

North Yorkshire County Council

Business and Environmental Services

Extraordinary report to Executive Members

20 January 2021

Innovation Resilience Bid – Joint working with City of York Council

Report of the Assistant Director – Highways and Transportation

1.0 Purpose Of Report

- 1.1 To inform the Corporate Director, Business and Environmental Services (BES) and BES Executive Members of the Innovation Resilience Fund.
- 1.2 To seek approval of the proposed NYCC approach to the fund, which includes working with City of York Council (COYC) (which will be the submitting authority) on a catchment based bid, with the potential to therefore give cross-boundary benefits.

2.0 Background to the fund

- 2.1 In the 2020 Budget, the government announced a programme to test and demonstrate ways to help communities become more resilient to flooding and coastal change. The programme will allocate £150 million of the £200 million to 25 areas in England. Each of the selected partnership projects will receive on average £6 million between 2021 and 2027.
- 2.2 Projects must be led by a single Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) or Coast Protection Authority (CPA), although successful projects will represent a consortium of other local partners and can include applications across administrative boundaries. LLFAs are encouraged as the lead applicants, to proactively engage with local risk management authorities and regional flood and coastal committees as they develop their applications.
- 2.3 The closing date for expressions of interest is the 29th January 2021. From this process, projects will be invited to develop their ideas. Successful projects will be announced in spring 2021 and will receive on average £6 million over the six years.
- 2.4 This bid clearly is looking for large scale, ambitious, innovative projects for large funding and those projects which make the widest partnership links will be favourably viewed.
- 2.5 NYCC and COYC propose to work together on a bid at an ambitious whole catchment scale. This would match the drivers of the funding source, but would remove some of the BCR constraints associated with proposing ambitious flood mitigation across a rural area. The project would seek to add to the body of evidence regarding the viability of the catchment scale/Natural Flood Management approach (NFM), as well as its effectiveness, which much of the previous demonstration work has focussed on. City of York Council is to be the submitting authority to the fund.
- 2.6 The bid would be truly innovative in accepting the whole catchment ethos and understanding the relationship between the downstream beneficiaries and upstream facilitators for the approach.

3.0 Opportunities and risks for project bids within NY

- 3.1 Demonstrating attractive BCR's for flood mitigation or bids that give competitive outputs on a national scale is difficult in North Yorkshire (NY). This is due to the dispersed, rural nature of our communities and the relatively small number of properties that can be protected by any specific intervention. Notwithstanding this, the residual flood risk is significant and in previous flooding events in 2012, 2015, 2019 and most recently in February 2020, large swathes of the authority area (and indeed neighbouring downstream authorities) have been impacted by specific rainfall events, from catchments originating in the upstream areas of NY.
- 3.2 The wider economic effects of flooding then, whilst dispersed, are nonetheless keenly experienced in NY.
- 3.3 NY benefits from a number of proactive catchment partnerships and the potential of the approach is recognised within the county and in neighbouring urban authorities including York and Leeds, where the impacts of flooding events are more concentrated in urban settings.
- 3.4 Eyes therefore often look upstream for solutions, from attenuation potential, to targeted land management. It is not however easy to demonstrate the effectiveness of any one particular measure. In order to add to the body of evidence, modelling and interventions need to be delivered on an ambitious scale. Large projects such as the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme have looked to natural upstream measures to attempt to give a level of mitigation to support the hard engineering measures in the city centre.
- 3.5 Whilst there is a growing body of evidence concerning the effectiveness of whole catchment working and NFM, issues remain concerning its viability, which act as a hindrance to its mainstream acceptance.
- 3.6 Land management across a wider catchment area is in abstracted responsibility. The downstream benefits of NFM are not easily visualised by those in upstream areas when delivery is of a larger scale. Whilst initial capital costs for natural measures are relatively low, the costs associated with maintenance and loss of viable farmland are proportionately more significant than traditional flood mitigation. Costs to risk management authorities to take responsibility for these assets are too large to be realistic or sustainable.
- 3.7 Delivery to date then has been reliant on interest and goodwill as opposed to recompense and sustainability. This is a wider concern in rural authority areas like NYCC, where many upstream communities are reliant on farming and do not necessarily receive benefit from giving land to this approach.
- 3.8 Catchment partnership approaches are relatively new and innovative in themselves and given the above concerns, often work generates more questions than it answers. Whilst there are examples of ambitious work, projects are regrettably often self-contained and their success is location specific, based on opportunity, limited funding and more demonstrable biodiversity gains. They therefore do not necessarily add to the body of evidence that is needed to support this more strategic approach to catchment management solutions or raise confidence in its effectiveness.

