

Report title: 2023/24 Essex Capital Flood Programme update AGENDA ITEM 6 EFPB/04/23	
Report to: Essex Flood Board	
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Date: 6 th September 2023	For: Discussion
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County Divisions affected: All Essex	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To update the Flood Board on the 2023/24 Capital Flood Programme

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The 2023/24 capital programme was made up of 7 priority schemes and 4 reserve schemes. We had a total programme budget of £4.0m, with a target of unlocking 50% of the total budget from external sources and reducing surface water flood risk to 215 residential properties in Essex.
- 2.2 For Essex Flood Board Members to note the successes of the capital programme. Using the lessons learned, combined with developing stronger partnerships, the aim is to continue the upwards trend and we hope to retain this level of service, and where possible improve it for future years.
- 2.3 The Full Business Case (FBC) for continuing the capital programme into 2024/25 is going through the internal sign off process as we speak. As it stands the FBC is asking for a budget of £4.5m and is aiming to reduce the surface water flood risk to 187 residential properties in Essex.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 The Floods capital programme has now completed 9 years. Over this period, we have delivered several projects ranging in size and complexity, been nominated and won awards but we continue to push the boundaries in terms of design interventions and achievable benefits.
- 3.2 During the current programme we have demonstrated the success achieved and the benefits delivered to residents of Essex. During the life of the programme, the team have investigated more than 90 sites for the potential to deliver capital schemes.

3.3 By the end of the current programme, over £11.0m pounds worth of external funding will have been generated through the delivery of schemes on the capital programme and reduced surface water flood risk to over 1800 residential properties.

3.4 The knowledge gained from these projects will help to unlock more funding in the future and reduce the risk of surface water flooding to more residential properties in Essex. To deliver schemes on the Flood Programme, we are using several consultants and in-house expertise to design and build bespoke mitigation projects.

3.5 The Capital Flood Programme is broken down into 2 elements

- 1) Property Flood Resilience (PFR) is a scheme that offers residents of previously flooded properties an opportunity to apply for individual property protection. The applications are then vetted and prioritised.
- 2) Capital funded Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS) forms the bulk of our programme; this area focuses on delivering projects on the ground in the areas most at risk of surface water flooding.

Below is more specific detail on the Capital Programme FAS.

- West Mersea – Construction has not restarted in the new year because there have been delays in providing the structural calculations needed to complete the last section of Phase 1 foundation. The proposed end date of construction is now estimated to be the end of November 2023. Once this phase is complete a review of its success and a decision on whether or to deliver phase 2 will be made.
- Guilfords, Old Harlow – Construction is underway. Topsoil strip and additional tree removal is complete. Some design changes have been made to accommodate uncharted utility services, but these have now been overcome.
- Ashingdon, Rochford – Construction of the flood scheme has started. Preparation of the EA business Case is underway to unlock grant funding.
- Cherry Avenue, Thrift Green – This is the third of our much anticipated rain garden projects follows the same principals as Springfield Rd and Tyrrells Road. By strategically locating rain gardens at low points along the system, with the purpose of collecting excess surface water from the highway during periods of heavy rainfall. These rain gardens will also provide environmental and water quality benefits. We have partnered with Brentwood Borough Council on this project who will own and maintain the rain gardens after completion.
- Rain Gauge Project - ECC have picked up the delivery of this project from the EA and CCC. The project involves installing 35 rain gauges in areas across east Anglia where there is currently a shortfall in surface water data. Legal agreements are being finalised by ELS. The project is a multi-stakeholder partnership and is entirely funded by the EA. Delivery of this project will help to unlock the opportunity for ECC to be the delivery partner for other organisations.

- 3 feasibility studies are ongoing, and 5 projects are in the optimisation/detailed design stage. These projects will form priority delivery schemes for future years of the capital programme.

To note this programme will contribute towards ECC's ambitions to meet climate change commitments by delivering schemes that offer flood mitigation, Green Infrastructure, habitat creation and biodiversity net gain. The following strategic policies will also be met when delivering the floods capital programme;

- Improve the health of people in Essex
- Help to secure stronger, safer, and more unneighborly communities
- Help to secure sustainable development and protect the environment
- Facilitate growing communities and new homes
- Develop the capability, performance, and engagement of our people

4. Links to Essex Vision

4.1 This report links to the following aims in the Essex Vision

- Strengthen communities through participation
- Develop our County sustainably
- Connect us to each other and the world
- Share prosperity with everyone

For more information visit www.essexfuture.org.uk

4.2 This links to the following strategic aims in the Organisational Plan:

- Help create great places to grow up, live and work
- Transform the council to achieve more with less

5. Financial implications

5.1 Over the completed 9 years of the programme we have developed strong working relationships with a wide range of stakeholders such as the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and District Councils. During this process the Flood and Water Management team has been able to attract external contributions and income to support several functions, these include

- Feasibility and assessment studies
- Delivery of capital flood alleviation schemes
- Delivery of Property Flood Resilience projects

5.2 We have a target of generating 25% of our annual budget from external stakeholders, but this year we aim to raise this to 50%.

Previous contributions to the flood programme are as follows;

- £125,771 contributions secured in 2014/15
- £225,227 contributions secured in 2015/16
- £436,490 contributions and income secured in 2016/17
- £1.63m contributions secured in 2017/18
- £1.57m contributions secured in 2018/19
- £1.53m contributions secured in 2019/20
- £1.68m contributions secured in 2020/21
- £400k contributions secured in 2021/22
- £500k contributions secured in 2022/23

6. Equality and Diversity implications

6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. *(Describe the specific equality and diversity implications of the proposal, any adverse findings from the equality impact assessment and your proposed mitigation measures)*