection process

The selection and prioritisation of pilot projects will follow a specific governance structure:

- RFCCs: The Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) chairs will have the authority to prioritise which pilots are supported within their respective regions. Selection will be down to the RFCCs, subject to the submissions received within their region.
- EA role: The Environment Agency (EA) will focus on ensuring that all submission received and put forward to the RFCCs are technically sound and strictly in line with the eligibility requirements for the CAP. The EA will also provide ongoing support and evaluation as with FCRIIP.
- The EOI will be determined on the criteria table below. Through the work undertaken by the coastal group and the Our Future Coast programme we are in an excellent position to provide confidence in delivery, capacity, partnerships, knowledge and legacy.
- Initial discussions with the EA have indicated that a strategically coordinated approach but with individual scheme identification, actions and outcomes would provide the optimum chance of success.

Section	Subsection	Word Limit
1. Strategic Alignment - Where and Why? (5%)		
	1A. Local Context and the Case for Change	650
	1B. Strategic Context	300
2. Rationale for Proposed Actions - Why this, why now? (15%)		
	2A. Why this action	300
	2B. Why Now	250
	2C. Mechanism of Change - Project Theory of Change	TABLE
3. Pilot Delivery - How and when? (30%)		
	3A. Delivery Plan	600
	3B. Delivery Detail	TABLE
	3C. Cost Estimate	TABLE
4. Delivery Capacity - Who will deliver? (10%)		
	4A. Delivery Team & Capacity	600
	4B. Planned Recruitment, External Support, or Training	200
5. Partnerships, Governance, and Engagement - Who and How? (5%)		
	5A. Partnerships, Governance, and Community Engagement	300
	5B. Community Partnerships and Engagement	150
6. Knowledge and Evidence (10%)		
	6A. Knowledge Capture & Sharing	400
	6B. Innovation	200
7. Benefits and Legacy (25%)		
	7A. Coastal Adaptation Benefits	450
	7B. Embedding Mechanisms	350
	7C. Value for Money	450

Strategic priorities

Coastal adaptation is a priority issue in the North West with complex wider community dependencies. However, CAP's focus is specifically designed to support deprived households and communities at risk of coastal erosion. This primary driver is immovable, as the programme is intended to support those most vulnerable to the immediate physical impacts of a changing coastline.

It is therefore clear that each individual scheme will need to demonstrate that it meets the criteria independently, but a strategic coordinated approach would provide the greatest confidence in deliverability.

Discussion and recommended next steps

The EOI window is open from 1 April to 30 June 2026. It is proposed that a submission for the North West RFCC is developed incorporating discussions with key members of the RFCC sub regional partnerships.

An initial review of the potential sites within the region has been developed – see appendix A that indicates potential for sites within each coastal partnership to have compliant sites.

On 23 March, the CAP Senior Responsible Owner (SRO), Julie Foley, and Tom De La Rossa presented to the RFCC chair and on the 26 March a webinar was delivered to coastal practitioners. These sessions provided detail regarding the specific criteria and the formal application process.

The intention is that RFCCs will be in a much clearer position to discuss local priorities and submission expectations following these updates.

The RFCC Coastal Advisor and Coastal Group Chair have written to the CAP team and have been engaging in the run up to the launch of the CAP and have received the reply below

“It is great to see such your ambition and expertise in response to the Floods and Water Minister’s initial CAP announcement. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the brilliant work that Our Future Coast has delivered as part of the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme (FCRIP). Your commitment to coastal resilience provides a strong foundation for the challenges ahead.”

The recommendation is therefore for the Our Future Coast OFC team and the SMP coastal coordinator to work with coastal officers across all the coastal protection authorities CPAs where compliant sites have been identified to produce proposals. These proposals will then be presented to the sub regional partnerships for prioritisation based on local needs.

In accordance with the new funding rules a 10% contribution will be required. The OFC team are hopeful that this funding can be met through contributions from infrastructure providers such as Network Rail, United Utilities and Electricity North West who will benefit from the CAP studies. However, this may not be possible in the short EOI window and therefore it is requested that RFCC levy underwrites the required contribution should utility contributions not come forward in the required timeframe. This would be approximately £170,000 based on the indicative allocation.

It is recommended that the administration, project management and coordination of delivery is managed by the OFC team with delivery through and with the relevant CPA officers and members. This model has been developed and proved successful through the OFC programme. Members are therefore asked to support this coordinated approach.

Report of Carl Green North West & North Wales Coastal Group Chair

Susannah Bleakley RFCC Coastal Advisor

Appendix A – [CAP Initial Analysis](#)

Coastal Adaptation Pilot Funding

High level Site Selection for the North West

3rd March 2026

1. Introduction

A high-level review has been carried out to identify places across the North West that may be suitable for Coastal Adaptation Pilot (CAP) funding. This early assessment is only intended to show the *range* and *spread* of possible locations. It does not make any decisions or recommendations at this stage.

The review looked at coastal areas where:

- the SMP policy is Managed Realignment (MR) or No Active Intervention (NAI)
- Hold the Line (HTL) is likely to be too expensive to maintain
- national NCERM2 data shows a future risk of erosion

Deprivation data has not yet been included in the filtering.

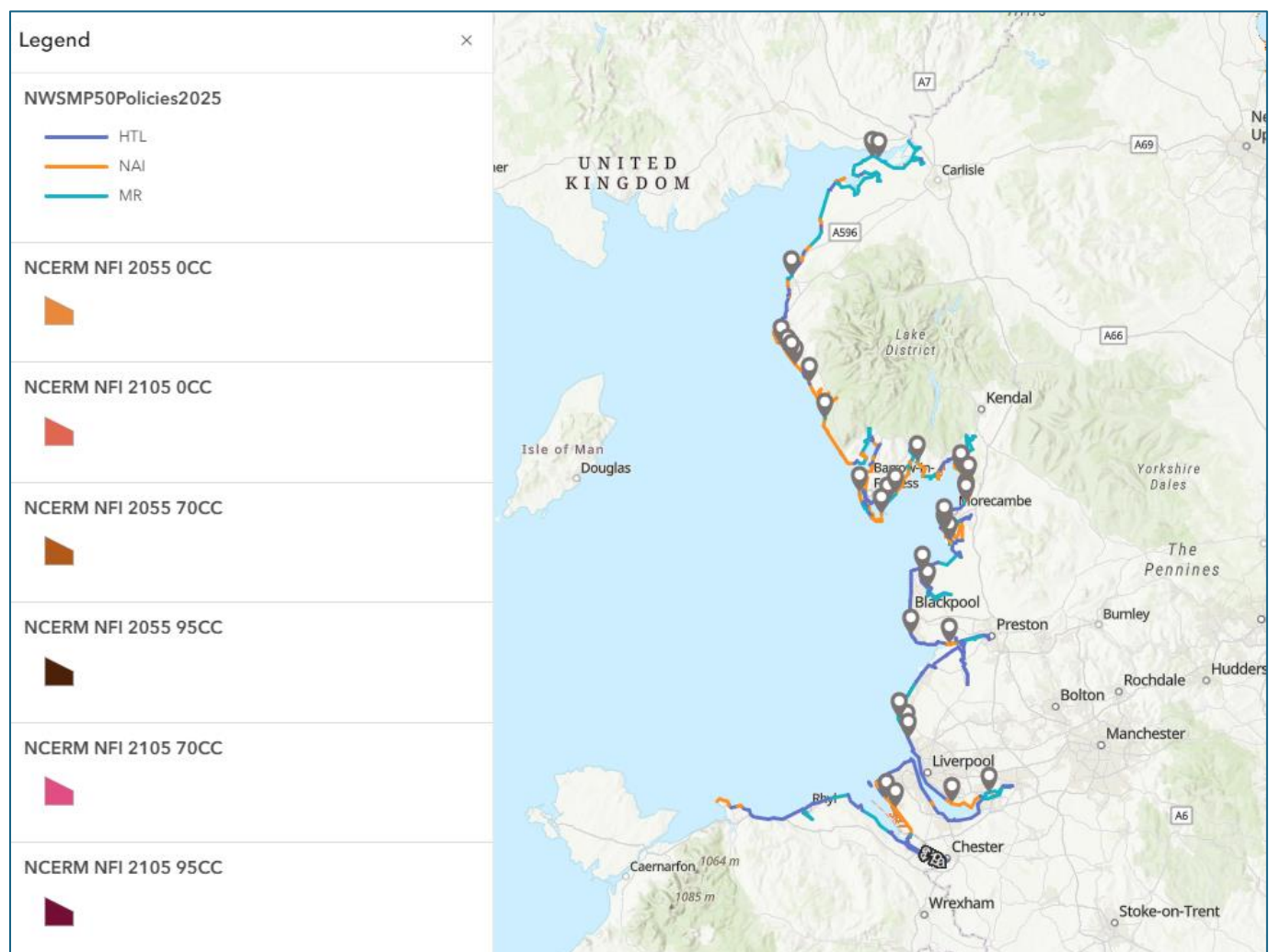
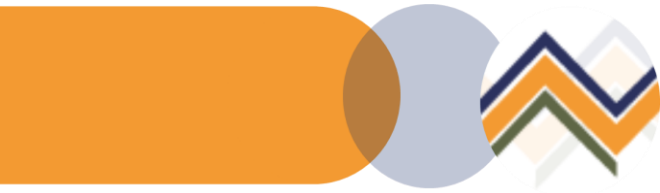


Figure 1: High-level site selection based on NCERM2 'No Future Intervention' erosion risk and medium-term SMP policy positions (2025–2055).



