

**Executive Member for Environment and
Climate Change Decision Session**

14 December 2022

Report of the Director of Economy & Place

York 5 Year Flood Plan Update

Summary

1. The flooding in late December 2015 followed an intense period of rainfall across November and December due to the impacts of Storms Desmond and Eva. Record river levels were observed in many river catchments across the north of England. More than 4,000 homes and 2,000 businesses flooded across Yorkshire with 453 properties and 174 businesses flooded in York.
2. Funding has been allocated to the Environment Agency (“**EA**”) following the floods to renew existing and provide new flood defences across the city, £38m has been allocated to the Foss Barrier improvements and a total of £64m to the wider flood defences across the City of York.
3. An update on progress has been supplied by the EA, this can be seen in **Annex 1**.
4. The City of York Council (the “**Council**”) are leading on the development of the scheme in Fulford, appraisal and design work has continued, review sessions and community meetings have been held, submission of the planning application is expected before the end of 2022.
5. The Council’s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (“**DEFRA**”) funded Innovative Flood Resilience project is being developed further through to the full outline business case that will be submitted to DEFRA in spring 2022. All financial and governance approvals are in place and final procurement of all project partners is being finalised.
6. A motion was tabled at the 16 December 2021 Council meeting detailing a range of actions and activities that were needed to ‘Clean up York’s Rivers’ <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=60979>

7. **Annex 2** details the motion and the progress of actions that have been commenced in response. A recommendation is made in paragraph 8 for future updates to be brought to the Executive Member on this issue.

Recommendations

8. It is recommended that the Executive Member for the Environment and Climate Change:
 - i. Note the updated report and the evidence presented by the Environment Agency in the session, feedback is sought from the Executive Member on all content; and
 - ii. Consider and endorse the progress of actions from the motion in **Annex 2**, the need to continue to work with all partners and use any opportunity to develop further studies and projects to better improve river quality and the usage of our rivers. Further updates will be brought to the Executive Member on this item.

Reason: To support the delivery of flood resilience interventions in York and across the wider River Ouse catchment.

Background

9. Following the development and publication of the York Five Year Plan (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/york-5-year-flood-plan>), the EA have developed detailed business cases and designs for schemes in 19 flood cells across the city.
10. The EA continue to work closely with the Council on all aspects of the York Five Year Plan, an update has been provided by the EA at **Annex 1**.
11. The detailed design and appraisal of flood defences and a pumping station on Germany Beck continues. The scheme will provide protection to homes and maintain access on Fordlands Road during flooding. The scheme will also aid future flood resilience on the A19.
12. The programme for the delivery of the detailed design and all permissions is almost complete but delays have been faced due to heritage and conservation matters. Public meetings have been held regularly with the most recent on the 17 November and 6th December 2022 to update residents on the project and the changes to the programme.

13. Planning application submission is now expected in late 2022. The construction phase for the project is expected to commence in late 2023.
14. The Council are developing works to increase the flood resilience of Millennium Bridge. Although physically impossible to raise the levels to prevent inundation in all future flood events the works will significantly reduce the likelihood of the east/west link across the bridge being unusable. Design work is ongoing, permissions and the delivery programme will be finalised in the new year.
15. The Defra funded Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme catchment scale natural flood risk management project has received all financial and governance approvals and the project has progressed into the delivery phase. Procurement of hydraulic and environmental modelling consultants, catchment advisors and academic partners has commenced and, in some cases, has been completed. Recruitment of the first catchment partner posts have progressed.
16. Over the next few months, the project team will be developing proposals for a grant scheme for natural flood management (NFM) measures in the river catchments upstream of York. Funding will be available for measures which will help reduce to reduce flood risk to people and property, based on current evidence about the effectiveness of a range of NFM measures. A wide range of partnerships and linkages have been formed by the project team and a number of case study demonstration sites have begun to be considered.
17. The North Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership (co-chaired by the City of York Council Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change) provide governance over the project and will be asked to approve details about how the grant scheme will operate and the initial proposed tranche of grant recipients at their meeting in February 2023. It is anticipated that most, if not all, grants will be made for measures outside of the City of York Council area, based on current evidence on the types of areas where NFM is most effective. The modelling carried out as part of the wider project will help to show the potential cumulative benefits of such measures to downstream communities, including York, over the longer term.
18. A wide range of reports of water quality issues across England and Wales in late 2021 illustrated public and political concerns over combined sewer overflows into our rivers and the perceived environmental damage that this can cause. A motion was tabled at the 16 December 2021 Council meeting -

<https://democracy.york.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=60979> – calling for a range of actions to ‘Clean up York’s Rivers’. **Annex 2** details the motion and the progress on actions to take this forward.