3.9 The relatively low BCR across NYCC boundary is a risk to success to this ambitious funding pot. By embracing catchment scale working however, across authority boundaries, in a manner that is considerate to the origin of the water that affects both authority areas, this is turned into an opportunity for innovation in approach that recognises the wider downstream beneficiaries. There is therefore a potential for a confident project that is a good fit with the ethos of the bid. It would add to the evidence base and give opportunity to address some of these delivery constraints, whilst giving clear benefits to both authority areas.

4.0 Innovation Expression of Interest

4.1 The bid in preparation therefore seeks to add to the body of knowledge concerning natural flood management. The ultimate objective of the project would be to link those who have the means to facilitate upstream flood prevention measures with those who would benefit and provide the means for them to reward the positive flood risk decisions made by their upstream neighbours, to give benefit to all.

4.2 This will be delivered in phases, as follows:

Work Stream one: Catchment modelling to identify the opportunities for NFM

Work Stream 2: Informed by the outputs of Work Stream 1, a number of NFM schemes will be delivered during the early years of the programme to showcase the methods and practices that can be used to produce benefits downstream.

Work Stream 3: Will utilise the outcomes of the previous work streams to develop and deliver a rich and sustained programme of awareness and communication activities in the rural and urban areas of the SUNO (Swale Ure Nidd and Ouse) catchment.

4.3 The innovation programme team will, through the steer of the SUNO Flood Partnership, fund existing and develop new initiatives to ensure a network of advisors and influencers able to connect to the beneficiaries of NFM throughout the catchment.

4.4 The project would bolster the link between the work of the catchment partnerships and the lead local flood authorities as it represents a project, which would truly address flood risk through a catchment scale. Because of the established programmes and partnerships, the two authorities are also in a position to demonstrate confidence that the work will succeed.

4.5 The University of York is interested in potentially providing academic support to the project, through its links with ICASP and a meeting between COYC, university reps and NYCC is planned for early in the new year.

4.6 Similarly, the LEP has indicated early support for the project, as it demonstrates cross boundary working and ties to devolution ambitions regarding natural capital. It demonstrates positive delivery of catchment wide solutions across authority areas.

4.7 The submission of one bid, across both authority areas reduces competition between the authorities, whilst also strengthening the bid. It demonstrates effective cross boundary working in the North Yorkshire area

5.0 Actions to progress

5.1 Work on the expression of interest continues and there are a number of meetings with interested parties early in the new year.

5.2 COYC will be the submitting authority. As the “bidding” authority, COYC will put a paper regarding the EOI through its democratic procedures in early January. Letters of support and confirmation of the collaborative effort from NYCC would be beneficial for submission with the expression of interest to demonstrate the collaborative approach.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 As NYCC is not intended to be the authority which will submit the expression of interest, there are no financial implications arising from this report. If the bid is successful however the project would provide significant benefits for NYCC communities and flood risk mitigation in NY.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 Consideration has been given to any legal implications in submitting an expression of interest and there are none at this stage but it is acknowledged that legal implications may arise at the project planning and implementation stages.

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is included as Appendix A of this report. No impacts are anticipated as this decision solely relates to collaborative working across authority areas and seeks approval for NYCC to support an expression of interest to be made by a third party authority, with the potential, through collaborative working, to benefit NY residents.

9.0 Climate Change Implications

9.1 A Climate Change Impact Assessment is included as Appendix B of this report. No impacts are anticipated given the report seeks approval for NYCC to support an expression of interest to be made by a third party.

