

Executive

29 June 2017

Report of the Assistant Director Communities and Equalities
Portfolio of the Executive Member for Environment

Community Flood Resilience

Summary

1. This report proposes measures to create greater community resilience in the event of future flooding and other emergencies within York.

Recommendations

2. The Executive is asked to:
 - a) Agree to use of contingency funding of £122.4k to fund the proposals set out in paragraphs 7, 12 and 19
 - b) Agree in principle the proposed restructure of the Flood Risk Management function and delegate to the Director of Economy and Place responsibility to deliver this within existing resources
 - c) Note the *Ready for Anything* programme and encourage relevant wards to take this up where it meets their needs

Reason: to increase community resilience in the event of future flooding incidents in York.

Background

3. At its February meeting the Executive agreed its response to the independent flood inquiry. The Executive committed to deliver a range of actions and the Council and Environment Agency (EA) action plans are now in place. The Executive also agreed to consider further reports with a view to allocating one-off funding to progress relevant actions, working closely with the Environment Agency and other key partners.
4. The city has a wide array of flood defence assets that reduce the risk of flooding in all but the greatest flood events. We are also working with the EA to use government funding provided for the further improvement and enhancement of these assets so that we

are better able to manage future flood events especially in the light of climate change. However, the risk of future flooding from our rivers can never be fully removed. Furthermore, intense rainfall can cause surface water flooding of highways and property in any part of the city since the design capacity for drainage systems can be overwhelmed during intense, localised storms. It is important that the city is prepared for such events. This report covers principally those aspects of preparedness for future flooding events that relate to community resilience.

5. All of us need to understand the causes of and risks associated with flooding and to be better prepared to protect ourselves and our property. Reflecting this, the concept of flood resilience runs through the core of the independent inquiry's report and a range of recommendations are identified concerning ways in which organisations, businesses, residents and visitors in the city could be better prepared for flooding and reduce its impacts.

Way Forward

6. It is now proposed to develop a flood resilience work programme in the city, working alongside partners and communities. Five elements are proposed:
 - a) Establishment of a Flood Resilience Role,
 - b) Restructure of the Flood Risk Manager function,
 - c) Enhancement of the Council's Emergency Planning function,
 - d) The *Ready for Anything* programme,
 - e) Hosting a Flood Defence Foundation Degree student.
7. **Community Resilience Role:** To take forward a programme to enhance community resilience, meeting a range of the recommendations made by the independent inquiry, it is proposed to establish a fixed-term Community Resilience Officer post. The post holder will develop programmes of work with all partners and communities. The proposed outcomes for the role are:
 - Engagement with communities and partners, including Flood Action Groups, Flood Wardens, and Local Resilience Forums
 - Promotion and increased take up of flood warden roles
 - More communities preparing community action plans
 - Promotion and increased take up the EA flood warning service, development of our flood recovery role, collation of flood incident data to support EA flood warning improvements

- Effective partnership working through enhanced relationships between the community, the local authority and key partners including the Environment Agency
 - Increased flood risk awareness promoting individual and collective action
 - Raised community awareness and empowerment through a programme of engagement, training and trial emergency exercises
 - Focus on the financial impacts of flooding on vulnerable groups
 - Development of wider awareness of flood risk insurance opportunities for residents and businesses
 - Working with schools and community youth organisations to develop learning packages
 - Awareness raising through flood fairs and themed campaigns
 - Support communities and businesses in the identification of effective flood resilience and resistance measures that can better prepare their property against the impacts of future flood events
 - Work with the Council and EA in the development of the York five year flood plan outputs
8. These outcomes will make a major contribution to ensuring that communities and businesses in York are more resilient to flood risk and are enabled proactively to manage flood risk and minimise the impact of future flooding. The post will work alongside broader Council initiatives that seek to support people to maintain their independence in their communities and homes through actively identifying the assets skills and knowledge of people and their support networks. For example, Adult Social Care staff are working to use the strengths of local communities and voluntary sector organisations to create new social bonds that will actively sustain and support people. The opportunity to identify and help people prepare for and, where possible, avoid crises arising not only from issues of personal health and social care, but also from the environment or their homes, will be extremely important to the aim of supporting resilient residents in the future.
9. It is proposed that the role is fixed-term for 18 months by which time it is expected that all the independent inquiry recommendations will have been delivered. At the end of this period an assessment will be made of how those recommendations that require long- term sustained delivery with communities will continue to be progressed

and a further report will be made to members with recommendations for the future.

