

Report to: Climate, Energy and Environment Committee

Date: 21 March 2023

Subject: **West Yorkshire Flood Programme**

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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

1. Purpose of this report

1. To provide Committee Members with an update on the Combined Authority Flood Risk Management (FRM) Programme and to seek endorsement of the proposed programme prior to progression into the Combined Authority's Assurance Process.

2. Information

Context

- 2.1 Around 5.2 million properties in England (or one in six properties) are at risk of flooding. In West Yorkshire approximately 39,000 residential properties and 13,000 commercial properties in fall within a flood zone. Flooding is likely to become a more frequent occurrence as a result of climate change.

WY Climate and Environment Plan

- 2.2 The Combined Authority has declared a climate emergency and committed the region to be net zero carbon by 2038 at the latest, with significant progress by 2030. The [West Yorkshire Climate and Environment Plan](#) (CEP) - approved by the Combined Authority in October 2021 - is the Mayor's and Combined Authority response to tackling the climate emergency, protecting the environment and achieving a net zero West Yorkshire.

- 2.3 With regard to FRM, the following critical action areas are identified:
- CR01 Climate Ready Strategy
 - CR02 Embedding Climate Readiness
 - CR03 Flood Risk and Drainage
 - BI01 Business Sustainability Support
- 2.4 The Flood Risk and Drainage critical action area (with a focus upon Natural Flood Management (NFM)) and Business Sustainability Support were prioritised by the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee on [22 March 2022](#).

Combined Authority Capital Infrastructure Flood Programme

- 2.5 The Committee on 19 July 2022 received an update on the Combined Authority's Capital Flood Infrastructure Programme. The Committee endorsed the programme prior to progression into the Authority's assurance process.
- 2.6 The programme comprises 24¹ flood schemes with a total capital value of £245m and a funding gap of £51m, with over 3,700 residential premises and 2,700 businesses premises benefitting from enhanced protection.
- 2.7 The Programme was granted approval to proceed through Decision Point 1 (Strategic Assessment) of the Assurance Process by the Combined Authority at its Meeting on 2 February 2023, including approval of £113,735 development costs to commence work on the development of individual business cases.
- 2.8 Additional approvals by the Authority in relation to the Programme include:
- The principal that £10,000,000 of Combined Authority funding is utilised as 'match funding' in order to engage and leverage funding from other funding sources and that work commences on the development of individual business cases, which will seek approval through the assurance process.
- 2.9 A programme Strategic Outline Case (SOC) is currently under development. Its development will include engagement with partners to refine and review the phasing of the programme.
- 2.10 Appendix 1 outlines the initial programme and phasing for information. This is based on known project deliverability and timescales for scheme and business case development.
- 2.11 The refinement of this programme will be based on a review of project information², availability of Combined Authority match funding and the potential funding envelope for the programme.

¹ Leeds FAS2 is currently on the programme but recently received additional BEIS funding via the Combined Authority. The funding position of this scheme and presence on the programme will be refreshed at the next business case stage

² Including costs, deliverability, funding sources, outputs and outcomes

- 2.12 The team are preparing the SOC for the Combined Authority with the anticipation that project level business cases can then be approved as funding is confirmed.

Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) Phase 2 (Step 2)

- 2.13 The approved Programme included a funding ask to support delivery of Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS) Phase 2 (Step 2), which has experienced an increase in costs as a result of significant inflation impacts. However, on 12 January 2023 the Government's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) committed to fund this ask from the Capital Investment Fund subject to clarification questions. In relation to this Scheme, the Combined Authority (2 February 2023) approved the following subject to confirmation from Government on the funding:
- The Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme (Step 2) scheme proceeds through Decision Point 1 to 4 (business justification) and work continues on activity 5 (delivery), subject to assurances on a two outstanding questions from BEIS.
 - Approval to the Combined Authority's contribution of £12,565,000 is given. The total scheme cost is £125,826,000.
 - The Combined Authority enters into a funding agreement with Leeds City Council for expenditure of up to £12,565,000.
 - Future approvals are made in accordance with the assurance pathway and approval route outlined in this report. This will be subject to the scheme remaining within tolerances outlined in this report.
- 2.14 As a result, the Leeds FAS Phase 2 (Step 2) Scheme will be removed from the Authority's programme pipeline when the above mentioned BEIS funding is confirmed by government.

