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| Report to: | Climate, Energy and Environment Committee |
| Date: | 26 November 2024 |
| Subject: | Flood Resilience Programmes – Update |
| Director: | Liz Hunter, Director Policing, Environment & Place |
| Author: | Rob Tranmer, Implementation Lead |
| 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 |

1. Purpose of this Report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on progress with both the Natural and Capital Flood Management programmes and the West Yorkshire Property Flood Resilience for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes progress with both the Natural and Capital Flood Management programmes and the delays to some projects.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the progress of the West Yorkshire Property Flood Resilience for SMEs.
- 2.3 That the Committee endorses the revised approach for flood projects, the proposal to prioritise those projects that can commence delivery first and entry of two new projects onto the Capital Flood Risk Management programme pipeline set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 That the Committee delegates approval to the Director of Policing, Environment and Place, in consultation with the Chair of the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee, any future review and reprioritisation of projects on the Natural and Capital Flood Management pipelines; the acceptance of new projects on to either programme; and the transfer of projects which place greater risk on either programme to lower down the flood pipeline for consideration as part of any future investment programmes.

3. Information

Background

Flood Risk in West Yorkshire

- 3.1 As referenced in the Monitoring Indicators report, around 5.2 million properties in England (or one in six properties) are at risk of flooding. Around 14,000 West Yorkshire residential properties are located in Flood Zone 3 areas and at risk of flooding once every hundred years, with an additional 24,000 located in Flood Zone 2, which is at risk of flooding once every 100 to 1,000 years. Together this accounts for 3.4% of West Yorkshire's residential properties. Around 15,000 commercial properties also fall within flood zones in West Yorkshire.

Policy Context

- 3.2 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. The CEP is currently being updated, with flooding and water management remaining a priority within the emerging document.
- 3.3 It is important to note that other Combined Authority policy and strategy documents have a role to play in ensuring our communities and infrastructure are climate resilient, including to the impacts of flooding. This includes the emerging Local Growth Plan, Local Transport Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- 3.4 Water and flooding do not respect administrative boundaries and therefore needs to be considered at catchment, sub-regional and regional scales. West Yorkshire partners have been collaborating on flood risk management issues and delivering integrated catchment management for a number of years in line with a regional governance process through the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (YRFCC). The current 6-year programme (2021-2027) includes 190 projects with a total forecast spend of £344 million. This total includes £247 million of investment from central government. The remainder is made up from Local Levy, other Environment Agency funds, public and private contributions. This illustrates that although there are significant levels of investment from the Government, it is not sufficient to deliver the West Yorkshire programme in full and other contributions are required.
- 3.5 Our local partnership has a strong track record of delivering innovative and complex schemes. We have delivered these schemes in partnership using a mix of funding that has safeguarded existing economic and infrastructure assets, unlocked new growth opportunities and supported inclusive growth. The Leeds Flood Alleviation project for example, provided greater flood protection to 4,000 homes, 1,000 businesses and key

infrastructure including roads and railways, communications networks and the power supply for thousands of people.

- 3.6 Current Combined Authority programmes in delivery include both a Capital Flood Risk Management and a Natural Flood Management programme.
- 3.7 As a partnership we recognise that the spatial distribution of our flooding investment will flex across our five local authority areas. This reflects that delivering flood resilience at a catchment scale will focus on where the opportunities and need for flooding investment is realised as schemes become investment ready.