10. **Flood Risk Management Function:** It is proposed to restructure the Flood Risk Manager role to increase it from a 0.5 FTE post to a full-time post. The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) role was established by the Flood & Water Management Act (2010) and places duties on unitary and county level local authorities. The demands placed upon LLFAs require close liaison with all other Risk Management Authorities as well as internal and external partners to deliver solutions to manage current and future flood risks. The wide programme of works associated with the recommendations of the York Flood Inquiry, together with the significant additional flood risk and regeneration investment targeted on the city represent a significant commitment for the role of Flood Risk Manager. Providing sufficient capacity within the role will be key to successful delivery of these programmes.
11. The current Flood Risk Manager also functions as Highways Asset Manager. This role is key to developing local and national funding bids (attracting more than £10m in additional capital funding to the service in the next 5 years), developing policy, ensuring performance, implementing new methods (e.g. the innovative highways digital data collection trials currently being supported by DfT, and protecting the Council's position in legal proceedings. This role therefore warrants a full-time post and it is proposed to restructure to create full-time roles of both Flood Risk Manager and Highway Asset Manager. This will be achieved within existing revenue and capital budgets. The Flood Risk Manager will work alongside the EPU reporting to the Assistant Director (Assistant Director Transport Highways and Environment).
12. **Emergency Planning Unit (EPU):** The major floods experienced in 2012 and 2015 revealed a lack of resilience within the EPU with its two officers being required to work 14 hour shifts at key times. Whilst this was managed in the case of those events, an incident lasting for any longer period would render this arrangement unsustainable. Furthermore, should an incident occur when one of the officers was on leave the ability of the Unit to maintain an emergency planning officer presence within a Silver Command or tactical coordination group would be compromised.
13. To address this it is proposed that both the Community Resilience Officer (see above) and the Flood Risk Manager are added to the EPU rota. This will require the Community Resilience Officer post to

be established at a level where it is capable of functioning as an emergency planning assistant. This will increase the rota to 4 individuals, providing a satisfactory level of resilience and ensuring that the Council is able to meet its statutory obligations as a “Category One Responder”.

14. The independent inquiry recommended that a trial be conducted of training reserve emergency planning officers. It is considered that the measures proposed here to enhance the core EPU rota will provide a more robust solution than relying on staff who are already fully committed to current roles and lack the capacity to attend the regular training that would be required. It will also be more cost - effective, obviating the need for extensive on-call payments to a significant number of staff. Notwithstanding this, measures will be taken to provide enhanced emergency planning training for appropriate service managers. This will provide increased resilience in the event of an emergency, complementing rather than substituting for the core EPU competence in the first instance.
15. It is recommended that the proposed arrangements for EPU are established on a trial basis for 18 months. At the end of this period a review will be undertaken as set out in paragraph 9 above. This review will include the continued need for the Community Resilience Officer post and the impact on the EPU’s resilience of any new arrangements that may replace this post. The review will consider how successful training of service managers in the EPU role has proved and the potential of this arrangement over the long-term for enhancing EPU’s resilience.
16. **The *Ready for Anything* programme:** Following on from the good work of volunteers, community groups and businesses who responded to the Boxing Day 2015 floods, York CVS, supporting by the MIRT team, set up a programme to help provide a coordinated volunteering response in the event of future floods or other major incident. Residents and organisation that originally registered to help were contacted to sign up and attend training. This provision is now in place and CVS are ready to move on to address community resilience, building resources in areas which may be hit by flooding again. They plan to engage and support community groups to create local emergency plans and relay practical advice and support to households at risk of future floods, supporting community groups to:
 - Create emergency plans for their own neighbourhood using planning templates and adapting best practice to suit their needs
 - Distribute information in the community on flood readiness

