

Flood Risk Management Final Proposal

1. Background

At the last meeting the Group were presented with a breakdown of the key activities undertaken by the team and how their time was apportioned. The Group also considered a number of additional service options and the resourcing implications of them.

The Group acknowledged that even when the current vacant post is filled the current Flood Risk Management (FRM) team wouldn't have the capacity to undertake any extra work nor improve what is currently done.

2. Final Proposal

The Group has looked in detail at the level of resources and skills available, what the current team do and the volumes in regards to key tasks like responding on planning consultations. After taking all this into consideration the Group agreed in principle to increase the current capacity and skill base of the FRM team by two post; a Senior Flood Risk Engineer and a Trainee Flood Risk Engineer.

The expanded team will not only help to ensure that the Councils meet their statutory duties but are also able to more pro-active in –

- a) Carrying out inspections on critical ordinary watercourses and assets with a view to seeing riparian owners carry out work before watercourses become congested and assets become dilapidated
- b) Liaising / lobbying role and monitoring of the performance of Thames Water (TW), Welsh Water (WW), Severn Trent Water (STW) & the Environment Agency (EA)
- c) Developing / delivering flood prevention schemes
- d) Working with Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) to ensure they are meeting their statutory duties, i.e. highways maintenance
- e) Leading and assisting external partners in forming bids for external funding as opportunities arise
- f) Exploring Natural Flood Management schemes that either LLFA, EA or others do not intend to construct
- g) Respond to internal and external consultations (such as GWT, Water companies, upper Thames catchment, Severn estuary catchment etc) which will shape the future of the landscape and flood defence.

In addition to the more proactive work outlined above the expanded team will also be able to improve many of the activities they current undertake but are compromised due to resource constraints such as –

- a) Following up on enforcement cases to ensure the agreed actions have been undertaken.
- b) Improving the time taken to respond to follow up queries raised once the team have formally responded to a planning consultation
- c) Ensuring the target for Land Drainage consent applications is always met
- d) Monitoring the maintenance of Council assets such as trash screens to ensure both the quality of the work and frequency meets requirements
- e) Taking a greater role in the design of new schemes as this has always been the main advantage that the team has had over the other districts (and County Council LLFA teams) who inevitably have to rely on procuring consultants because of their lack of resource capability.

- f) Exploring new income opportunities either through options like new street sign positioning for a fee and offering specific support to other organisation, which would then help subsidise the cost of a more resilient FRM team

A key associated benefit of the proposal is that by recruiting a trainee this is aligned with the Councils / Publica's 'grow our own' approach, which will help with resilience and long term capabilities in this area at a time where the demand for these role is strong and salary levels very high.

3. Break down of work the new resources will undertaken

We have provided a breakdown of the work that we envisage the 2 new roles will undertake -

Proposed Senior FRM officer;

- 25%- Riparian maintenance (planned inspections, site meetings, required level surveys and other required surveys).
- 10%- Asset maintenance (trash screen inspections, bund inspections and council owned watercourses) including contractor procurement and supervision.
- 10%- Following up on opportunities to bid for funding towards delivering communal flood defence schemes but also water quality improvement schemes.
- 20%- Site inspections to check quality and compliance of new SUDS schemes being installed on new developments.
- 15%- Planning consultation responses.
- 10%- Assist with miscellaneous enquiries (internal and external).
- 10%- Create a liaison with GCC and OCC Highways on reported highway drainage issues.

Proposed Assistant FRM officer;

- 25%- Assist with delivering the consenting and enforcement agency work but also assist with the riparian maintenance reactive and pro-active workload.
- 20%- Planning application consultation responses.
- 10% Assist with site surveys
- 20%-Database updating, correspondence/technical admin, EIRs, FOIs, Land searches and utility searches.
- 10%- Assist with flood incident investigations
- 10%- Assist with liaison with Highway Depots.
- 5%- Assist with miscellaneous enquiries (internal and external).

4. Additional costs

The additional costs associated with the proposal are - Additional Senior Flood Risk Engineer - £52,000 pa New Flood Risk Apprentice / Trainee - £26,000pa. Both these figure are inclusive of both NI and pensions.