2. Summary of Initial Findings

The longlist shows a wide mix of eroding coastal areas across the region. These include land with:

- Caravan and holiday parks
- Residential homes
- Agricultural land
- Critical or nationally important infrastructure

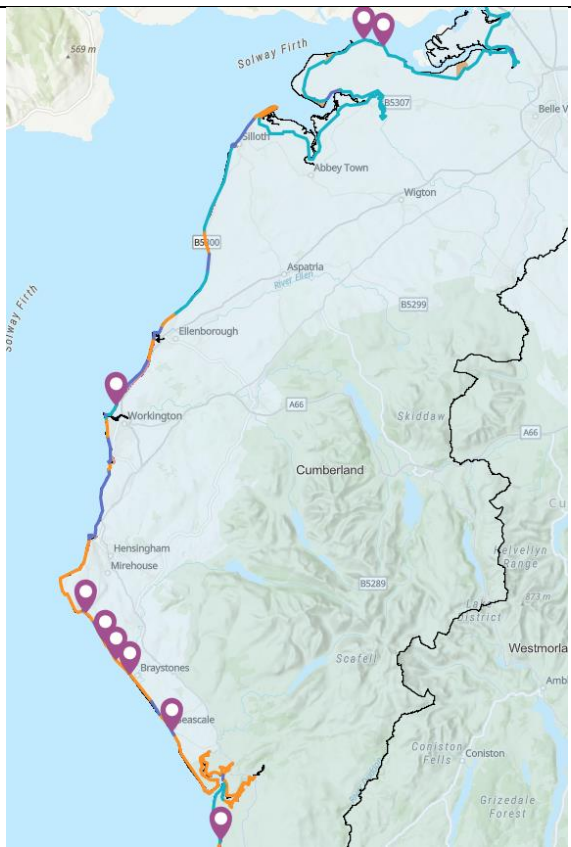
The type of area will affect the kind of learning the CAP programme can deliver. Different sites will present different challenges, including:

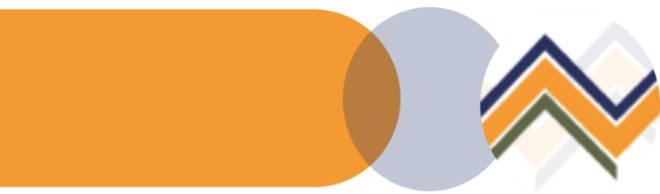
- types of adaptation needed
- levels of community engagement required
- how adaptive pathways can be used

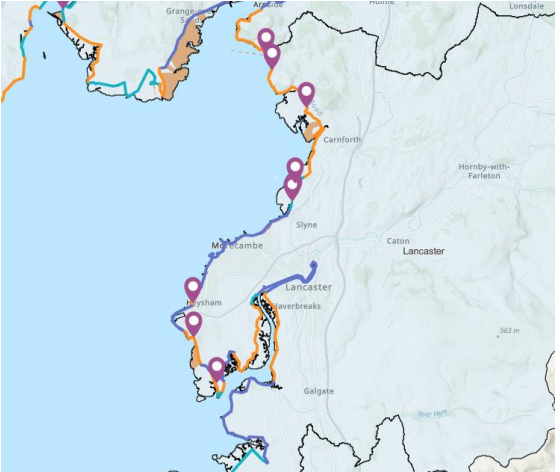
This highlights the need for a clear and consistent process to refine the longlist into a smaller, strategic shortlist.

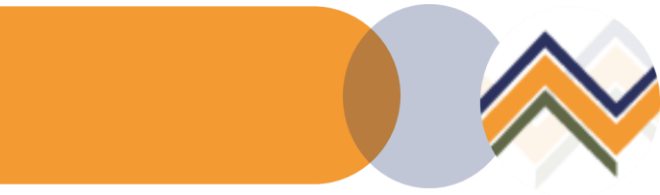
2. High-Level Longlist of Potential Sites (Initial Screening)

This longlist is for early screening only and does not represent a recommended shortlist.

Cumberland	
• Port Carlisle (MR policy; future erosion risk; residential properties) • Bowness on Solway (MR policy; future erosion risk; residential properties) • North of Workington Harbour (MR policy; future erosion risk; wind turbine pylons at risk) • St Bees (NAI; future erosion risk; static caravan areas) • Couderton Beach (NAI; future erosion risk; beach properties; railway line behind; adaptation action identified in SMP) • Netherton Beach (NAI; future erosion risk; beach properties; railway line behind; adaptation action identified in SMP) • Braystones (NAI; future erosion risk; beach properties; railway line behind; adaptation action identified in SMP) • Seascale (HTL (subject to funding); future erosion risk; residential homes) • Stubb Place (MR; future erosion risk; MOD access road at risk) • Numerous NAI frontages with significant railway asset risk from future erosion across Cumberland.	

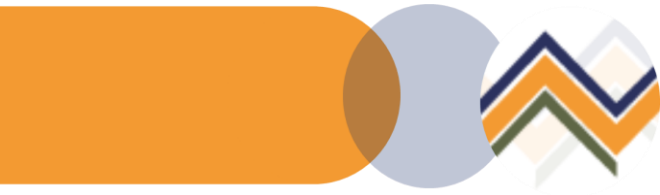


Westmorland & Furness • Walney West shore (MR; future erosion risk; residential chalets) - Existing OFC site • Piel Island (MR; future erosion risk; caravans) • Newbiggin to Rampside (MR; future erosion risk; caravans) • East of Newbiggin NAI; future erosion risk; caravans) • Old Park Wood Caravan Holiday Park (MR; future erosion risk; caravans. • Heald Brow to Frith Wood (NAI; future erosion risk; caravans/lodges)	
Lancaster • Silverdale (NAI; future erosion risk; residential homes) • Warton (NAI; future erosion risk; landfill site and railway assets) • Bolton le Sands (NAI; future erosion risk; residential homes) - OFC Site • Hest Bank (MR; localised erosion (not identified by NCERM); residential homes) - OFC Site • Heysham (NAI; future erosion risk; residential homes) • South Heysham (NAI; future erosion risk; caravan park) • Sunderland Point (NAI; localised erosion risk (not identified by NCERM); residential homes) - OFC Site	
Wyre • Knott End Golf Club (NAI; future erosion risk; recreational land. - Opportunity to apply learning from Formby Golf Club adaptation work) • Stanah (MR; future erosion risk; landfill and agricultural land)	

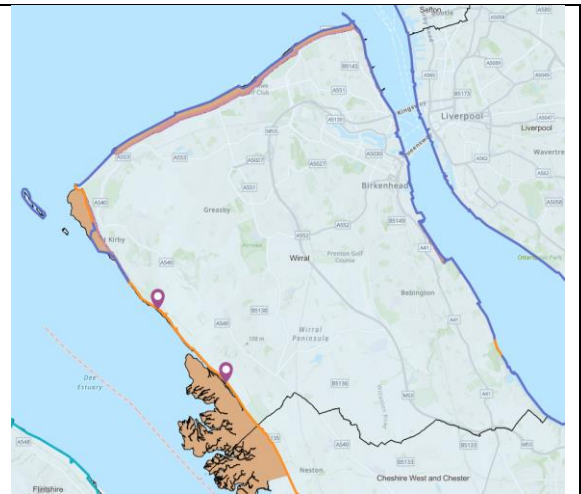


Blackpool	
• No CAP-eligible NAI/MR sites identified • HTL assumed deliverable, though NCERM shows some future erosion risk. • Potential value in piloting the adaptive pathways process on a HTL frontage.	
Fylde	
• Fylde Dunes (HTL via soft defences; future erosion risk; adaptation still relevant on this frontage) • Warton Airfield (NAI; future erosion risk; airport infrastructure)	
West Lancashire	

[illegible]

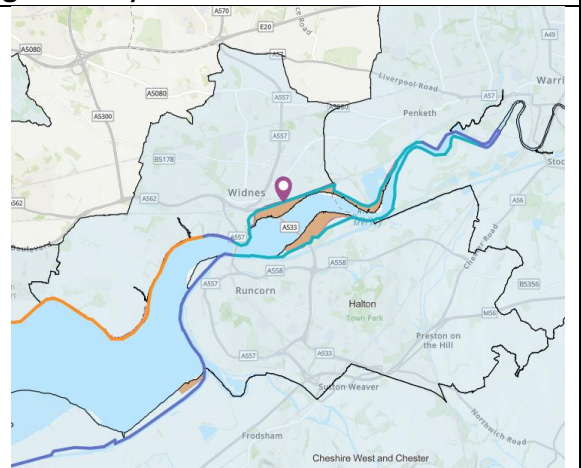


- Thurstaston – Wirral Country Park (NAI, future erosion risk; Caravans)
- Heswall Boat Yard (NAI, future erosion risk; Road; Boat Yard; properties)



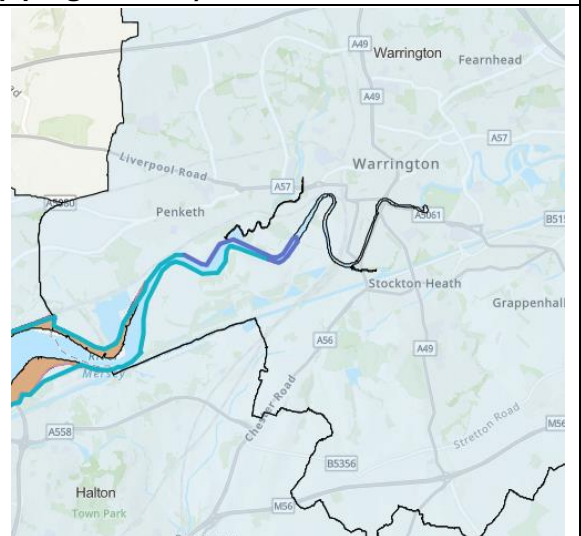
Halton (SMP not formally adopted but funding could help progress this)

- Widnes (MR; future erosion risk; infrastructure at risk. Likely need for policy change due to limited space for MR.)