Natural Flood Management Programme Update and Delivery

- 2.15 The programme included nine Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes with a total value of £7,100,000. The programme was approved at Strategic Assessment³ stage. Officers are working with partners to further develop the indicative list of projects with a view to submission of Business Justification Cases for consideration.
- 2.16 The proposals are subject to gaining various landowner consents and statutory consents relating to wildlife protection and water management licenses which are being worked up. It is anticipated that the first project, the 'Landscapes for Water' project being developed by the National Trust will be submitted for consideration by Committee in June/July.
- 2.17 Development costs have been approved for the 'Wyke Beck' project to identify options for dealing with a gas pipeline and a grant funding agreement has been issued to the Environment Agency.

³ Included in the Climate and Environment Plan Wave 1 Strategic Assessment

- 2.18 The programme level outputs for the NFM schemes are not fully developed yet but they will include:
- enhanced flood resilience for homes and businesses
 - improved natural process (e.g. soil aeration, peat restoration, carbon sequestration, air toxin removal) for healthier ecosystem services
 - improved and less-fragmented habitats e.g. trees, hedgerows, bogs to support greater abundance and variety of species (biodiversity)
 - improved access to high-quality green space for communities
 - increased opportunities for nature connection / re-connection
 - mutual benefits from tie-in with emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Next Steps

- 2.19 The Combined Authority will work with partners to refresh the Capital Flood Infrastructure Programme leading to a Strategic Outline Case later in the year.
- 2.20 Alongside this work the Authority will develop materials to articulate the benefits, outputs and outcomes of the programme. This will be used as the basis for further engagement with government departments. It is proposed that the £10,000,000 'match funding' provided by Authority is used to leverage further investment from government departments or bodies.
- 2.21 The engagement will not be specifically directed to the Department for Environment, Flood and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It will be directed to other departments where the wider outputs and outcomes from the programme align with their interests or objectives e.g. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Department for Transport, Network Rail, Homes England and other regional partners.
- 2.22 The proposed materials will be used as the basis for correspondence and communications with government departments/bodies. The timing of this will be developed but the most impact may be achieved when aligned with programme development milestones, national fiscal events or key ministerial contact/visits.
- 2.23 The Committee are invited to consider the proposed next steps.

3. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 3.1 Climate change drives extreme weather events such as storms and prolonged periods of wet weather which cause floods. The programmes outlined in this paper seeks 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, peat restoration, habitat restoration and wider green infrastructure activities.

These measures offer a mix of benefits including carbon sequestration, biodiversity enhancements water quality improvements 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 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 programme 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 there is scope for more focus on engaging with diverse communities and how these projects can develop skills and experience in an emerging sector.

5. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.1 The impacts of flooding can impact community groups in differing ways, with some more vulnerable communities suffering the most and taking longer to recover. The proposed flood programme will support the wider flood risk partnership efforts to minimise the impact on these communities in the future.
- 5.2 A Stage 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) was developed at Programme level for each element of the flooding work. Project level EqIAs will be developed as part of the project development process and consideration given to promoting inclusivity when consulting on specific schemes.

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 has identified some initial match funding to support this programme and is working with partners to engage with government.

7. Legal Implications

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

8. Staffing Implications

- 8.1 The programmes are fully costed and have sufficient funding in place to support delivery of the schemes.

9. External Consultees

9.1 The schemes in this programme have been endorsed by the West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnerships.

9.2 West Yorkshire Local Authorities have also been engaged and co-developed the proposed programme.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That Committee Members are asked to:

1. Note the work done with partners to drive delivery of the Combined Authority's flood risk management programme.
2. Consider the proposed methods of engagement with government to address the remaining funding gap in the programme.

11. Background Documents

There are no background documents referenced in this report.

12. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Capital Flood Infrastructure Programme (Schemes & Initial Phasing)