

Housing and Infrastructure Board

Thursday, 08 December 2022

Revised Draft South Yorkshire Connected by Water Plan

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
Reason why exempt:	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Policy Decision
Is this a Key Decision?	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan of Key Decisions?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary

To consider and endorse the Draft Updated Connected by Water Plan.

What does this mean for businesses, people and places in South Yorkshire?

The Plan aims to help identify and secure additional funding and investment to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses, as well as improving the resilience of places to climate change and potential future flooding.

Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- Consider and endorse the Revised Draft Updated Connected by Water Plan.

Consideration by any other Board, Committee, Assurance or Advisory Panel

N/A

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the 2019 flood event in South Yorkshire, the previous Mayor and Local Authority Leaders submitted a South Yorkshire Business and Infrastructure Resilience Priority Flood Programme to Government, which included the proposal to prepare a catchment wide flood plan covering the whole of South Yorkshire.
- 1.2 The result was the development of the Connected by Water Plan by the MCA Executive, Environment Agency, the four South Yorkshire Authorities and Yorkshire Water. This partnership approach reflects a new, more effective and integrated approach to future flood policy and investment, taking a holistic 'South Yorkshire' approach to cover all rivers and watercourses, rather than continuing to consider flood policy and investments in a piecemeal way. It will also enable the potential future impacts of climate change to be taken into account and better understand the contribution that Natural Flood Management can play in building resilience and reducing future flooding.
- 1.3 The Connected by Water Plan was launched in January 2022 and partners have moved into the implementation phase. However, the Plan is a 'living document' to facilitate the development of a long-term strategy for flood risk management and climate resilience, and an updated draft Plan has been prepared (see Appendix A) which the Board is invited to consider and endorse. The Plan has also recently been considered and endorsed by the South Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership, which is part of the joint governance arrangements for the programme.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The Plan outlines the actions to be undertaken to reduce flood risk, mitigate climate change and support climate resilient communities across South Yorkshire.
- 2.2 There have been a number of successes and highlights following its launch as follows, which are also included in the presentation (see Appendix B):
 - Development and delivery of schemes on the South Yorkshire flood risk programme, and the further development of the South Yorkshire 'Shovel Ready' capital sub-programme.
 - Progress with demonstrator Natural Flood Management projects as part of the Source to Sea programme.
 - Progress in securing resources and investment required for future years, including the appointment of a Connected by Water Programme Manager and the current recruitment of a Communications and Engagement Advisor.
 - Development of a portfolio of flood risk management scheme case studies.
 - Progress in capturing collective maintenance activities and requirements.
 - Steps made in the development of multi-agency data sharing protocol.
 - Development of action plans to aid engagement with priority communities.
 - A good response to public consultation on the Plan, and a positive media response following the Plan's launch.
- 2.3 The Plan is now being brought up-to-date ahead of being re-published in January 2023. The key proposed changes to the Plan relate to:
 - Minor tweaks to text to reflect work in delivery and updates to case studies.

- Updates to theme introductions to reflect work completed in 2022 which will now become business as usual and to incorporate response to the public consultation.
- Revision of Appendix 1 based on updated South Yorkshire capital flood programme
- Addition of an Appendix 2 to record completed/removed actions.

2.4 With regard to the actions identified in the Plan:

- 7% of actions have been completed.
- 38% of actions remain unchanged.
- 55% of actions are being updated (including 12% of actions where Step 1 has been completed and Step 2 is being defined).
- New actions have also been identified and included within Theme 4 Communication, Engagement and Building Resilience.

2.5 The latest Revised Draft Plan is attached at Appendix A, with yellow highlights indicating changes from the 2022 Plan. It should be noted that work is continuing to implement the changes set out above in preparing a final version for publication in January 2023.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

To endorse the updated Revised Draft Connected by Water Plan, subject to any comments by the Board.

3.2 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

The key risks relate to the implementation of the Plan as follows:

- That delivery partners are unable to implement the Catchment Plan actions agreed in the Plan. This has been mitigated by the appointment of a programme manager dedicated to Connected by Water and the ongoing recruitment for a Communications and Engagement Advisor, both of which will work on behalf of all partner organisations.
- That sufficient funding is not available to deliver the early actions in the Plan. In response all key Partners are continuing to consider how they could contribute resources to fund the immediate and longer term actions.
- That there is insufficient public and private funding and investment available to deliver the whole Catchment Plan over time. Work will continue to identify opportunities to help deliver the Plan, and partners along with Local Authority Leaders and MPs will continue to lobby Government for further flood investment in South Yorkshire.

3.3 Option 2

To not endorse the final draft updated Connected by Water Plan.

3.4 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

This option would negatively impact on the successful partnership approach adopted to date and risk the loss of the consistent approach adopted across South Yorkshire to address flood risk. It could result in different partners and resources approaching flood policy and investment in an uncoordinated way.

3.5 **Recommended Option**

Option 1 is recommended to continue the shared, joined-up strategic approach to flood mitigation and to maximise resource targeting and effectiveness.

4. **Consultation on Proposal**

- 4.1 Both the Housing and Infrastructure Board and the South Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership (SYFRP) are jointly overseeing and are contributing to the implementation and updating of the Plan.

5. **Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

- 5.1 The SYFRP, on behalf of the Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), endorsed the draft updated Connected by Water Plan at its recent meeting in November 2022. The endorsement of the Board is similarly requested along with any comments. The final updated Plan will be published in January 2023 once the final amendments and design changes.

6. **Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice**

- 6.1 The Environment Agency, the MCA Executive and other partners are providing financial and in-kind support to implement the Plan. SYMCA has committed £5.5m of Gainshare funding to help deliver capital flood schemes as well as supporting implementation of the Plan. Additional resources will be required to deliver the immediate and longer- term actions, and all Partners are considering how they could contribute to supporting delivery.

7. **Legal Implications and Advice**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

8. **Human Resources Implications and Advice**

- 8.1 Consideration will need to be given to the resources for implementing the Plan, including the roles and resource requirements of SYMCA.

9. **Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice**

- 9.1 Ensuring equality and diversity is part of the Catchment Plan, aligning with the intentions of the Equality Act and Public Sector Equality Duty and the inclusivity policy approach of the Strategic Economic Plan.

10. **Climate Change Implications and Advice**

- 10.1 The climate and nature emergency requires a strong collective response to carbon reduction and to be more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The Plan contributes by capturing actions of partners to reduce flood risk and build climate resilience across South Yorkshire, improving information and evidence to support decision making, and support investment decisions and delivery. It may also support the delivery of net zero targets by the provision of carbon sequestration.

11. **Information and Communication Technology Implications and Advice**

- 11.1 None as a direct result of this report.

12. **Communications and Marketing Implications and Advice**

- 12.1 Communication on DEFRA Grant in Aid funding is managed by the Environment Agency, with work by Local Authorities to communicate directly with impacted communities on individual schemes. The updated Plan will be published in

January 2023 which will provide an opportunity for communications and media engagement for SYMCA, local authorities and partner organisations.
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List of Appendices Included:

A	Updated Revised Draft South Yorkshire Connected by Water Plan
B	Connected by Water Plan Presentation

Background Papers

Connected by Water Plan - January 2022.