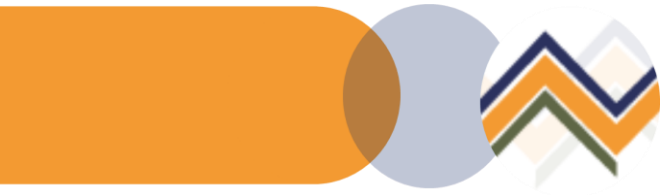


Warrington (SMP not formally adopted but funding could help progress this)

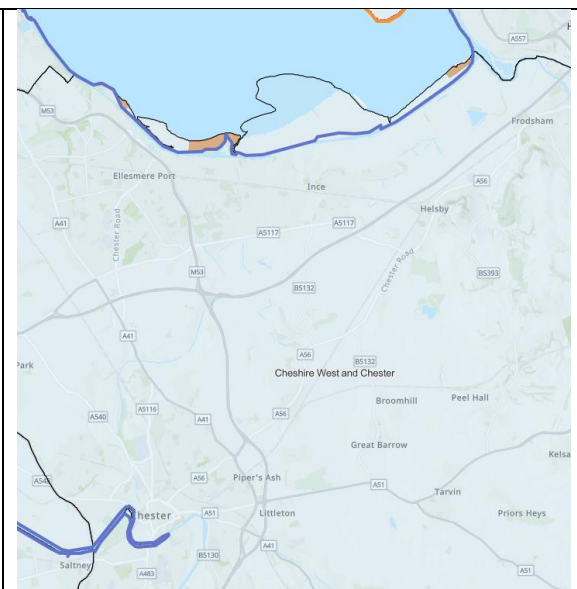
- No CAP-eligible sites identified



Cheshire (SMP not formally adopted but funding could help progress this)



- No CAP-eligible sites identified
- HTL currently in place.
- National data suggests very limited future erosion risk.



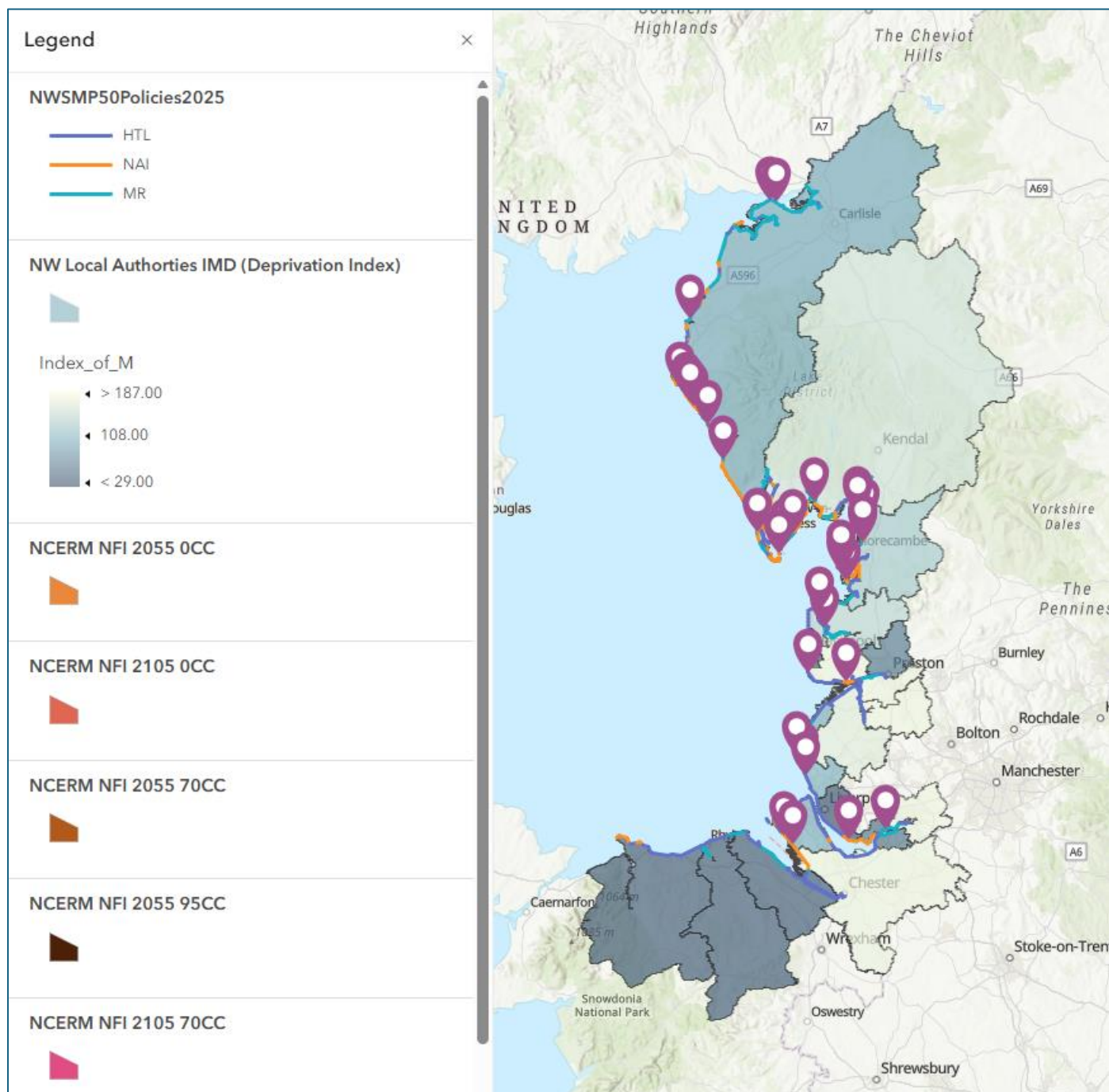
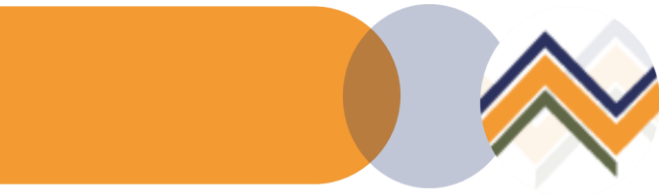
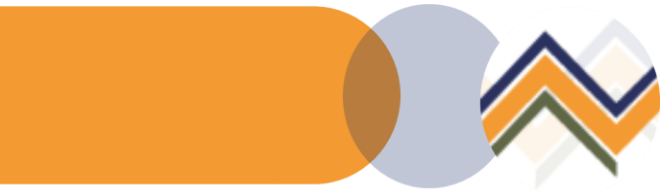


Figure 2: High-level site selection with Local Authority Index of Multiple Deprivation overlaid.



4. Our Future Coast Partner Workshop (4th March 2026) – Key lessons

The OFC partner workshop on 4 March also highlighted several lessons learned that we could really build on when selecting CAP sites, including:

- The long lead-in time needed for planning and partnership building (we could use the funding-bid phase to bring partners together early and build on existing OFC partnerships and ways of working).
- Clear programme and site-level objectives are essential
- Engaging partners from the very beginning, using existing local knowledge and connections.
- Understanding risks to delivery at each site.
- Ensuring all partners have a baseline understanding of the SMP.
- The critical role of detailed site knowledge.
- The need for clearer reasoning behind site selection and expected learning outcomes (a gap identified in OFC).
- Focusing on outcomes rather than delivery alone.
- Project structure must allow partners to join later if needed

5. The Need for a Structured Assessment Process

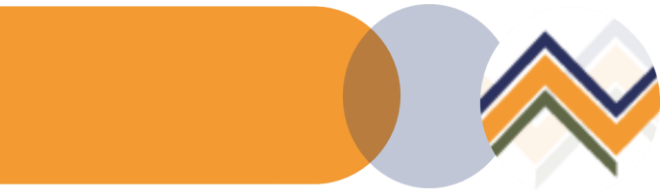
- To ensure site selection is fair and consistent, the longlist should be refined through a joint, structured approach that includes:
- A working group of CPAs and local partners
- Confirmation of local erosion risk and HTL affordability
- Supporting evidence from Local Authorities and partners
- Checking partner interest and capacity to participate.
- Understanding local needs and how sites align with SMP policies

This approach will help the region to:

- Clarify what CAP funding should achieve
- Agree shared objectives linked to SMP delivery
- Use local knowledge that national datasets may miss
- Apply fair, consistent assessment criteria
- Design transferable, scalable work across the North West and other regions
- Ensure site selection is credible and regionally aligned

Potential Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Description
Application of Adaptive Pathways	Assess how well the site supports adaptive pathways, including: suitability for exploring multiple futures, staged transitions, scenario-testing and the use of triggers for decision-making.
Engagement Requirements & Opportunities	Evaluate the scale and sensitivity of required engagement, complexity of communicating risk and adaptation, and opportunities to reduce uncertainty, conflict or surprise.
Partner Buy-In & Readiness	Confirm whether partners understand the site's risks, support CAP involvement, have capacity to participate, and can validate local erosion or HTL affordability issues.
Transferability of Learning Objectives	Determine if the site can generate learning applicable across the North West, aligned with SMP, FCERM Strategy and CAP priorities, and provide scalable adaptive pathways practice.
Alignment with SMP Policy & Erosion Risk	Identify whether the site lies within MR/NAI, unaffordable HTL, or is highlighted by NCERM as an erosion risk frontage.
Site Composition & Strategic Value	Consider the type of assets present (e.g., caravans, residential areas, infrastructure) and the potential strategic insights these provide.



6. Adaptive Pathways

Adaptive pathways help manage long-term coastal change where risks are uncertain or increasing. They:

- support planned, long-term decisions
- provide clear, evidence-based triggers for action
- reduce conflict by showing why and when changes are needed
- meet national expectations for future FCERM work
- create consistency across North West authorities

Pursuing pathways for CAP funding provides significant advantages for the region:

They support long-term, resilient decision making

Adaptive pathways allow coastal authorities and communities to plan for multiple possible futures, rather than relying on single outcome predictions. This enables:

- planned transitions instead of emergency responses
- solutions that remain viable under a range of climate scenarios
- an ability to anticipate and avoid tipping points such as failing assets or unaffordable HTL

They create clear, fair and evidence-based choices

Pathways break adaptation into transparent phases, each supported by evidence, community engagement and agreed 'triggers'. This helps RMAs and communities understand:

- what the next step is
- why it is needed
- when it will be needed
- what options were considered and why others were ruled out

This reduces conflict, uncertainty and surprise, particularly in MR and NAI areas where change may be sensitive.

