

Report to: Climate, Energy and Environment Committee

Date: 19 October 2021

Subject: **Flood Risk Management Update**

Director: Liz Hunter, Director of Policy and Development

Author: Justin Wilson, Head of Strategic Networks

Is this a key decision?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information or appendices?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, state paragraph number of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1:	
Are there implications for equality and diversity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To summarise the Combined Authority's work with partners to address Flood Risk Management (FRM) issues.

2. Information

Policy Context

- 2.1 In collaboration with partners, the Combined Authority developed the Leeds City Region Flood Review following the 2015 Boxing Day floods. The Review sits within Strategic Economic Framework (SEF) and outlines the Combined Authority's approach to FRM.
- 2.2 The Review includes 19 recommendations which relate to:
- Economic impact of flooding;
 - Emergency response and recovery; and
 - Planning, risk reduction and mitigation for future events.
- 2.3 Delivery of the recommendations is ongoing with partners. Consideration is also being given to opportunities to refresh the Review, having regard to

priorities emerging from the West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan.

- 2.4 The resilience of the City Region to flood risk is vitally important to tackling the climate emergency. Our communities need to be helped to become more resilient to current and future weather events, which will only increase as our climate continues to change. The work undertaken to improve FRM provides an important contribution to the City Region's work to address the Climate Emergency, supporting the commitment for West Yorkshire to reach net zero carbon by 2038 at the latest with significant progress by 2030.
- 2.5 This work aligns with the Mayor's pledge to tackle the climate emergency and protect the environment.

Capital Flood Risk Management Programme

Previous Delivery (up to March 2021)

- 2.6 The Combined Authority has invested £20 million from the Leeds City Region Growth Deal Three, alongside over £200 million of partner match, into flood alleviation schemes across the region. Projects included Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS), Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge and Leeds FAS 1 & 2, alongside the Wyke Beck FAS.
- 2.7 The programme also included Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects in the Colne, Calder and Upper Aire catchment areas. For example, £1.7 million of interventions led by the National Trust and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, designed to slow the flow of water and help protect 1,075 businesses and 2,936 homes. This innovative programme, which will be monitored by the University of Leeds, supports the City Region's ambition to become a trailblazer in NFM techniques.
- 2.8 When complete, the programme will provide enhanced flood protection to approximately 1,300 businesses and 11,100 jobs.

Future Funding (2021/22-2026/27)

- 2.9 Building on the success of the above programme, the Combined Authority has worked with partners to develop a programme of priority schemes for delivery between 2021/22 and 2026/27. The programme requires £120m of additional investment from government or other sources, and includes:
 - £103.9m to unlock local contributions and private funding to deliver 28 FRM schemes with a total capital value of £176.4m.
 - £15m NFM Programme to deliver the Leeds and Upper Calder NFM schemes and support a £8.3m pipeline of other NFM projects.
- 2.10 The programme includes four 'shovel ready' schemes, which are fully developed and can be accelerated to commence delivery by December 2022.
 - Leeds FAS Phase 2, Step 2
 - Brighouse FAS Phase 1 (fluvial)
 - Reservoir Storage (Calderdale)

- Wortley Beck Improvements, Leeds

2.11 The updated Programme was submitted to DEFRA and HM Treasury on 22 December 2021 and forms part of the West Yorkshire Economic Recovery Plan. The Combined Authority and the Mayor are continuing to engage with government to outline the wide range of benefits the programme could deliver, with a view to securing the additional investment required.

Business Flood Resilience & Recovery Support

- 2.12 The Combined Authority has previously provided flood recovery business support grants, with two funds operational recently with circa £4m provided from early 2016 and early 2020, with around 100 businesses supported. These have mostly been manufacturing businesses in West Yorkshire. These utilised Growth Deal Three (GD3) funding which ran out at in March 2021
- 2.13 As the Combined Authority moves into a new funding position, thought needs to be given to the need for and design of any potential successor business flood recovery programme. There is also the opportunity to deliver proactive resilience measures outside of flood events, which could result in better value for money and reduced damage to properties during a flooding event.
- 2.14 If the Committee endorses further work on this issue, the Combined Authority will continue with the West Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership, Environment Agency and local authority partners to develop the structure, design and financial requirements of the programme.
- 2.15 If it is considered that a programme is required and is deliverable, it would need to progress through the Combined Authority's assurance process and additional funding would need be identified.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Climate change drives extreme weather events such storms and prolonged periods of wet weather which cause floods. The programmes of work outlined in this paper seek to adapt our communities so that they become more resilient to future flood events.
- 3.2 NFM also provides wider adaptation and mitigation measures by delivering tree planting, peat restoration and wider green infrastructure activities. These measures offer a mix of benefits including carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancements and urban cooling.

4. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 4.1 Climate change drives adverse weather events such as floods and heatwaves, which significantly affect health and are likely to worsen health inequalities.
- 4.2 The flood risk management work by partners recognises the importance of the health and wellbeing benefits provided by enhanced flood protection. This is

particularly important when considering NFM measures, which can offer wider health benefits when integrated with green infrastructure.

4.3 The flood pipeline developed with partners will include stages of community engagement and co-development of schemes as they develop.

4.4 NFM projects present an excellent opportunity to collaborate across public, private and third sector. As delivery increases and COVID-19 restrictions reduce, there is scope for more focus on where volunteers come from and how these projects can develop skills and experience in an emerging sector.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

5.1 There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Many of the FRM schemes in the Environment Agency's pipeline of schemes have significant funding gaps. The Combined Authority is working with partners to engage with government to address this issue.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. Staffing Implications

8.1 Capacity to deliver this work programme is constrained. The Combined Authority and partners are likely to have the resources to deliver but timescales can often become pressured e.g. after a major flooding event with resource being directed to crisis management.

9. External Consultees

9.1 The work outlined in this update has used an extensive partnership approach. This includes industry, public sector, business and academia.

10. Recommendations

10.1 The Committee to note the work undertaken in relation to FRM activities.

11. Background Documents

None.

12. Appendices

None.