Flood Resilience and Infrastructure

- 3.8 There is a recognition that investment in flood risk management infrastructure as part of a river catchment level approach will unlock significant outcomes and benefits for our communities. This includes enhancing the level of flood resilience for homes, businesses and infrastructure e.g. transport routes and hubs.
- 3.9 The impact of improving the flood resilience of critical infrastructure will be considered as flood schemes are developed. This will be based on an assessment of the benefit area¹ of a scheme and its relationship with infrastructure. The Environment Agency can then coordinate discussions across relevant partners regarding financial or in-kind contributions if mutual benefits for infrastructure resilience and delivery can be realised.
- 3.10 Mutual benefits often include reduction in flooding to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) or improving access issues to schools during flooding. These opportunities will be identified by the Environment Agency during the scheme business case process. Financial contributions that recognise the impact on infrastructure can be obtained direct from partners, via partner grant applications or 'Other Government Department' funding; for example, there is a specific DEFRA funding-pot to support delivery of improvements to infrastructure. Strategic partnerships are already in place between the Environment Agency and Network Rail and National Highways.

Flood Programmes Update

- 3.11 **Natural Flood Management:** Reducing flood risk and improving drainage - with a focus upon Natural Flood Management – was identified for investment by the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee on 22 March 2022 as part of Climate and Environment Plan Wave 1 activity. The CEP Wave 1 portfolio gained decision point 1 (strategic assessment) approval from the Combined Authority on 22 July 2022 and Strategic Outline Case approval in October 2022, including details of a Natural Flood Management (NFM) programme. The business case indicated a budget of £7.07 million from the Single Investment Fund, with nine projects (see Appendix 1) indicatively identified for
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inclusion, subject to progression through the Combined Authority's Assurance Framework.

- 3.12 At the present time, two projects have commenced on site (Landscapes for Water and Wortley Beck Re-naturalisation) and one small project has completed (Chellow Dene). A further four projects are in development with a view to submitting business cases in the Spring of 2025. Two projects (Wyke Beck and Broughton Hall) have been withdrawn due to deliverability challenges identified following more detailed scheme development.
- 3.13 Whilst the final outturn spend forecast for the NFM programme will not be known until development work has completed on the remaining projects, the programme is currently forecast to spend £5.52 million compared to the indicative funding of £7.07 million previously agreed.
- 3.14 **Capital Flood Risk Management:** In July 2023 the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee approved the Strategic Outline Case for a Capital Flood Infrastructure programme, together with an indicative budget of £10 million Combined Authority funding. An indicative pipeline of schemes was identified across three phases (see Appendix 1) with a forecasted timescale for completion of the projects by March 2027. Phases 1 and 2a were approved for delivery and phases 2b and 3 were identified as a pipeline of schemes to be brought forward in the future, subject to funding becoming available.
- 3.15 The proposed schemes were selected on the basis of deliverability, looking at their potential to support business areas, deliver flood innovation, and align with, and leverage national funding pots. The Combined Authority's programme has been designed to complement work underway across the wider flood partnership and to reduce the impact of flood events in our region.
- 3.16 The primary objective of the programme is to improve flood protection to properties in West Yorkshire through delivery of 23 schemes with construction commencing between 2024 and 2029.
- 3.17 From the original Phase 1, two approved schemes have commenced on site, Brighouse Flood Alleviation Scheme and Sheepscar Beck, Leeds. A further scheme, Albert Street, Huddersfield is anticipated to start on site this financial year and a business case submission for Stubbing Holme Road, Calderdale, is anticipated towards the end of the current financial year. However, two projects from the early phases are either unaffordable within the current funding envelope or are many years off in terms of readiness for delivery.

Pipeline development

- 3.18 The Environment Agency is working nationally on its programme and has provided Combined Authority officers with details of their updated pipeline (see Appendix 2) which will be approved in February 2025. The pipeline projects have been ranked based on

affordability and projected start on site dates, prioritising projects commencing on site before the end of 2027/28. Whilst the projects are ranked based on deliverability and value for money, this ranking will also be considered alongside the impact of individual schemes on key infrastructure, such as road and rail infrastructure, including proposals for Mass Transit and Combined Authority land assets which will be explored through the development of business cases.

