

North Yorkshire County Council

Richmond (Yorks) Area Constituency Committee

6th June 2022

Flooding Working Group - Feedback

Purpose of Report

To note the discussions of the Flooding Working Group and consider any further action from the issues highlighted.

Background

At its meeting held September 2021 the Committee formed a Sub-Group of three Members, County Councillor David Hugill, County Councillor Yvonne Peacock and County Councillor Annabel Wilkinson, to consider flooding issues and flood prevention work in the Constituency area and feedback to the main Committee.

Three Meetings were held as follows:-

25th November 2021 with Emily Mellalieu (Development Management Team Leader, Highways and Co-ordinator for flooding issues at NYCC) **(Appendix A)**

18th January 2022 with Roger Smith and Matthew Cooke (Swale/Ure Internal Drainage Board), James Copeland (NFU) **(Appendix B)**

17th March 2022 with Robin Derry (Flood and Coastal Risk Management Advisor – Environment Agency) **(Appendix C)**

Emily Mellalieu and Steve Loach (Democratic Services) were also present at each of the meetings.

Copies of the notes from those meetings are appended to this report, as detailed.

Main Issues Arising

A summary of the main issues and points raised relating to action to be considered, during the discussions, is outlined below:-

- The structure for reporting flooding issues is complicated - it is difficult to determine who to approach initially for different aspects of flooding and flood prevention
- The co-ordination between the various organisations and agencies relating to flooding issues appears to be a challenge.
- Highways should have an involvement in the planning of flood prevention schemes.
- Provide a dedicated, single point of contact for advice on flooding prevention and, in particular, for flooding events.
- Provide a simple mapping/signposting framework to identify who to contact and when to contact.
- Work more closely with local communities to assist with their engagement with relevant bodies and agencies.
- Provide clear details as to how to access the Flooding Action Plan.
- Consider allowing landowners to be directed to available flood prevention funding, allowing them to initiate flood prevention work, rather than them having to approach NYCC for this.
- Ensure that the NYCC website contains details that are relevant and are tailored for the needs of local communities.
- Encourage local communities, through Parish Councils and Parish Meetings, to develop local resilience plans, where these are not already in place, as they assist with the identification of relevant contacts during flooding events.
- Evaluate to what extent the Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) can be utilised to assist flood prevention schemes.
- Whilst peatland has a significant effect on flooding risk, helping to reduce that, the re-wetting of the North Yorkshire Moors, for example, would have a dramatic effect on the iconic landscape, with large swathes of the purple heather having to be removed. This would be likely to have an impact on tourism in that area, which would impact farmers/landowners financially due to the secondary, diversified businesses they had developed in line with high levels of tourism, therefore, there had to be a carefully balanced approach to this.
- Consider amalgamating funding initiatives to address flood risks.
- Feed into the mapping exercise of the IDBs which is looking to reduce flood risk.
- Consider how support can be offered to landowners, allowing them to offer land, particularly agricultural land, as flood alleviation pools, to prevent the flooding of properties and infrastructure, as currently there is no compensation scheme for this.
- Ensure that the various co-ordination Committees (eg - Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee) effectively provide feedback to local representatives and local communities.
- Continue to explore methods of flood prevention such as “leaky dams” and “attenuation pools” to provide appropriate solutions for specific locations.
- Encourage enhanced communication between the various bodies, agencies, elected representatives and local communities. Consider having a flood warden in each local community to act as a contact point for flooding issues.

- Ensure that local communities are provided with the specific flood prevention equipment that they have requested for flooding events rather than adopting a 'one size fits all' approach.
- Ensure that an appropriate contact point is established for emergency flooding situations, and is available at all times.
- Details are currently emerging of a large scale flood alleviation project which will provide flood prevention schemes for large parts of the Constituency area, with a view to reducing the flood risk in the City of York. A consultation process was currently being developed and it was requested that this be fed into the Area Constituency Committee, and that progress reports be provided at regular intervals.

Recommendation

(i) Members are asked to consider the issues of note arising from the Working Group meetings, and to determine what action, if any, should be undertaken in relation to the issues raised.

Steve Loach
Democratic Services

May 2022