- Identify and support neighbourhood champions to maintain two-way contact with statutory organisations in an emergency
 - Identify and publicise a local hall to be a meeting place and temporary shelter in an emergency
 - Purchase necessary equipment such as torches and hi-vis vests for community groups
 - As part of a wider programme to engage young people, create story sacks to reassure and inform young children on flooding.
17. CVS's initiative targets specific streets within the wards hit hardest by the 2015 floods. Working closely with the Council, the Major Incident Response Team (MIRT) and the Two Ridings Community Foundation and listening to community groups they have identified the practical measures which would be of real benefit to residents. A bespoke emergency process will be devised and implemented locally. This would mean a faster response to households affected by flooding or other emergencies. Residents would benefit from access to household emergency plans in a format appropriate to them enabling them to take measures to protect themselves and their property in a flood.
18. This package, which is available for Guildhall, Heworth, Huntington and New Earswick, Fishergate and Micklegate wards, is exactly the type of locally tailored solution meeting local priorities for which ward budgets were created and it is expected that wards will want to use their budgets for this purpose.
19. **Flood Defence Foundation Degree student:** The Council has hosted a student in the past on a placement that combines work based learning with block release to university. The enhanced Flood Risk Manager role would provide a staff resource to mentor such a student in conjunction with the EPU. This initiative would provide a further resource during the 2 years that the student would be with us creating greater resilience in the FRM and EPU, as well as a trained and competent person who could fill any future flood risk roles that may be available. Part funding by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is being explored. It is proposed that officers explore this possibility further including whether this could be formally recognised as a Council apprenticeship opportunity.

Council Plan

20. This initiative furthers a number of Council Plan priorities including:
- Local businesses can thrive

- Residents live and thrive in a city which allows them to contribute fully to their communities and neighbourhoods
- Residents are encouraged and supported to live healthily
- Residents are protected from harm

Implications

21. **Financial:** The proposals contained in this paper have the following costs:

Community Resilience Officer:

- Salary including on-costs over 18 months: £50k
- Operational budgets over two financial years:
 - Event and promotional materials – leaflets, posters, mapping, DVDs etc. £20k
 - Event delivery £10k
 - Development of communication and awareness materials e.g. flood awareness stickers on bins, GIS/computer visualisations, linkages with museum exhibits, branded dry bags for valuable documents, demonstration homes/displays for flood resilient products £30k

Flood Risk Management Function restructure: This will be funded within existing budget resources.

The *Ready for Anything* programme: This is available for wards for them to buy into if they wish using their ward budgets.

Flood Defence Foundation Degree student: The cost to the authority would be £12,400 spread over two financial years. Part funding by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is being investigated.

The total one-off costs arising over two years total £122.4k including the full costs of the student.

The 2017/18 budget report identified that community resilience was a potential drawdown from the contingency. The contingency budget approved within the 17/18 budget is £500k; however elsewhere on the agenda it is recommended to carry forward £549k of unallocated contingency from 16/17. This would make the contingency £1,049k. If the recommendations of this report are accepted this would be reduced to £926.6k.

Any future ongoing recurring costs would need to be considered by Members through the annual Budget reports

22. The Better Decision Making tool has been used to identify impacts. These impacts are very positive; however, the need is highlighted for careful engagement with all communities of identity in York alongside geographical communities.

Risk Management

23. In compliance with the Council’s risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified associated with the proposals contained in this report are those which could lead to the inability to meet business objectives and to deliver services, leading to damage to the Council’s reputation and failure to meet stakeholders’ expectations. The level of risk is assessed as “Low”. This is acceptable but means that regular monitoring is required of the operation of the new arrangements.

Contact Details

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		Report Approved	✓	Date	15/06/17
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Wards Affected:				All	✓
For further information please contact the author of the report					

Background papers: None

Annexes: None