

**REPORT FROM: HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING MANAGER**

**TO: WEST CRAVEN AREA COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 2 JULY 2019**

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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**

- (1) To note progress made.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- (1) 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;
  - (b) a floodwater storage area at Birley Playing Fields; and
  - (c) a floodwater storage area at Victoria Clough.
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. 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.
13. Regular meetings are taking place between PBC, EA and MHCLG to address the schemes, the funding and the timescales. The next meeting is scheduled for 17 July 2019.

### ***Upland Moorland Management by EA***

14. 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 and the Environment Agency is working with landowners to develop schemes. (This is part of the Leeds City Flood Alleviation Scheme: upper tributaries of the River Aire.)
15. The EA is at advanced stages of detailed design of NFM measures for Marlfield Farm. This will involve tree and hedgerow planting, soil permeability improvements and small ponds. This work will also reduce flood risk in Earby itself. Other landowners have been identified and engaged positively.

### ***Victoria Clough Culvert***

16. The works to Victoria Clough, undertaken by the Environment Agency, were completed in the spring.

## ***Property-Level Resilience Grants***

17. 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.
18. Those properties that were flooded were entitled to receive an initial grant of £500. Most claimed this.
19. There were 78 properties in total that flooded: 49 residential and 29 businesses.
20. 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.
21. Forty-one claimed this £5,000 grant but 37 properties did not take up the offer. This includes both residential and business properties.
22. 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***

23. 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).
24. 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.
25. It was also made clear that the details of any proposed schemes must be approved by MHCLG officials.
26. Three key principles had to be adhered to and addressed:
  - (a) demonstration of effective engagement with the properties who 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.
27. A report was submitted to MHCLG on how Pendle is addressing the three principles.
28. 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.
29. 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.

30. Deployable barriers have been purchased as well as containers for the barriers and these are now in situ. These will provide flood resilience for properties affected by the Boxing Day 2015 floods.
31. 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.
32. As part of this Community Flood Plan, a group of volunteer flood wardens (approximately 15 in number) has been set up to assist with deploying these barriers with assistance from local contractors and farmers.
33. 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.
34. Training exercises will be organised for the volunteer flood wardens in the near future in partnership with Lancashire Fire and Rescue.
35. Another Flood Group meeting will be arranged for July when a walkabout of the flood storage containers and their contents will be included.

### ***Highway Authority and Water Company/Sewerage Authority Works***

36. Lancashire County Council cleared 11 tons of silt from culverts and drains in the Skipton Road area.
37. Yorkshire Water is looking at maintenance/improvements to their infrastructure in the Skipton Road and Stoney Bank/Water Street areas.
38. Another meeting with Yorkshire Water is due in the near future.

### **BARNOLDSWICK ISSUES**

#### ***Ghyll Meadows***

39. Following a major flood in February 2002, a Ghyll Meadows Community Flood Group was established.
40. In 2003 funding was obtained to divert a blocked section of the Ghyll Meadows Culvert.
41. 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.
42. This project came about following the 2015 Boxing Day floods when, thanks to community efforts, these 55 properties narrowly missed devastating flood damage.
43. A scheme for a further diversion and upgrading was put out to tender in December 2018.
44. A residents' drop-in session was held on 17 December 2018 to inform residents of the scheme details.

45. 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.
46. 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.
47. A further £25,000 for the scheme was approved by the EA.
48. The scheme commenced on 13 February 2019. Delays have been experienced due to hitting bed rock. Anticipated completion date is currently 1 September 2019.

## **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.

**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.