They align with national expectations and emerging funding direction

The Environment Agency is increasingly requiring adaptive pathways as part of business cases, investment planning and SMP implementation. Pursuing pathways through CAP funding:

- keeps the North West aligned with national best practice
- strengthens future bids for GiA or RFCC funding
- demonstrates compliance with the SMP refresh and FCERM Strategy

They enable consistent practice across all North West authorities

Without pathways, each authority risks developing localised, inconsistent approaches to adaptation. Pathways:

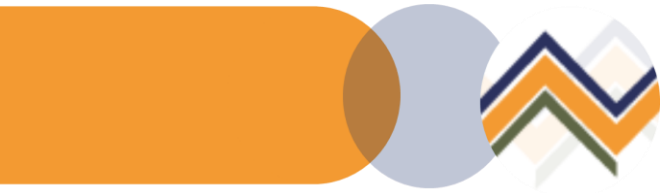
- standardise language, expectations and technical method
- make decision-making repeatable across the region
- support smaller authorities with limited capacity
- create shared learning that can be scaled beyond pilot sites

CAP funding is specifically designed to support pathways work

CAP funding fills a gap that capital funding cannot:

- early engagement
- evidence gathering
- scenario testing
- collaborative planning
- transition planning in MR and NAI frontages

These are precisely the activities required to build strong adaptive pathways.



7. Next Steps

Share this information through Strategic, Tactical and Coastal Group Partnership meetings, and take the following actions:

- Set up a small working group with CPAs and key local partners to lead the refinement of the longlist.
- Agree the overall project approach as one of the group's first tasks, including how adaptive pathways will be developed or other shovel-ready projects will be handled, and the expectations for partner involvement.
- Define and agree the assessment criteria, ensuring they align with the agreed project approach.
- Invite Local Authorities to provide local evidence, including erosion data, local context and HTL affordability information.
- Use the evidence and criteria to refine the longlist and develop a fair, transparent shortlist of potential CAP pilot sites.

This process ensures that site selection is consistent, regionally aligned, and guided by a clear understanding of what the CAP programme is trying to achieve.

8. Conclusion

The initial review gives a useful first look at where CAP funding could be used across the North West. To move towards a strong, credible regional proposal, we now need a structured and collaborative approach. This will ensure site selection is fair, transparent, and aligned with both local needs and regional SMP objectives, while maximising long-term learning and value.

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 Shorrocks	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 Sub group 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.

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.

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 it 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 Shorrocks, 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. 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 Shorrocks, 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 Shorrocks, 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 Shorrocks, 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 Shorrocks, 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 Sub group, 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 Shorrocks 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 Shorrocks, 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 Shorrocks, 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 Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

April 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

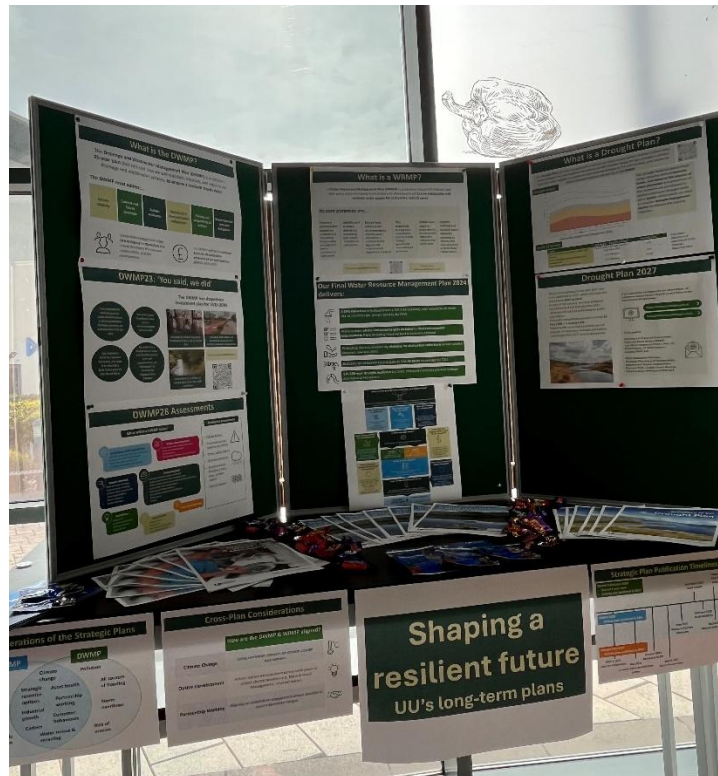
Below is the summary of the number of properties impacted by sewer flooding between 7th January 2026 to the 2nd April 2026. This is unverified data at this time, and so the numbers are likely to fluctuate until the regulatory data is signed off for our full year regulatory reporting for Ofwat. 'Severe 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	0	0	0
Merseyside	0	0	0	0
Greater Manchester	0	5	0	0
Lancashire	1	6	0	0
Cumbria	1	7	0	0

3. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) update

Since presenting at January's RFCC meeting, we have been busy developing our DWMP through ongoing engagement with key stakeholders (Figure 1), including local authorities, the Environment Agency and Ofwat. Early discussions have helped shape regional priorities and ensure the plan reflects the issues most important to North West communities. The insights gained have been reflected in our Strategic Context document; a document that represents the culmination of the first phase of DWMP development and is due for publication later this month. You can keep an eye out for this on our website [here](#).

Figure 1: An example of DWMP engagement at UU's Resilience Community of Practice which brought together over 75 attendees



A North West DWMP Stakeholder Group, comprising regulators, YourVoice and local authorities, has been established to help guide the strategic direction and benefits of the plan. We are also continuing to build on existing strong partnerships by using established forums for more detailed collaboration at a river catchment and county level. These include Catchment Partnerships, Strategic Flood Partnerships, the RFCC, Coastal Management Groups, Your Voice subgroups and Integrated Water Management Plan partnerships.

The key focus for the next quarter is the development of our DWMP Options Toolkit, namely the suite of interventions or 'options' that we propose to use to address current or future system performance risks. The options will include a range of operational and maintenance activities, asset improvements, green infrastructure, land management, markets and customer side actions. If you or your organisation are aware of options that you could deliver, or we could deliver in partnership, to address risks such as surface water flooding and water quality deterioration, we'd love to hear from you at DWMP@uuplc.co.uk.

4. Integrated Water Management

4.1 Cumbria

The Carlisle Integrated Water Management approach continues to make progress with partners working collaboratively, following the identification of the priority areas and the four key workstreams of St Cuthbert's Garden Village, Sheepmount/Willowholme, Caldew sub-catchment and the wider Eden catchment. Workstream-focused sessions, bringing together key organisations are planned for April/May with the aim to explore the challenges, risks and opportunities of the workstream area in relation to water. The group will share intel about organisational objectives for this location, planned activity, future ambition and timelines.

To support the Carlisle IWM approach we have established governance, comprising of convening a steering group with representatives from each organisation. The first steering group meeting is scheduled for the end of April.

As part of the AMP8 period (2025-2030), we have secured investment to develop a Net Zero Catchment Strategy for the St. Cuthberts Garden Village in Carlisle. The final deliverable will be a sustainable water and wastewater masterplan that is developed in collaboration with a wide range of partners and places Net Zero at the heart of development planning to balance investment needs with minimising long term impacts. Initial engagement has been completed across UU and key external stakeholders, including Eden Rivers Trust, Cumberland Council and the Environment Agency. Stakeholders and alignment opportunities have been mapped; delivery partners will now develop a long list of options which will be shortlisted using a carbon focused multi criteria analysis, including wider ecosystem benefits to identify the preferred solution.

We have been working internally to assess opportunities we received following a data share activity held with catchment partnerships to encourage identification of potential partnership opportunities. Across Cumbria we received 80 opportunities which are currently being assessed internally.

4.2 Lancashire

We continue to explore potential geographic areas which would benefit from an IWM approach across Lancashire and continue to support collaborative working particularly across the Fylde Coast.

We have been working internally to assess opportunities we received following a data share activity held with catchment partnerships to encourage identification of potential partnership opportunities. Across Lancashire we received 78 opportunities. They have all now been reviewed internally and we have allocated a status to them. The next step over the coming months is to co-ordinate follow up meetings to discuss potential partnership opportunities between UU teams and the catchment partnership members that submitted them.

As part of our Rainwater Management activity, Preston master plan activity is underway and due to complete in May 2026.

4.3 Greater Manchester

Hindley IWMP activity is ongoing. An [updated action plan](#) was published in February 2026 on the Wigan Council website reporting on progress over the last six months. Further modelling work by Jacobs on permanent solutions to alleviate surface water flooding in Keats Way will be completed in June 2026.

UUW has been part of the development of the Stockport Integrated Drainage Strategy (IDS). 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. UUW will remain heavily involved in the 'phase 2' of the IDS which is about turning the strategy into a delivery plan, with prioritised ranking of solutions and potential funding streams identified.

Collaborative projects are being brought to UUW Rainwater Management team through the GM IWMP, with several projects now approved and many more in review. Over 100 local authority projects in the GMCA Surface Water Project Pipeline have been identified as being within an eligible area.

Annual planning: In March the Micker Brook Place Based Planning Group held their annual planning session to set out plan of activities for 2026-27. The GM IWMP are finalising the annual business plan for 2026-27

4.4 Merseyside

The Merseyside trilateral partnership continues to focus on the development of the Integrated Water Management Plan (IWMP) and the practical arrangements needed to deliver it effectively. A draft governance structure, core team membership, and an IWMP delivery roadmap have now been developed.

The Vision Mersey programme has continued to mature with two IWMI Stakeholder Workshops now having been completed.

A core focus of the team has been engaging with Merseyside Local Authorities and having targeted discussions with a view to formalising engagement and maturing the working relationship to identify consistent routes for integrating LA priorities, datasets, and growth plans into the Vision Mersey IWMI project and opportunity pipeline.

4.5 Cheshire

Activity across Cheshire has continued to evolve in the context of emerging devolution arrangements and the opportunity to shape integrated water management at both county-wide and hyper-local scales. Over the last six months, the team has progressed early foundational discussions around a post-devolution Cheshire-wide IWMP, while also developing place-based opportunities (notably Crewe) and monitoring strategic growth proposals that may influence long-term water management needs.

Continued involvement in the development of the Weaver Gowy Nature Based Solutions (NbS) feasibility study has built a greater understanding on catchment scale ecological drivers in the region and is generating opportunities for proliferation of NbS.

5. Rainwater Management

During the last quarter, UU hosted a 'Beyond Water' webinar for our partners to understand how the Advanced WINEP programme works and the opportunities to collaborate and achieve funding. The slides and recording from the webinar were shared with those who attended.