10.0 Recommendation(S)

- 10.1 It is recommended that the BES Corporate Director, in consultation with BES Executive Members:
- i. Note the proposed approach to the Innovation Resilience Bid
 - ii. Agree to the collaborative approach being taken in response to the bid fund, to be demonstrated in a letter of support to City of York Council as the bidding authority, to be included in the expression of interest.

Barrie Mason
Assistant Director - Highways and Transportation

Author of Report: Emily Mellalieu

Background Documents: None

Initial equality impact assessment screening form (As of October 2015 this form replaces 'Record of decision not to carry out an EIA')			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Business and Environmental Services		
Service area	Highways and Transportation		
Proposal being screened	Approval to support a collaborative bid, to be submitted by City of York Council with support from NYCC, to the Innovation Resilience Fund		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Emily Mellalieu, Stephen Lilgert		
What are you proposing to do?	COYC will submit a bid on behalf of both authorities for a whole catchment project, which provides upstream Natural flood mitigation and links it to downstream beneficiaries		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	The fund has been opened by central govt. It is a good opportunity to attract funding for innovative flood mitigation projects. It is considered that an ambitious project scaling authority boundaries will be well received and will ultimately benefit downstream communities in the SUNO catchment		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	There is no financial implication arising from the decision		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYCC's additional agreed characteristic As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 			
If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be a significant adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Yes	No	Don't know/No info available
Age		No	
Disability		No	
Sex (Gender)		No	
Race		No	
Sexual orientation		No	
Gender reassignment		No	
Religion or belief		No	
Pregnancy or maternity		No	
Marriage or civil partnership		No	

NYCC additional characteristic			
People in rural areas		No	
People on a low income		No	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		No	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No.		
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	No		
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	X	Continue to full EIA:
Reason for decision	The content of the bid relates to a geographical area, any action which may arise from the submission, relates to the physicality of the location and its associated flood risk, rather than being a decision which may be accessed differently or would have different implications depending on any protected characteristics an individual may have.		
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Barrie Mason		
Date	12 January 2021		



Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Innovation Resilience Bid – collaborative working with COYC
Brief description of proposal	As above
Directorate	BES
Service area	Network Strategy
Lead officer	Emily Mellalieu
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	
Date impact assessment started	

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

Two distinct bids could be submitted by NYCC and COYC. These would have competed with each other and through working together benefits can be realised in both authority areas.

The bid is for flood mitigation involving working with natural processes. However the aim was realised, it would have relatively low climate change implications in terms of other flood mitigation measures.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

The proposal is cost neutral to NYCC and COYC. It is proposed that NYCC supports a bid by COYC which will include additional resource and flood mitigation that will benefit the community in NYCC area.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where	No impact (Place a X in the box below where	Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel		X		<p>This report seeks approval for NYCC to work collaboratively on and support the submission of a bid by City of York Council. There are no emissions resulting.</p>		
	Emissions from construction		X		As above		
	Emissions from running of buildings		X		As above		
	Other		X		As above		
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>		X		As above			
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>		X		As above			

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes over and above business as usual Evidence or measurement of effect Figures for CO₂e Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>		X				
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>		X		<p>Whilst this report only seeks approval for the bid, the resulting work if successful would reduce flood risk using natural flood measures and add to the body of knowledge surrounding this more sustainable approach</p>		
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		X		<p>The resulting work if the bid is successful would have the potential to enhance conservation and wildlife positively</p>		
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		X		<p>The resulting work if the bid is successful would have the potential to positively enhance distinctive characteristics, features and qualities of NY's landscape</p>		

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
Other (please state below)		X		As above there are potential positive effects if the bid should be successful.		

<p>Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.</p>
<p>n/a</p>

<p>Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.</p> <p>No impacts are anticipated as this decision relates to the submission of a bid by COYC for a collaborative cross-border project which would have benefits to communities in NYCC administrative area.</p>
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Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Emily Mellalieu
Job title	Development Management Team Leader
Service area	H&T -Network Strategy
Directorate	BES
Signature	E Mellalieu
Completion date	4/1/2020

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Barrie Mason

Date: 12 January 2021