

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Environment and Climate Change
Date	12 August 2020
Present	Councillor Widdowson (Executive Member)
In Attendance	James Gilchrist (Assistant Director of Transport, Highways and Environment), Steve Wragg (Flood Risk Manager), Ben Hughes (Environment Agency Project Director for the York Flood Risk Programme) and Louise Cook (Democracy Officer)

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or discloseable pecuniary interests she may have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session, and the Joint Budget Decision Session with the Executive Members for Transport and Economy & Strategic Planning, held on 13 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Executive Member at a later date.

3. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the session under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. York February Flood Review

The Executive Member considered a report that provided a review of response to flooding in York following storms in February and early March 2020 and an update from the Environment Agency on the progress of the York Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The Flood Risk Manager, the Assistant Director of Transport, Highways and Environment and the Environment Agency Project Director for the York Flood Risk Programme were all in attendance to provide an update, where they informed the Executive Member that:

- February 2020 had been confirmed as the wettest on record leading to four significant river peak levels, leaving significant areas of the city centre and outlying villages in flood alert and warning status for more than three weeks, with riverside access routes for pedestrians and cyclists being underwater for the majority of February.
- All flood plans including temporary measures were enacted by City of York Council, the Environment Agency (EA) and Yorkshire Water and the cities flood defences prevented flooding to around 1056 properties and the A19 access was maintained, which would have been flooded previously.
- All partners worked collaboratively to deliver flood response operations and communications and thanks was expressed to City of York Council officers who provided a 24 hour on call service.
- A Single Version of The Truth document was developed which detailed all aspects of the emerging incidents, latest forecasts, operational actions and likely impacts. This was updated daily and distributed to all key internal departments, Councillors, Parish Councillors, flood groups, the Local Resilience Forum and MPs.
- Forecast flood levels shown on the gov.uk website could be over predicted and differ from the information officers provided to partners and the public.

Officers highlighted the recommendations in the report and they answered questions raised by the Executive Member, where it was noted that:

- Timely and direct messages to residents was essential and that communications regarding the impact of flooding and preventative measures available should be issued from early autumn.
- The Single Version of The Truth document would be developed as messaging and communications were improved in advance of flooding and built into the flood plan.

- Officers would consider how they monitored the raw data to ensure residents received tailored and up to date forecasts, flood warnings and alerts in their areas.
- The replacement flood gate at Lendal Bridge had been delayed and would now be installed in spring 2021.

The Executive Member commended all officers and partners for ensuring that progress continued to be made on flood alleviation and prevention in York and she requested officers monitor the delay and installation of the flood gate.

Resolved: That the report and the update at Annex 2 be noted and the following be agreed:

- i. Emergency Response Procedures – co-location of internal officers worked well and should be reinforced in the flood plan, linkages to the York Flood Group should be reviewed.
- ii. Emergency Response Procedures – further awareness sessions for key duty officers across agencies were to be considered to ensure awareness and understanding of their roles.
- iii. Operational – acting early to deploy temporary measures was successful, this should be recognised and supported as best practice and all teams be encouraged to act in this way.
- iv. Operational – The flood resilience measures under consideration for Fulford were to be developed further and additional funding be sought to enable their delivery.
- v. Operational – Sandbags were deployed in accordance with risk and forecast, this worked as an effective use of resource but need to communicate this better to affected communities so they know what to expect.
- vi. Warning and Informing – Forecast levels were included for Viking recorder on the .gov.uk website as part of a trial. This functionality was not available on all EA level gauges. The website included a statement to refer to alerts

and warnings for information. Better understanding was needed by all users of this service to explain its limitations. All communications should provide supporting information to explain this, Environment Agency were supportive of this and example text was provided at Annex 1 of the report.

- vii. Communications and Media – The Single Version of The Truth worked well to prove a rolling update on the forecasts, escalation and impacts of the flooding. The consequences of River Ouse flooding were well known and responses rehearsed, messaging and communication can be developed in advance of flooding and built into the flood plan.
- viii. Impact – Environment Agency led schemes in areas affected by the event were essential to provide future flood resilience, all involved were to commit to their effective and timely delivery.
- ix. Impact – The funding available for flood signage updates should be informed by feedback from the event to ensure it was targeted effectively and has maximum impact.
- x. Impact – Council teams and partners support affected businesses wherever possible, businesses will be encouraged to ensure they were prepared for future flooding and business continuity planning takes this into account.

Reason: To confirm that the Executive Member was aware of the current position and to ensure that progress continued to be made on flood alleviation and prevention in the City of York.

5. Germany Beck Flood Scheme Update

The Executive Member considered a report that provided an update on the Germany Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme and requested she endorsed the procurement and development of the detailed design stage of the scheme and the funding options to deliver the construction phase.

The Flood Risk Manager, the Assistant Director of Transport, Highways and Environment and the Environment Agency Project Director for the York Flood Risk Programme were all in attendance to provide an update. They informed the Executive Member that City of York Council (CYC) had taken the lead in the development of a Germany Beck Flood Alleviation Scheme and that consultants were working on the wider Environment Agency (EA) led programme to develop a range of options that would better maintain a dry access to the Fordlands community, protect properties in this location and enhance the existing flood protection works on the A19.

Officers confirmed that the design, construction and whole life maintenance costs of the preferred solution was estimated at £4.9m and the various funding sources available were discussed. It was noted that the wider CYC funding available to contribute to the delivery of wider benefits from the EA led programme would be considered by Executive.

The Executive Member noted the benefits the scheme would have on residents and the A19 and she thanked officers and the EA for their continued contribution to keeping residents safe.

Resolved:

- (i) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (ii) That the development of the next stage of appraisal, as detailed in paragraphs 31 & 32 of the report, be agreed.
- (iii) That the funding needs be considered by Executive for further consideration.

Reason: To confirm that the Executive Member was aware of the current position and to ensure that progress continued to be made on the Germany Beck Food Alleviation Scheme.

Cllr Widdowson, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 3.00 pm and finished at 3.44 pm].