- 3.19 The revised programme identified with the Environment Agency, if implemented in full, forecasts enhanced protection to 4,288 homes and 2,335 businesses.
- 3.20 Within this programme the Environment Agency review has identified two additional projects at Hebble Brook and Hebden Bridge in the Calderdale district and it is recommended that these projects are added to the Combined Authority's programme set out in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 3.21 On 25 July 2024, a Managing Capital report was presented to the Combined Authority outlining the challenges of managing the Combined Authority's portfolio of projects and programmes and considered an approach to revised ways of working that would ensure a focus on delivery that maximises available funding.
- 3.22 In September 2024, the Combined Authority endorsed the proposals for revised ways of working. As part of the changes, projects and programmes will no longer have an indicative approval, even if one has been approved in the past. Instead, projects and programmes will have "Combined Authority potential funding" which will be used for planning, performance management and reporting purposes only. Projects will no longer be guaranteed funding until they have been approved through the Assurance Framework at decision point 4 (full business case / business justification case).
- 3.23 The indicative funding, previously approved for the Flood Resilience programmes is therefore no longer in place and there is no guarantee of funding for the projects within the programme, until each has secured full business case or business justification case approval.
- 3.24 It is therefore recommended that for the Flood Resilience Programmes, the original phased approach to scheme delivery is removed, with schemes only entering the programme on approval of a full business case / business justification case, in accordance with the new approach.
- 3.25 Subject to Committee approval, and to aid management of the programme, through this report a delegation to the Director of Policing, Environment and Place, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, is sought to amend the programme pipeline in future and to enter new projects into the pipeline, effectively creating a rolling programme, subject to additional funding being secured. All live projects will still be subject to Combined Authority approval as business cases are submitted through the Assurance Framework process. As approval to individual schemes are given, consideration can be

given to the level of cumulative programme funding forecast to identify if further schemes can be developed.

- 3.26 Alongside the Combined Authority's flooding programmes, the Environment Agency is coordinating delivery of a wider West Yorkshire flood programme with partners that bolsters the resilience of communities and places to flooding. This work will continue, supported by funding from central Government. This includes the recent Autumn Budget confirmation of £2.4 billion over two years for flood resilience nationally. Local partners are currently reviewing the implications of what this announcement means for West Yorkshire.
- 3.27 We will continue to work with partners to deliver West Yorkshire's share of this effectively. We will also press the Government for further investment in our areas of highest flood risk and ask for their support to deliver schemes which are particularly complex.
- 3.28 **West Yorkshire Flood Resilience Support Programme:** Launched in February 2024 and running until March 2026, the £5 million programme was designed to support 100 Small to Medium sized Enterprise (SME) businesses proactively strengthen their flood resilience. The programme has had limited engagement to date with only 3 businesses having received support. The programme was consulted on and approved by local authority flood lead officers and members of the Environment Agency prior to the launch. The programme offers two key funding elements:
- **Stage 1:** Eligible businesses can access funding to conduct a flood resilience survey of their premises. The survey will identify appropriate resilience and resistance measures to mitigate flood risks. Businesses can apply for a grant covering 50% of the survey cost, up to a maximum grant of £5,000. A total of 18 enquiries and 3 applications have been received and approved, with total allocated spend of £6,750. To date 2 of the 3 approved applications have been completed and payment defrayed totalling £4,225.
 - **Stage 2:** Eligible businesses can apply for capital grant funding to implement flood resilience measures identified through a professional survey. Grants range from £10,000 to £100,000, covering up to 50% of eligible project costs. No applications have been received to date.
- 3.29 There has been an extensive engagement and marketing plan delivered to date to encourage engagement with the support. The programme has been actively promoted across the Combined Authority's and Local Authorities' social media platforms, including paid advertising to enhance visibility. Most recently two webinars have been conducted on Property Flood Resilience and the available grant support.
- 3.30 Programme information has been shared with a range of stakeholders, including Local Authority Flood Leads, Combined Authority business-facing staff, Local Authority Growth Managers, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, the West Yorkshire Flood Risk

Partnership, the Mid-Yorkshire Chamber, West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme, and the Yorkshire Regional Flood & Coastal Committee.