UU is still offering funding to partners who are designing and delivering third party projects which are reducing or slowing the grey area draining to the combined sewer. The most successful projects so far have been growth and active travel projects in local authorities. These projects are often reducing the amount of grey area draining to the combined sewer network by disconnections or slowing the flow by installing sustainable drainage. Where projects have not proposed SuDS or funding is not allowing the installation of SuDS, UU can support with funding for drainage features which will reduce flows to the combined sewer (subject to terms and conditions).

Flood risk management projects have also been successful in achieve funding. Liverpool Road, Warrington, is a flood risk management project disconnecting surface water into a new council owned pumping station. This has reduced the amount of area draining to the combined sewer and was therefore eligible for funding. Warrington Council blended funds from UU, EA and Warrington Council to make the scheme successful; it is an example of how other flood risk management projects could become viable with UU

funding provided hard standing area is being removed, or slowed, from entering the combined sewer system.

If you have projects you would like to discuss please email rainwater@uuplc.co.uk

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**24 APRIL 2026****RFCCs | Environment Agency FCERM Update****April 2026**

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Weather events**Storm Chandra and wet weather**

This winter saw several named storms, and other periods of heavy rain. These included: Storm Bram in December, Storm Goretti in early January, and Storm Ingrid and Chandra, which brought heavy rain across England in late January 2026. This was followed by further rainfall in February 2026, particularly in the south and south west.

During this time, Environment Agency staff continued to warn and inform local communities and support local authorities. Our teams visited communities and checked, maintained and operated our flood assets to reduce flood risk. A major pumping operation took place on the Somerset Levels and Moors to deal with the impacts of Storm Chandra for several weeks.

Alongside the Met Office, we held a media briefing on 18 February 2026 to help inform reporting on the wet weather, the actions we took in places like Somerset and along river catchments, and the threat from groundwater flooding.

The Environment Agency received reports of flooding to over 400 properties caused by Storm Chandra and Ingrid. Our flood defences helped protect around 24,500 properties from flooding.

The latest [3 month outlook](#) by the Met Office, published on 30 March 2026 shows that the risk of impacts from rainfall across this period (April – June 2026) is similar to normal.

FCRM investment programme update

End of 2 year FCERM investment programme

Our 2 year Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) investment programme ended on 31 March 2026. This programme invested £2.65 billion from 2024 to 2026, and enabled us to achieve our target of 52,000 properties better protected.

New 3 year FCERM investment programme

A new 3 year £4.2 billion FCERM investment programme started on 1 April 2026, allocating investment where flood and coastal risk and vulnerability are greatest, using the government's new funding rules. On 3 March 2026, we published new [FCERM funding policy guidance](#). This new guidance explains how the government's new funding policy will work in practice for new project opportunities.

On 17 March 2026, we published the flood and coastal schemes that have been allocated FCERM (GiA) funding for 2026 to 2027, the first year of the new programme. This follows approval by the Environment Agency Board and Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs). The new allocation for 2026 to 2027 includes:

- £750 million for flood and coastal schemes, of which £385 million is for schemes protecting against river flooding
- £144 million for preventative maintenance of Environment Agency assets in 2026/27, over £110 million of which is associated with assets that provide protection from river flooding

We wrote to local authorities and internal drainage boards to formally confirm their allocations for FCERM projects in 2026 to 2027. We also held an MP drop-in session regarding the flood programme in Parliament on 18 March 2026, attended by 17 MPs/offices.

The allocation for 2026 to 2027 has been created using a prioritisation method based on a partnership funding score, which complements agreed allocation principles and maximises the wider benefits that flood and coastal schemes can achieve.

Working with FCERM stakeholders

Flood and Coast conference

We are continuing to progress the organisation of the [annual Flood and Coast conference](#), taking place from 9 to 11 June 2026 at the Exhibition Centre Liverpool. As previously announced, 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 conference programme is being designed to address priorities such as:

- Flood and coast policy and the strategic landscape
- Skills and workforce
- Innovation in delivery
- Water, nature and climate resilience
- Community resilience and social value

The call for papers has now closed, keynote speakers have been invited and confirmed, and the conference programme is now available to view [here](#).

The Environment Agency's Flood and Coast Excellence Awards 2026 are also now closed, having received a broad range of nominations across the following 8 award categories:

- Resilience in Action (new for 2026)
- Climate Resilient Asset Management and Engineering
- Surface Water Management
- Community Action
- Working with Nature
- Digital Excellence
- Innovation in Climate Resilience
- Early Career Professional

The awards recognise outstanding achievements, partnerships and innovation across the FCERM community in the UK and internationally, while also celebrating the next generation of sector leaders. Shortlisting has now concluded and winners will be announced on 10 June 2026 at the conference.

Floods Resilience Taskforce

On 18 December 2025, the [Floods Resilience Taskforce held its fifth meeting in Hull](#). The taskforce focused on preparedness for the winter period, with the Environment Agency updating on their resilience to responding to further possible flooding over the period, and reflections on the response to Storms Claudia and Bram.

On 16 March 2026, the Floods Resilience Taskforce held its sixth meeting in Manchester. Minister Hardy chaired the meeting, which was attended by Caroline Douglass, Julie Foley and Paul Clements from the Environment Agency. The meeting focussed on the national and local response to this autumn and winter's flooding, wider societal flood resilience, the Environment Agency's refresh of the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy, and an update on progress of the implementation of the FloodReady report.

The next Taskforce is due to be held in Exeter in June 2026.

CoastCraft award

On 21 January 2026, CoastCraft, which inspires children and young people to learn more about climate change and coastal flood resilience through a custom-built Minecraft world, won the Bett award for Secondary Digital Learning Product. The judges praised CoastCraft as an authentic digital learning experience that brings climate change and coastal geography vividly to life. By connecting curriculum content with real-world data and presenting it in a Minecraft-style environment, it enables pupils to learn through interactive simulations and understand the future impact of decision-making.

CoastCraft was funded and developed as part of the [flood and coastal innovation programmes](#).



RFCC Chairs recruitment campaign

On 22 December 2025 we [announced](#) the RFCC Chair appointments for Trent, Southern and North West RFCCs. These appointments were made on merit in accordance with the Governance Code for Public Appointment.



Appointees were:

- David Hickman as Chair of Trent RFCC, from February 2026
- David Throup as Chair of Southern RFCC, from July 2026
- Liz Grey as Chair of North West RFCC, from September 2026

Events

FCERM publications and announcements

Coastal Adaptation Pilots

On 28 January 2026 the Environment Agency and Defra [announced](#) a new initiative - the £30 million Coastal Adaptation Pilots – to help coastal communities plan ahead and [adapt](#) to the impacts of climate change. £18 million will be shared between coastal projects across the East Riding of Yorkshire, Norfolk and Suffolk, and £12 million for RFCCs to select projects that can deliver smaller scale adaptation readiness actions. The new pilots build upon the lessons learnt from the Coastal Transition Accelerator projects which continues to support coastal authorities to trial new methods for managing erosion.



1: Picture credit: Danielrao via Getty Images

Environmental Audit Committee report on flood resilience – government response

On 23 December 2025, the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) published the [government response](#) to the recommendations in their [report](#) on flood resilience in England. We supported Defra with the responses to the recommendations in the report, including on surface water information sharing, monitoring flood assets, flood awareness and reporting. We will be supporting Defra in monitoring progress on the recommendations.



EFRA Committee report on coastal erosion

On 20 March 2026, the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (EFRA) Committee [published a report on coastal erosion](#) following their inquiry into climate and weather resilience in the UK. We provided evidence to this inquiry on investment in coastal flooding and coastal erosion.

The report makes recommendations to the government on practical ways to help people with issues around insurance, demolition costs and relocation. It criticises the lack of requirement to inform home buyers of the risk of their home falling into the sea, and calls for changes to make it mandatory for conveyancers and estate agents to do so.

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](#).

Strategic Policy Statement for the Environment Agency

On 12 March 2026, Defra published the [Strategic Policy Statement for the Environment Agency](#). The purpose of this is to:

- set out the Secretary of State's expectations for the Environment Agency in terms of how it delivers on both environmental protection and economic growth
- be embedded into decision-making, to guide the Environment Agency's use of discretion and ensure the effective delivery of these priorities

The expectations set out in this SPS build on actions the Environment Agency has already taken and illustrate how it can go further to support delivery of the government's strategic priorities.

Flood scheme openings and updates

Stoke-on-Trent flood risk management scheme completed

On 6 February 2026 [we announced the completion of the Fowlea Brook flood risk management scheme in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire](#). This major upgrade to the town's flood defences will help reduce flood risk for 333 properties and will help unlock £75 million in regeneration opportunities, through housing developments and a regional AI hub. The project has also created a better environment for wildlife with the removal of a barrier that prevented fish from swimming upstream, reopening 6.5km of the brook for fish migration.

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme

On 15 January 2026 [an update](#) was shared on the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier scheme, which is due to protect 12,800 homes and businesses from the risk of flooding. A design efficiency review was carried out to refine the scheme and mitigate cost increases, reduce future construction, operation and maintenance costs, and simplify long-term operation, while still delivering the same agreed outcomes and level of flood protection. The design review will be integrated into the live programme during 2026, avoiding unnecessary delay. We expect to remain on site for a further 5 to 6 years, including for wider landscaping works.

Other work completed

- [Minehead coastal defences to be strengthened with new rock armour - GOV.UK](#)
- [Natural flood management aims to protect Suffolk road & wildlife - GOV.UK](#)
- [Flood resilience improved for homes in Stafford - GOV.UK](#)
- [Enabling communities to maintain local flood risk defences - GOV.UK](#)
- [Beavers to be released in South West England in coming weeks - GOV.UK](#)
- [Rapid Flood Guidance service to continue until 2028 - GOV.UK](#)
- [Powerful animated Cumbrian NFM film wins international prize - GOV.UK](#)

Ways to keep in touch with our work

- [GOV.UK](#)
- [Follow on X](#)
- [Follow on Facebook](#)
- [Follow on YouTube](#)
- [Follow on Flickr](#)
- [Follow on Creating a better place blog](#)
- [Follow on LinkedIn](#)
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Environment Agency, National FCRM Stakeholder Management Team
FCRMNC@environment-agency.gov.uk

April 2026

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE MEETING

24 APRIL 2026

FCERM STRATEGY REVIEW

Recommendations

RFCC Chairs are asked to:

1. Circulate the attached slides to their RFCC members as a correspondence item to inform their April RFCC Committee meeting conversations.

