

REPORT FROM: NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MANAGER

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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WEST CRAVEN FLOOD DEFENCE AND RESILIENCE – UPDATE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To note progress made with the ESIF funding bid, EA flood modelling and Natural Flood Management (NFM) in Earby and Victoria Clough culvert repairs being undertaken by the Environment Agency as well as Ghyll Meadows culvert works being undertaken by Pendle.
2. To note progress made on the flood resilience schemes with funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

RECOMMENDATION

To note progress made.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To enable flooding issues in West Craven to be effectively managed and reduced.

EARBY ISSUES

ESIF Bid update

Background

1. We received approval in March 2018 for our full bid to the European Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF).
2. This was for a series of flood prevention measures to minimise flood risk to Earby's commercial and residential communities. This was under the ESIF Programme Priority 5 which relates to promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management.
3. The bid was for £635,260 ESIF to be matched with £425,000 public sector funding from the Environment Agency (EA) Yorkshire; Grant in Aid funding (GiA).

4. However, at the time of gaining approval of the funding, match funding from the EA was not in place as they had to complete their flood modelling before they could guarantee their contribution.
5. After much deliberation, and following meetings with EA, we agreed to sign the Funding Agreement “at risk” as we knew that as long as we did not start any capital works we would not lose any money should the EA money not be forthcoming.
6. The Funding Agreement is from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for £635,260 and was signed on 28 June 2018.

Current Situation

7. The EA has now completed their detailed flood modelling work in Earby and has shortlisted their preferred schemes, which are:
 - (a) a new flood defence wall on New Cut adjacent to Albert Street, and
 - (b) a floodwater storage area at Birley Playing Fields.
8. The flood modelling also includes EA’s Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes with upland moorland management to delay the speed at which surface water runoff progresses down the catchment (Wentcliff Brook and other tributaries to Earby Beck).
9. The EA expects to select their preferred option by July 2019.
10. However, the provisional cost for the EA’s preferred options is currently £4.8 million compared with the Funding Agreement total of £1.06 million.
11. Clearly this funding gap is significant and all interested parties are working hard to identify funding opportunities to bridge the funding gap.
12. The most recent development is that we may have to submit a new bid to MHCLG for the additional funding needed to deliver the EA’s preferred option.
13. It is now expected that the works would be designed, procured and implemented by the EA’s consultant/contractor in consultation with Pendle Council Engineers and local landowners.
14. Pendle is looking to enter into an agreement with MHCLG to either:
 - (a) draw down the agreed funding outlined in the signed Funding Agreement and submit a new application for the additional funding required which will allow the EA to deliver the agreed schemes;

OR

 - (b) submit a new full application for the full new amount needed.
15. It is envisaged that the EA would provide the necessary match funding and that this would increase in line with the new funding bid. This would come from Grant in Aid (GIA) and Local Levy.
16. Regular meetings are taking place between PBC, EA and MHCLG to address the schemes, the funding and the timescales.

Upland Moorland Management by EA

17. The Earby Beck catchment has been identified as a key area where Natural Flood Management (NFM) can contribute to reducing flood risk. Approximately £100k is available to install NFM in the Earby area over the next 12 months and the Environment Agency is already working with landowners to develop schemes. (This is part of the Leeds City Flood Alleviation Scheme: upper tributaries of the River Aire.)
18. The EA is at advanced stages of detailed design of NFM measures for Marlfield Farm. This involves tree and hedgerow planting, soil permeability improvements and small ponds. They are hopeful some of this work will start on site during spring 2019. This work will also reduce flood risk in Earby itself. Other landowners have been identified and engaged positively.

Victoria Clough Culvert

19. Works to Victoria Clough culvert started on 23 July 2018 to undertake £1m (GIA and Local Levy funding) repair work in Earby to make the Victoria Clough culvert structurally sound.
20. The scheme will reduce flood risk to 91 homes and 17 businesses. Approximately 60m of structural re-lining has been completed along the middle and downstream sections of the culvert.
21. The project has been delayed due to auger bore encountering a major obstacle beneath the Station Yard Business Park. A solution (within project budget) to the obstacle has been agreed with the contractors (JBA Bentley) and subcontractors on site.
22. Works are to re-commence towards the end of January 2019 with an eight-week programme to complete the project. The EA has the funding in place to complete this scheme.

Property-Level Resilience Grants

23. Following the Boxing Day Floods of 2015, grants were offered to businesses and residential properties that could prove they had been flooded. This required inspection by Pendle Council officers.
24. Those properties that were flooded were entitled to receive an initial grant of £500. Most claimed this.
25. There were 78 properties in total that flooded: 49 residential and 29 businesses.
26. The properties that flooded and received the initial grant of £500 were also entitled to apply for grants up to £5,000 for resilience measures to their property.
27. Forty-one claimed this £5,000 grant but 37 properties did not take up the offer. This includes both residential and business properties.
28. We wrote to the 37 properties that did not take up the offer asking owners if they might be interested in Pendle Council pooling their £5,000 entitlement to work on external community-led flood alleviation measures on their behalf to help prevent water from reaching their properties in the future; 27 of the 37 agreed to "their" £5,000 being utilised to fund community flood schemes.

