

Housing and Infrastructure Board

22 June 2021

South Yorkshire Flood Catchment Plan Update

Is the paper exempt from the press and public?	No
<i>Reason why exempt:</i>	Not applicable
Purpose of this report:	Discussion
Funding Stream:	Not applicable
Is this a Key Decision	No
Has it been included on the Forward Plan?	Not a Key Decision

Director Approving Submission of the Report:

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Executive Summary:

An update on ongoing work and themes informing the preparation of the South Yorkshire Flood Catchment Plan

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

The Catchment Plan could help identify and secure additional funding and investment that will reduce flood risk to homes and businesses, as well as improving the resilience of places to future flooding.

Recommendations:

- To note and comment on the workstreams being undertaken to prepare the South Yorkshire Flood Catchment 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, Mayor Dan Jarvis 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 aim of this proposal was to develop a new more effective and integrated collaborative approach to future flood policy and investment, by taking a holistic 'South Yorkshire' approach embracing all rivers and watercourses rather than continuing to consider flood policy and investments in a largely piecemeal way.
- 1.3 This approach was considered to offer the opportunity to both maximise funding opportunities and lead to more effective outcomes in terms of protecting homes and businesses from flooding in the future. It would also enable the potential future impacts of climate change to be taken into account and understand better the contribution that Natural Flood Management could play in building resilience to, and reducing, future flooding.
- 1.4 Initial work has begun to prepare the Draft Catchment Plan and the emerging workstreams and themes are presented for the Board's consideration.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The attached presentation at Appendix A provides an update on progress in preparing the South Yorkshire Catchment Plan. A steering group has been established to oversee the preparation of the Plan comprising of senior officers from the MCA Executive, Environment Agency, four South Yorkshire Authorities, and Yorkshire Water. The outputs of the work of the Group are reported to both this Board and the South Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership which are jointly overseeing the preparation of the Plan.
- 2.2 There are several purposes of the Plan as set out in the presentation, and the aim is for it to be a 'living document' to facilitate the development of a long term strategy for flood risk management and climate resilience. This will enable partners and communities to incorporate emerging data, knowledge and opportunities to continue to build and shape the Plan over time. Importantly, the programme arising from the Plan will provide a clear programme of well developed projects to secure the remaining investment that is required to alleviate and mitigate future flooding.
- 2.3 The preparation work is set around four key workstream themes, with one local authority leading on each of one of themes:
 1. Responding to the climate emergency
 2. Ensuring investment is prioritised, smart and based on evidence using the best available data and intelligence
 3. Strengthening the use of technology and operational management to build the capacity of Local Authorities and other Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to work together more effectively on an operational basis
 4. Community engagement and resilience

- 2.4 A workshop was held in late April to consider and discuss each of the key themes with local authority, Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water senior officers from a range of disciplines in order to obtain a broad perspective and multiple ideas and feedback on developing each of the key themes. A similar group of communication and marketing officers has also been established to provide advice on 'branding' and 'engagement.' It is intended to broaden engagement with a wider range of community stakeholders as the Plan is progressed.
- 2.5 The intention is to prepare the initial draft Plan for consideration by this Board in September, with a view to finalising the Plan by the end of the year.

3. Options Considered and Recommended Proposal

3.1 Option 1

Options for the Catchment Plan will be considered through the four key workstream themes to inform the content and proposals.

3.2 Option 1 Risks and Mitigations

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

- Lack of alignment of individual partners on contentious issues, including investment priorities. Engagement with key partners throughout the Plan's preparation seeks to ensure that any controversial issues are identified and addressed early in the Plan's preparation. Where issues cannot be resolved, options will be presented to decision makers for a steer and decision.
- Individual partners being unable to engage fully or support elements of the Plan's implementation. To minimise this risk, the four workstreams are each being led by one of the South Yorkshire Authorities with wider partners also involved to ensure policy and proposals are aligned with partners' policies and are realistically able to be delivered.
- That delivery partners are unable to commit to implementing the Catchment Plan once completed. Also, as above, broad engagement and ownership by a range of key partners throughout the Plan's preparation and implementation will seek to minimise this risk.
- That the causes of flood events are too complex and difficult to understand at a strategic whole catchment wide scale. To minimise this risk, senior officer flood risk management specialists from a range of organisations have been engaged with and are leading various elements of the Plan's preparation; as well as drawing on specialist flood modellers within partner organisations. This will be further supported by involving other key community stakeholders in developing the Plan to provide a broader understanding.
- That there is insufficient public and private funding and investment available to implement the Catchment Plan in a timely manner to meet the Plan's delivery targets. To minimise this risk, consideration is being given in developing the key workstream themes to resourcing issues for implementation. A key aim of the Catchment Plan is to help build a stronger strategic case for further Government and other investment in flood mitigation and adaptation measures. Mayor Jarvis, local authority Leaders and MPs will continue to lobby Government for further flood investment to deliver both South Yorkshire's Business and Infrastructure Resilience Flood

Priority Programme and this emerging Flood Catchment Plan; thereby protecting more homes, and businesses, and support economic recovery and growth in South Yorkshire.

3.3 Option 2

To not develop a South Yorkshire Flood Catchment Plan

3.4 Option 2 Risks and Mitigations

The key risk with this option is that there would continue to be no consistent approach adopted across South Yorkshire to address flood risk, and different partners and resources would not continue to approach flood policy and investment in a piecemeal way. The benefits of collaboration and developing and adopting joint priorities and maximising resource targeting and effectiveness would not be realised.

3.5 Recommended Option

Option 1 was the recommended option that Mayor Jarvis and local authority Leaders agreed with the Secretary of State.

4. Consultation on Proposal

4.1 The Housing and Infrastructure Board and SYFRP are overseeing and are contributing to the development of the Catchment Plan following the decision by Mayor Jarvis and local authority Leaders to prepare the Plan. Engagement with a range of community stakeholders will be part of the next stages in preparing the Plan. It is intended to present the Catchment Plan to the MCA for consideration by the end of the year.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 The views of the Board are requested at this stage on the emerging key workstream themes. The decision to approve the final document will be taken by both the MCA and the SYFRP (on behalf of the Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) following consideration and recommendation by the Housing and Infrastructure Board. This is anticipated to be by the end of 2021.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications and Advice

6.1 The Environment Agency (EA) is providing lead resources for preparing the Catchment Plan, with the MCA Executive and other partners providing in-kind support to the process. The EA would fund and procure any external support that is required.

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 Strategy, including the roles and resource requirements of the MCA.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications and Advice

- 9.1 Ensuring equality and diversity will be 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 Covid19 lockdown has shown the importance of good digital connectivity, particularly in relation to enabling people to effectively work from home, where possible; and access public health and other services online. A positive consequence of this has been a reduction in travelling and related pollution. Improved digital infrastructure / connectivity could therefore have a significant role in meeting net zero reduction targets related to transport.

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 Communicating on Grant in Aid DEFRA funding is managed by the Environment Agency, with work by local authorities to communicate directly with affected communities on individual schemes.

A wider communications plan will be prepared for the Catchment Plan as part of its preparation, and the MCA Executive Communications Team will be involved in this work.

List of Appendices Included

- A South Yorkshire Catchment Plan Update Presentation

Background Papers:

None