1. Introduction

Following a request at the RFCC Chair's meeting on 23 March, the attached slides are being circulated as a correspondence item at all April RFCC Committee meetings.

We committed to undertaking a refresh of the FCERM Strategy for England in 2026. We will be working with internal and external stakeholders over the coming months to review the current strategy and inform the refresh. The refreshed strategy will go out for public consultation later this year and will be published during 2027.

2. Slide pack content

The contents of the slide pack includes:

- a reminder of what the FCERM Strategy is, and how it brings to life the vision of "a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100".
- a summary of the achievements the Strategy has delivered
- early feedback received from external stakeholders through an on-line survey
- the key themes the Strategy Refresh will consider, together with a timeline and information on how partners and stakeholders can get involved

3. Summary and recommendations

We want RFCC members to note:

- The FCERM Strategy Refresh has started and that an invite to register for the launch webinar will be shared shortly.

Author: Rachael Hill

Author email address: rachael.hill@environment-agency.gov.uk

Job title: FCERM Strategy Manager

Paper sponsor: Julie Foley

Date: 7th April 2026

FCERM Strategy Review 2026

RFCC Chairs

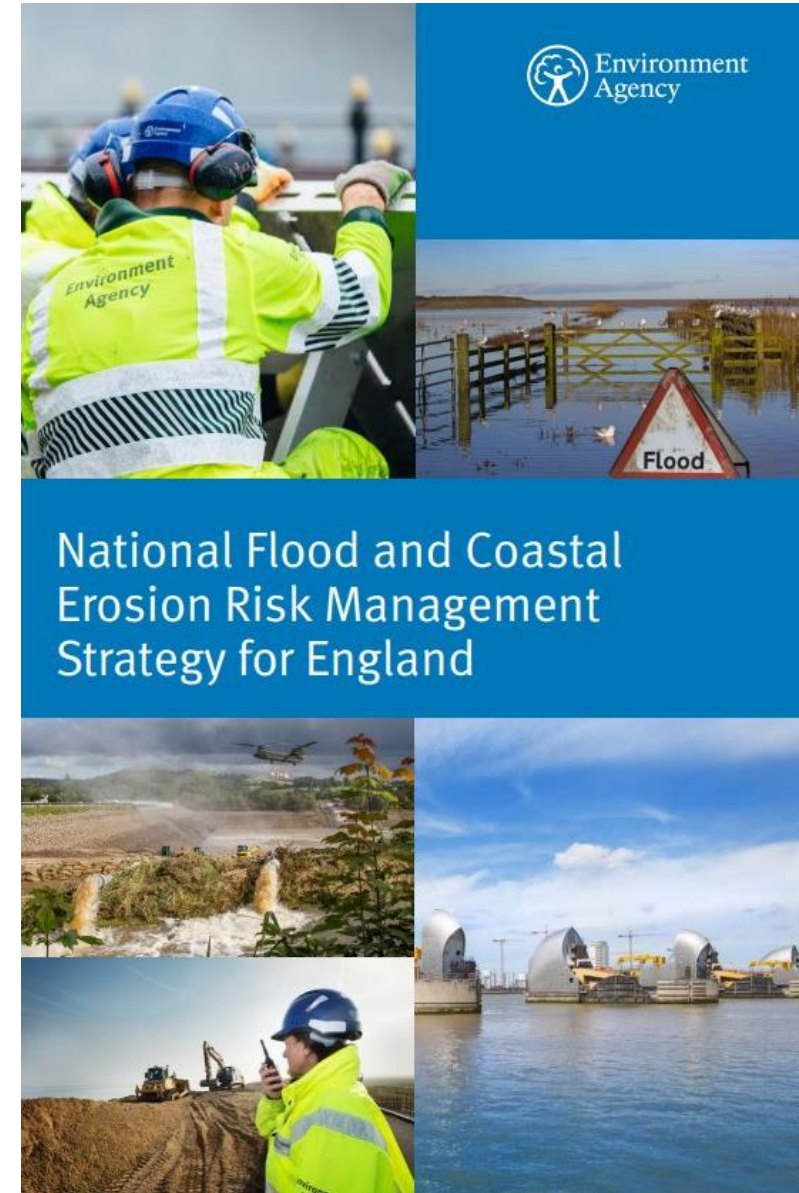
Julie Foley
Director, FCRM Strategy & Adaptation

Ben Plummer Deputy Director, FCRM
Strategy

23 March 2026

What is the FCERM Strategy?

- The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires the Environment Agency to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a national strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England
- The Strategy helps fulfill the EA's 'strategic overview' role
- All Risk Management Authorities must act in a manner which is consistent with the national strategy
- The 2020 strategy set out a long-term vision for:
a nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change – today, tomorrow and to the year 2100



Statutory Strategic Objectives and Measures



- The next review of the Strategy is required over 2026
- The review of the FCERM Strategy has been committed to in the government's response to the Environment Audit Committee, and in the EA's Strategic Policy Statement 2026

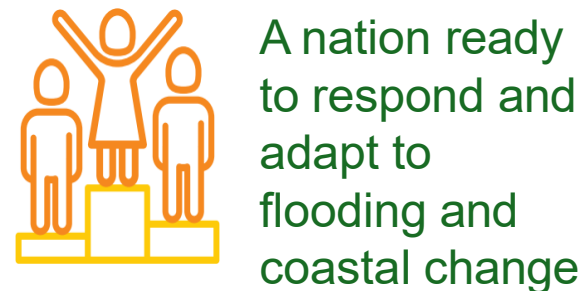
Ambition 1



Ambition 2



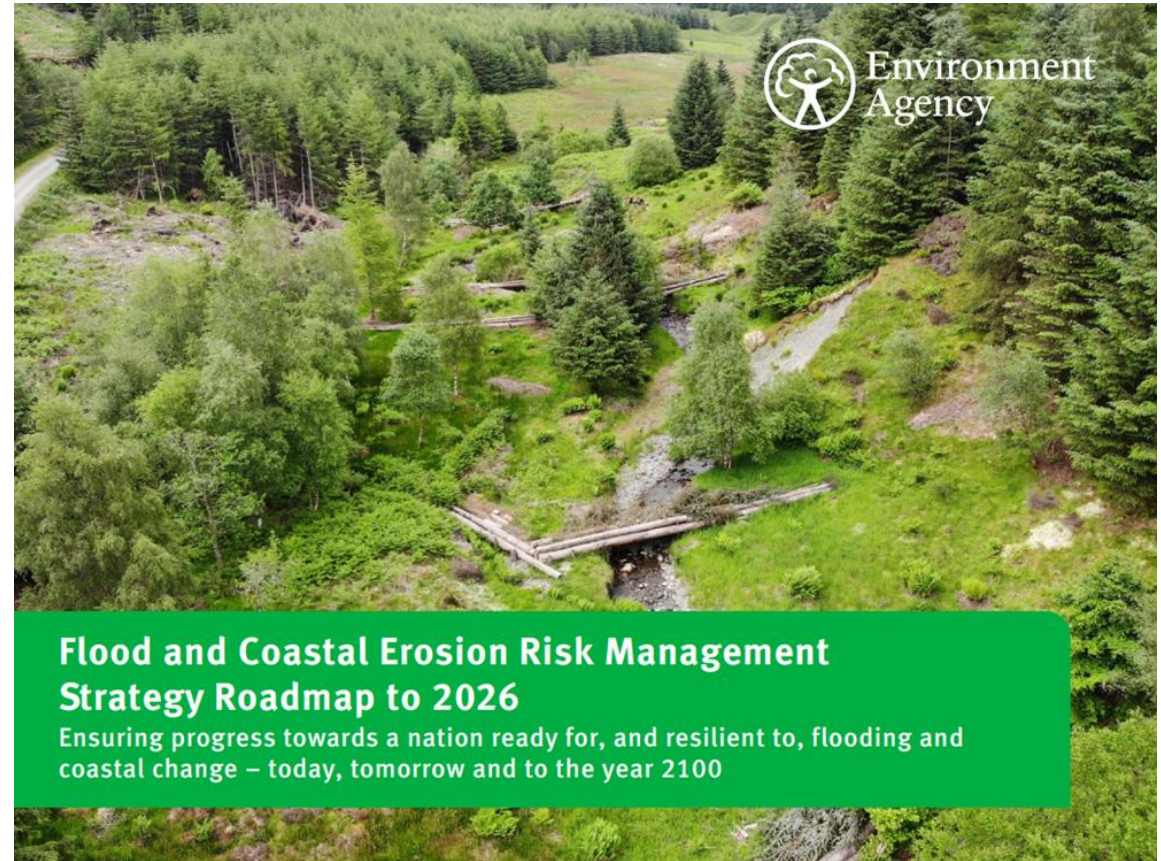
Ambition 3



Turning the FCERM Strategy into delivery

June 2022: Publication and launch of the Strategy Roadmap to 2026

Over 90% of Strategy Roadmap actions are complete or on track for delivery by the end of 2026



What difference has the Strategy made?

FloodReady

An action plan to build the resilience of people and properties



Mainstreaming PFR



Work Plan 2024-2026



Focus on rural flood resilience

Find a Shoreline Management Plan

Help

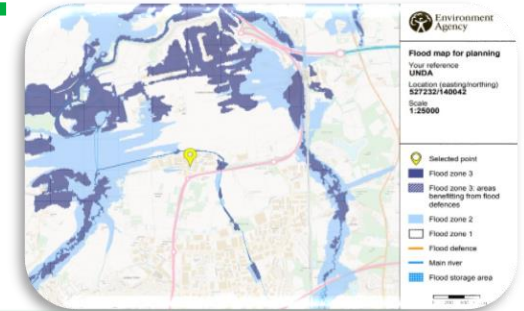
Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) identify the most sustainable approach for managing the risk from coastal flooding and erosion over the short (0 to 20 years), medium (20 to 50 years) and long (50 to 100) term.

Local authorities and the Environment Agency have led the development of these plans, working together in regional Coastal Groups.