19. Water quality and the performance of Yorkshire Water combined sewer overflows is monitored by the Environment Agency, the Executive Member and Flood Risk Manager have met with the water company to discuss these issues. CYC are working closely with Yorkshire Water on their next funding settlement and their response to Government’s Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan. Noncompliant overflows will be identified, and we will work with Yorkshire Water to target funding to resolve issues wherever possible.
20. Our work to develop catchment scale flood risk solutions presents us with an opportunity to influence water quality issues across the wider River Swale/Ure/Nidd/Ouse boundaries. Detailed hydraulic and environmental modelling will be developed for the project and will aid the identification of possible improvements.
21. The project has recently formed formal links with a University of York led project looking at water quality issues across the wider river catchments, this will also consider overflows. This ambitious project seeks to transform how we evaluate the risks of chemical mixtures to freshwater biodiversity in UK rivers, the Rivers Swale, Ure and Nidd are included as key case study areas. The project will deliver an assessment framework that accounts for the characteristics of a specific river catchment and determines the combined impacts of mixtures of chemicals on water quality. It will develop land-use based understanding of the current and future risks of multiple chemicals in our landscapes and the factors that influence them. This will be achieved by generating a better understanding of how climate and catchment changes are affecting the sources and processes by which pollutants are entering river systems.
22. This four year project aligns well with our catchment scale work and formal linkages will be made throughout to help illustrate the current and future river quality issues in our city.
23. The motion calls for holistic and wide-ranging reporting to be developed to manage and enhance flood risk, environmental, heritage, regeneration and amenity aspects of our river, this will be difficult to deliver due to the wide range of partners and the scale of the wider contributing river catchment. However, the work detailed in paragraph 21 will give us an opportunity to embed this, updates will be brought to the Executive Member to develop this further.

Consultation

24. Public consultation on the York Five Year Plan continues through a range of flood cells, this is detailed in the update in **Annex 1** along with the programme of future consultation events.
25. Consultation on the Germany Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme continues as the design work commences.

Options

26. The principal options open to the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change are to comment on and review the work undertaken to date, the future work identified and the representations made by the EA and the Council on all detail provided in this report and its Annexes.

Analysis

27. On-going liaison will continue between the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change and the Council's Flood Risk Manager. Future briefings to the Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change Decision Session will be made to ensure key outputs and decisions are supported by the Council and to provide formal opportunities for members and the public to consult. Further recommendations will be made for agreement at these sessions.

Council Plan

28. Improved provision of flood defences supports a prosperous city for all through safer communities for residents, businesses and visitors, a wide range of consultation events will ensure this is in line with the needs and expectations of local communities.

Implications

29. **Financial** – Funding is allocated directly to the EA. The additional funding is available to be directed towards key flood risk projects in the city in the short term. The extent of required works may require wider funding and DEFRA funding bids will be developed. There are likely to be contribution requirements as part of this wider work.
30. Although the majority of funding for Council's scheme in Fulford is secured a DEFRA Partnership Funding bid is to be developed to finalise the funding package.

31. All funding for the Innovative Flood Resilience Project is secured. The procurement strategy for the delivery phase of the project has been approved, this was endorsed by Council Executive on the 28th July 2022 <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=13288>
32. **Property** – The Site Investigation programme will include sites under Council ownership and/or control, consultation will be carried out with Estates teams and all relevant agreements will be put in place.
33. **Legal** - The governance and cross border working arrangements needed for the delivery phase of the Innovative Flood Resilience Project were endorsed by Council Executive on the 28th July 2022 <https://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=13288>
34. **Human Resources (HR)** – No implications.
35. **One Planet Council/Equalities** – No implications.
36. **Crime and Disorder** – No implications.
37. **Information Technology (IT)** – No implications.

Risk Management

38. No known risks are identified at this time, detailed risk management work will be developed as the business case and detailed design works commence.

Contact Details

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Report **Date** 05/12/2022
Approved

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all **All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: **Annex 1** York 5 Year Flood Plan Update Apr22
Annex 2 York 5 Year Flood Plan Update Apr22