- 3.31 There is further future planned engagement and marketing activities to broaden the reach and engage businesses in high-risk flood areas that may not have interacted with the Combined Authority through existing channels, via a direct mail campaign. By sending letters to businesses in these areas, we aim to raise awareness of the programme and encourage participation, especially among those who may not have been reached through our previous marketing efforts. This is expected to reach circa 3500 businesses in flood risk zones.
- 3.32 The programme will be reviewed once the programme has run for a full year to allow time to measure the level of impact that the direct marketing campaign will bring. The outcome of the review, which is expected to be completed by February 2025, will determine next steps.

4. Risks and Mitigations

- 4.1 Flood risk management project sponsors may be less willing to develop schemes 'at risk' without an indicative programme funding allocation. This may be mitigated by greater use of development funding being made available to partners. This will transfer some of the risk to the Combined Authority and this will be mitigated through robust challenge before projects are entered onto the programme.
- 4.2 The key risks for flood risk management projects tend to be construction risks related to cost and timing which are often managed by the inclusion of contingency sums in project costs.

5. Tackling the Climate Emergency Implications

- 5.1 The Combined Authority is working towards the target of being a net zero carbon economy by 2038, with an ambition to have made significant progress by 2030. Climate change and the increased frequency and intensity of weather patterns are making the risks associated with flooding more acute. The flood risk management programmes contribute to this ambition and to tackling the implications of the climate emergency by delivering enhanced flood protection and climate resilience to communities, homes, and businesses across West Yorkshire.
- 5.2 The capital flood programme may experience a short/medium term increase in carbon impact via construction materials. However, this will be mitigated as much as possible during the construction phase and will be balanced against the longer-term positive carbon impact via the reduced frequency and severity of flooding e.g. by reducing the carbon impact of rebuilding/restoring flood damage.

5.3 A Stage 1 Carbon Impact Assessment has been completed for both the Natural and Capital Flood programmes. Subsequent project business cases are required to complete a Stage 2 Carbon Impact Assessment.

6. Inclusive Growth Implications

6.1 The programmes have the potential to enhance living conditions for all communities currently impacted by flooding, by increasing protection to residential and non-residential properties, reducing number of “risk to life” flood events, protecting economic and infrastructure assets, reducing need for temporary accommodation and recovery budgets and delivering positive health related benefits for personal wellbeing.

7. Equity and Diversity Implications

7.1 Research from Age UK has shown that people with disabilities, older age groups, or who are pregnant may be adversely affected in terms of the ability to evacuate quickly from an area at risk of flooding. The flood risk management programmes therefore have the potential to positively impact people with protected characteristics through the reduction of flooding risk to properties.

7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for both the Natural and Capital Flood programmes and equality and diversity impacts taken into account as part of the development of each project through business case development. Each project within the programme will undertake a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 The indicative allocation for the Natural Flood Management programme was set at £7.07 million. The current forecast outturn shows a programme cost of £5.79 million.

8.2 The initial indicative allocation for the Capital Flood Risk Management programme was up to £10 million with a further allocation for projects in the pipeline to be subject to funds being made available. Funding approval has been given for project expenditure of £5.65 million to date.

9. Legal Implications

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

10. External Consultees

10.1 Combined Authority officers have engaged with the Environment Agency and Local Authority Officers in developing this programme.



11. Background Documents

11.1 The Natural Flood Management Programme was one of the actions within the Climate and Environment Plan prioritised for early investment by the Climate, Energy and Environment Committee on 22 March 2022 as part of CEP Wave 1 activity.

[Climate and Environment Plan Prioritisation](#)

11.2 The Capital Flood Programme Strategic Outline Case was approved on 11 July 2023.

[Climate, Energy and Environment Committee Approval](#)

12. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Original Flood Programme
- Appendix 2 – Proposed / Updated Capital Flood Risk Management Pipeline