Search for an SMP by address or postcode
e.g. Portsmouth

[What are Shoreline Management Plans and who is involved?](#)
[Updating and changing Shoreline Management Plans](#)
[Shoreline Management Plans and local development planning](#)
[Shoreline Management Plans and the natural environment](#)

New assessments of flood & coastal erosion risk



Flood & Coastal Innovation Programme

COASTWISE



Extended flood warning service



Growing evidence of the benefits of natural flood management
Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Research and Development Pro...
We reviewed the latest research on natural flood management and updated the Working with natural processes guidance.

Increase in NFM

Natural flood management programme

Increase flood resilience with Natural Flood Management



New & refurbished flood risk management assets



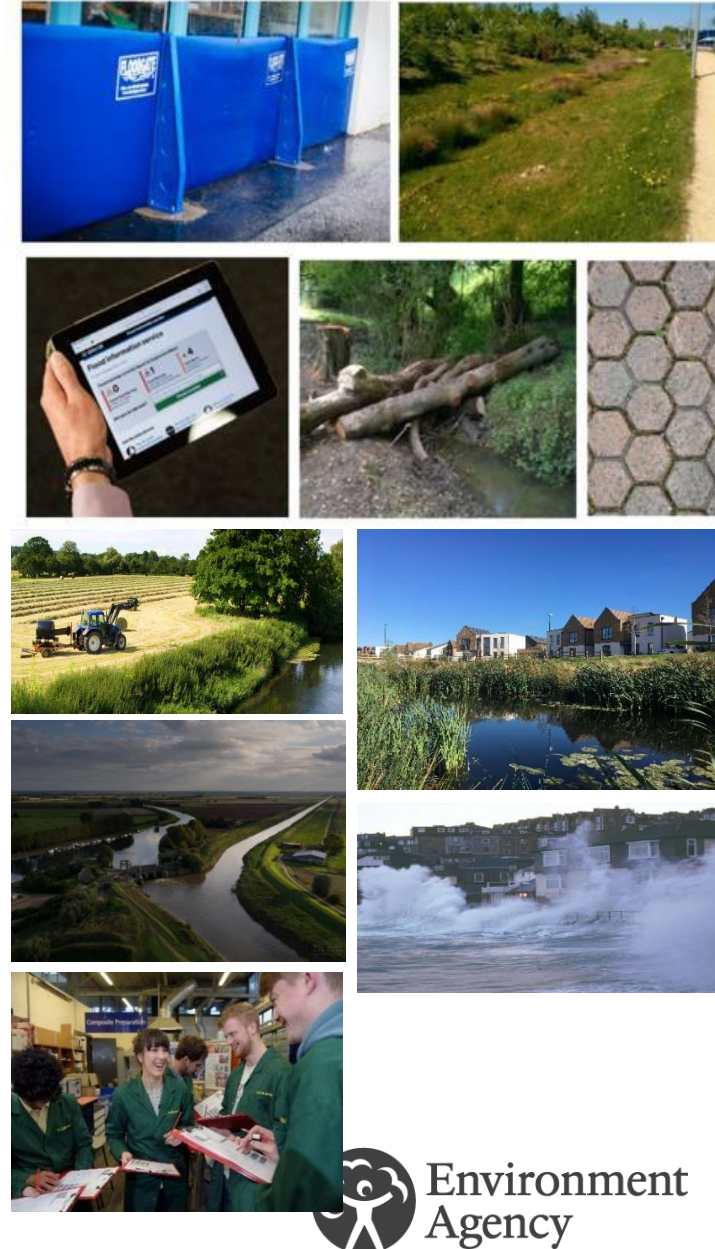
What stakeholders have told us

Feedback from the FCERM Strategy steering group and 125 respondents to an online stakeholder survey:

- **Strategy remains fit for purpose – strong support for the vision and long-term objectives**

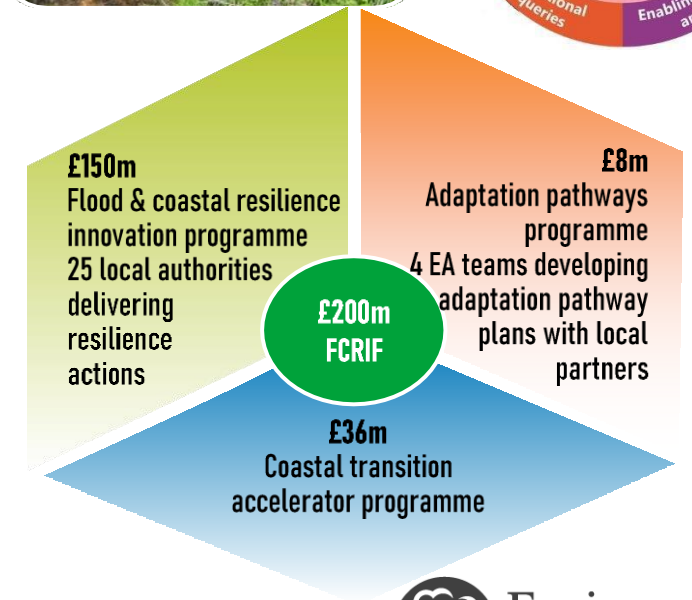
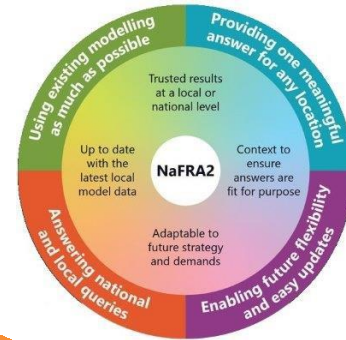
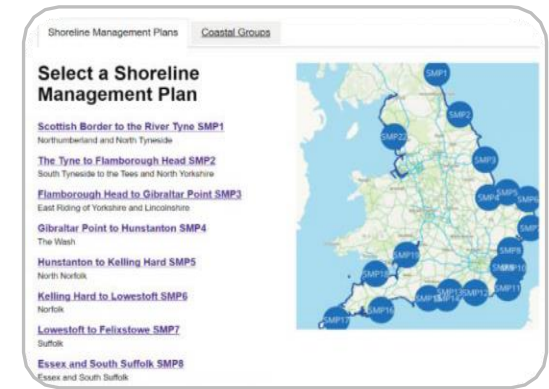
Stakeholders would like the refresh to consider:

- Balance between maintaining existing and building new flood and coastal defences
- Surface and groundwater flood risk and sustainable drainage
- Long term climate adaptation – notably adaptation strategies, coastal transition and indicators of resilience
- Natural flood management and integrated water management
- Skills and capabilities gaps – notably for local authorities
- Mental health impacts of flooding and recovery
- Growth and development
- Community resilience including social inclusion
- Revisiting roles and responsibilities



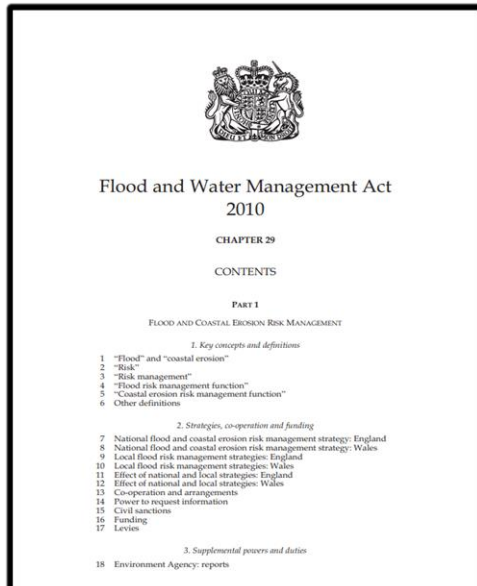
A lot has changed since 2020...

- Updated assessment of risk from the National Flood Risk Assessment (NaFRA)
- Updated Shoreline Management Plans
- Delivered hundreds of FCERM projects protecting over 116,000 properties and around 160,000 hectares of agricultural land
- Learning from innovation – Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programmes and NFM programme
- New Defra FCERM funding policy
- New FCERM investment programme – linked to 10-year HMT Infrastructure Strategy
- Government growth and devolution agenda
- Use of new technologies e.g. new flood warning system
- PFR Bonfield review and lessons learnt on Build Back Better
- EAC Flood Resilience inquiry including focus on community resilience



Strategy refresh: key themes

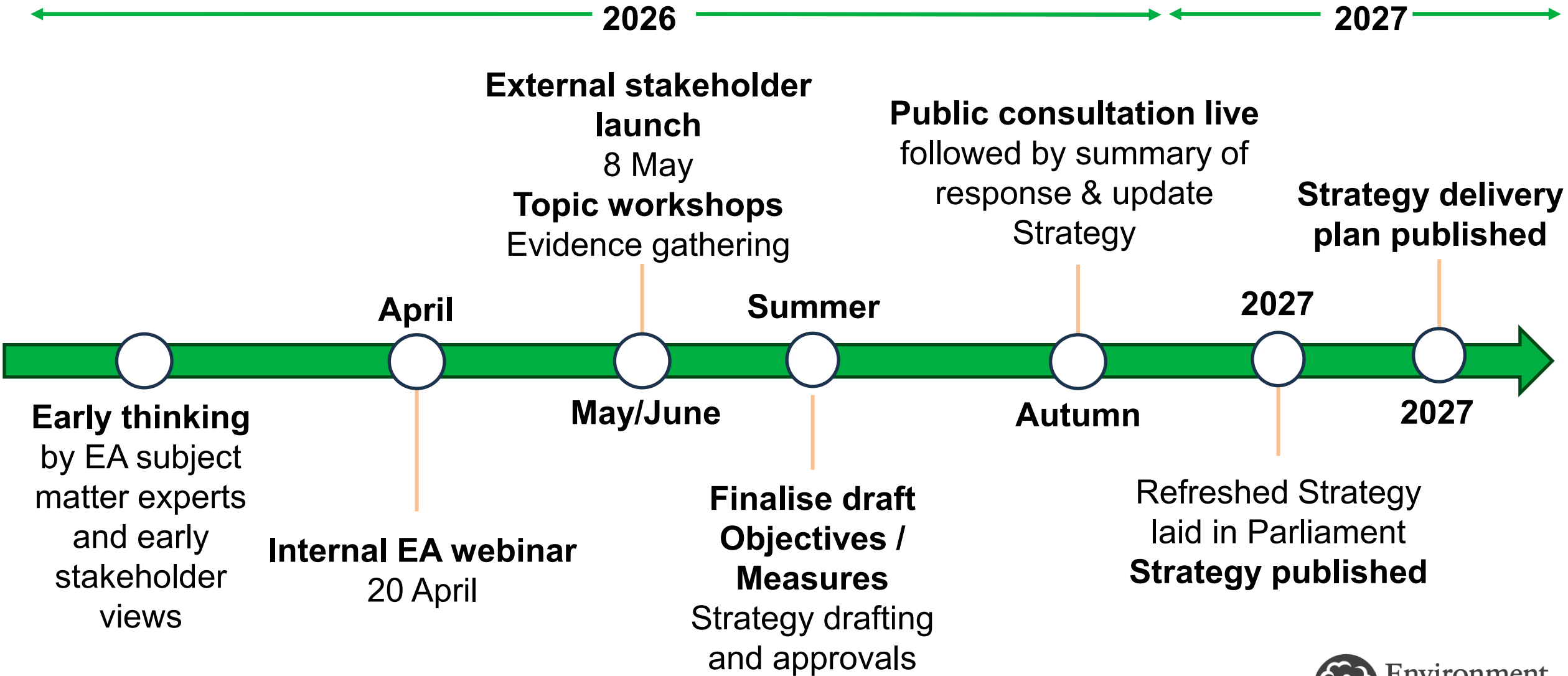
- Surface and groundwater risk
- Rural flood resilience and lowlands
- Coastal change, transition and adaptation
- Sustainable drainage
- Asset management including maintenance
- Integrated catchment-based planning
- Natural flood management
- Flood preparedness, response and recovery
- Community resilience including property flood resilience and social inclusion
- FCERM carbon footprint
- Growth, devolution e.g. combined authorities/city regions, and economy