MHCLG Funding for Community Resilience Schemes

29. In March 2017 the former Minister for Local Growth and the Northern Powerhouse gave approval in principal to unclaimed grants (in Earby) being used to deliver community flood resilience scheme(s).
30. It was made clear that any such schemes must be separate to any works funded by other Government departments or agencies, eg DEFRA, Environment Agency and the Department for Transport.
31. It was also made clear that the details of any proposed schemes must be approved by MHCLG officials.
32. Three key principles had to be adhered to and addressed:
 - (a) demonstration of effective engagement with the properties which have not taken up the grant;
 - (b) evidence that the schemes chosen are the best option, that they had been agreed with the EA and that advice had been taken from technical experts; and
 - (c) demonstration that funding was being targeted in a way that provides the best value for money.
33. A report was submitted to MHCLG on how Pendle is addressing the three principles.
34. The proposals for flood resilience included purchasing deployable flood barriers and containers to store them. These measures will give protection from flooding for up to 105 properties.
35. The EA and MHCLG required further flood modelling work to be undertaken to ensure that the deployment of the barriers would not cause flooding to properties.
36. This work has been done and the EA and MHCLG signed off on the suitability of the deployable barriers.
37. The deployable barriers and containers have now been purchased. These will provide flood resilience for properties affected by the Boxing Day 2015 floods.
38. One of the conditions was that we develop a Community Flood Plan. A draft Community Flood Plan has now been developed in partnership with Earby Flood Group.
39. As part of this Community Flood Plan, a group of volunteer flood wardens (approximately 15) has been set up to assist with deploying these barriers with assistance from local farmers.
40. Training exercises will be organised for the volunteer flood wardens in the near future.
41. Representatives from Engineering met recently with Lancashire Fire and Rescue and they have indicated that they will get involved and will be supportive with the deployment of the flood barriers.

Highway Authority and Water Company/Sewerage Authority Works

42. Lancashire County Council cleared 11 tons of silt from culverts and drains in the Skipton Road area.
43. Yorkshire Water is looking at maintenance/improvements to their infrastructure in the Skipton Road and Stoney Bank/Water Street areas.

BARNOLDSWICK ISSUES

Ghyll Meadows

44. Following a major flood in February 2002, a Ghyll Meadows Community Flood Group was established.
45. In 2003, funding was obtained to divert a blocked section of the Ghyll Meadows culvert.
46. Pendle Council has been successful in bidding and securing funding from the Environment Agency (Lancashire and Cumbria) for £300,000 to divert and upsize the culvert at Ghyll Meadows. It will significantly reduce the risk of flooding to 55 properties.
47. This project came about following the 2015 Boxing Day floods when, thanks to community efforts, these 55 properties narrowly missed devastating flood damage.
48. A scheme for a further diversion and upgrading was put out to tender in December 2018 and a contract has just been let.
49. Work is scheduled to start the week commencing 11 February 2019. A residents' drop-in session was held on 17 December 2018 to inform residents of the scheme details.
50. Lancashire County Council will adopt the new culvert (as it is in the highway). This is a condition of the funding from the EA, which wants to ensure that there will be a maintenance regime for the culvert in the future.
51. Money which was secured to construct a flood wall on Skipton Road in 2016 following the Boxing Day Floods of 2015 was used as match funding for the above bid.
52. A further £25,000 for the scheme has just been approved by the EA.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The ESIF schemes would support the following policies within the Pendle Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy: Policy ENV 1: Protecting and Enhancing Our Natural and Historic Environments; Policy ENV 7: Water Management; Policy SUP 2: Health and Wellbeing.

Financial: The EA's flood modelling has produced a number of options. These will require more funding than currently approved. It is expected that Pendle Council will submit a revised bid in May 2019 for the additional funding required to deliver EA's preferred option. It is expected that match funding towards the ESIF bid is likely to increase also and that this will come from GIA via the Environment Agency as in the previous bid.

Legal: None directly arising from this report.

Risk Management: Further discussions are needed with landowners regarding water storage locations and NFM measures on their land.

Health and Safety: None directly arising from this report.

Sustainability: The ESIF funding would enhance the sustainability of the area by creating and supporting habitats and improving conservation.

Community Safety: The flood resilience schemes will directly protect properties from flooding in the future. The external community-led schemes would also help prevent future flooding of properties and thereby adds to community safety and security.

Equality and Diversity: None directly arising from this report.

APPENDICES

None.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.