Legal requirements:

- Incorporating the latest assessment of flood and coastal erosion risk
- Refreshing the Strategy objectives and measures
- Restating FCERM roles and responsibilities of the EA (strategic overview) and other Risk Management Authorities
- Consulting English Risk Management Authorities, the public, Welsh and Scottish ministers for cross border risk management
- Assessing against relevant environmental legislation e.g. Strategic Environmental Assessment, Habitat Regulations, Environmental Principles Policy Statement

Time for a refresh of the Strategy (DRAFT)



A nation ready for, and resilient to, flooding and coastal change

Stakeholder engagement activities

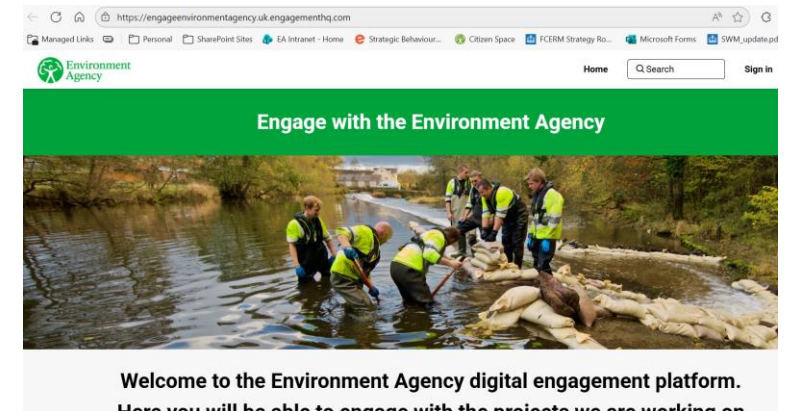
Recent and upcoming engagement activity:

- 13 February to 13 March – Stakeholder survey
- 16 March – Flood Resilience Taskforce
- 30 April – Convene Strategy Advisory Group
- 8 May – Stakeholder engagement launch webinar



Topic workshops and meetings

- **Surface water/groundwater** joint with ADEPT
- **Community resilience** – lived experience from flood affected communities
- **Insurance and finance** sector implications
- **Coastal adaptation** – joint with coastal group chairs
- **Rural and lowland resilience** – rural flood resilience partnership
- **FCIP project learning**
- Input from **Natural England** and **Historic England**
- Cross-border engagement with **NRW** and **SEPA**



We will also have an external facing website where stakeholders can find out the latest on the Strategy refresh

NORTH WEST REGIONAL FLOOD AND COASTAL COMMITTEE**24 APRIL 2026****ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AURORA TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME: CHANGES
TO PROGRAMME, PORTFOLIO AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT****Recommendations: The committee is asked to:**

1. Acknowledge the changes to programme, portfolio and project management being delivered through the Aurora Transformation Programme.
2. Note there will be some adjustments to ways of working, processes, and/or points of contact with the Environment Agency (EA), while some elements will remain unchanged.

1. Introduction

The Environment Agency is preparing to deliver the new FCERM investment programme beginning on 1 April 2026 and is transforming its approach to asset management. These changes are being managed through the 'Aurora Transformation Programme'.

The programme is making 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.

In January 2026, the Aurora Transformation Programme team circulated a paper to Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) that provided an overview of the programme. This paper provides further information, outlines what will and will not change for RFCCs and when any changes will be implemented.

2. Changes to programme and portfolio management**2.1 Programme and Project Delivery (PPD), within the Environment Agency's FCRM Directorate, will take on responsibility for the Environment Agency's delivered elements of the FCRM Investment Programme and some associated programmes.**

In February, the Aurora Programme Board approved the decision that Programme and Project Delivery (PPD) will take on responsibility for the EA delivered elements of the FCRM Investment Programme and some specific programmes.

PPD will be responsible for programme management, delivery of outcomes, and the budgets for these programmes. Financial Scheme of Delegation (FSOD) will change to reflect the new responsibility from 1 April 2026.

2.2 Changes on 1 April 2026

The change in responsibility for FCRM programme, project budgets and outcomes leads to necessary changes to programme and project role responsibilities.

The responsibility for FCRM EA project budgets, outcomes and FSoD approval authority will move from the Director of Operations to the PPD Director, and from Area Directors to PPD Programme Directors. These changes will be in place on 1 April 2026.

The EA-led aspects of the FCRM investment programme will no longer be managed according to Area geographies. Programme Delivery will be managed through three PPD geographic Programme Delivery Teams aligned with existing Integrated Delivery Teams and EA Area boundaries.

The EA part of the FCRM Investment Programme referenced includes:

- Defence projects
- Capital Maintenance Projects (Replacement & Refurbishment)
- Bridges
- Property Level Protection/Property Flood Resilience Projects
- FCRM Environmental projects
- Reservoir Projects (Measures in the interest Of Safety); and
- Reconditioning Programme & Projects

Some other internal roles and activities are likely to move in future, and we are working to finalise a timeline for these future changes.

PPD is not taking on responsibility for managing the other Risk Management Authority (oRMA) programme on 1 April 2026, nor the maintenance programme, for which budgets will continue to be held in Environment Agency area teams.

2.3 What remains the same

There will be no Environment Agency structural (people) changes introduced on 1 April 2026 and existing teams will continue to be line managed through the same arrangements. Area Programme Teams and area FCRM and Operations departments remain critical to the delivery of the FCRM Investment Programme and will continue to deliver much of the day-to-day activity involved in managing and delivering the programme.

They will continue to:

- provide essential local insight, data and management information aligned to new governance arrangements created by the change in programme management and delivery responsibilities.
- work closely with PPD to support delivery and enable them to fulfil their new responsibilities.
- enable the delivery of the oRMA programme.
- continue to lead local relationships with Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) and Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs) working in partnership with the Portfolio Management Office and PPD.
- continue delivering work undertaken by Local Levy funded roles that have been approved by RFCCs.

We are working through the detail of the transition and developing a detailed guide that will be issued to internal affected staff in readiness for the budget and responsibility move on 1 April.

2.4 Decisions still to be made

The Environment Agency administers a significant amount of funding to Risk Management Authorities to deliver flood and coastal works. A working group has been looking at a range of options into how the RMA programme could be managed in the future.

On 19 March 2026, the Aurora Programme Board will review a set of options for the future design of the Environment Agency's Programme and Portfolio Management Offices, and options for where RMA budgets are managed in future. Any changes to teams, roles, ways of working and systems will be

introduced over time and with required guidance and training. We will share details of any relevant changes with RFCCs following this Board meeting.

Whatever the outcomes, the oRMA programmes and corresponding budgets will continue to be managed by Area FCRM departments until at least September 2026, and any structural changes that may be relevant to RFCCs will be shared in advance of this.

3. Changes to project management

3.1 Proposed changes to project roles and a new tiered delivery framework

We will take this opportunity to update EA project role names and descriptions to align with government guidance and standards and align the Environment Agency's delivery practices to the updated government functional standards and the Teal Book.

We propose to introduce a new tiered delivery framework to managing Environment Agency projects, with proportionate resourcing, assurance and scrutiny according to project complexity, supported by the use of a new Project Complexity Tool and project delivery playbooks (updated guidance). The intent is to reduce the time, cost and technical capability invested in lowest complexity and lowest risk projects and re-invest this by increasing the support available to medium and large complexity projects.

This will require some people changes and changes to ways of working as a consequence of this new tiered approach and we are currently working through the detail of this.

3.2 What remains the same

The role of area teams as the asset owner remains a critical part of project leadership, with responsibilities including identification of investment need, setting the requirements, championing of the project in the local geography, leading relationships with local stakeholders, identification of partnership funding opportunities, and owning the realisation of benefits after project completion.

3.3 Decisions still to be made

On 19 March 2026, the Aurora Programme Board will review the proposed changes that have been described above, namely:

- proposed updates to Environment Agency project role names and descriptions, with timings to be confirmed following the board
- introduction of the proposed tiered delivery framework, which, subject to approval will be ready for introduction to Environment Agency projects in Spring 2026

4. Summary and recommendations

The committee is asked to acknowledge the further detail provided in this paper, specifically on proposed upcoming changes to portfolio, programme and project management and note that while these changes may lead to adjustments in ways of working, processes, and points of contact with the Environment Agency, many elements will remain unchanged. The Environment Agency will keep RFCCs informed of all relevant changes and will continue to engage with RFCC Chairs regularly as the proposed changes are finalised and introduced.

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