



**PORTFOLIO AREA: ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND TRANSPORT**

Date of Meeting: 4th July 2005

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan: Yes

Outside Policy Framework

Title: COMMUNITY AND HOUSING RECOVERY GROUP PROPOSALS
FOR THE ALLOCATION OF THE £1.5 MILLION GRANTED BY
THE OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Report of: Executive Directors

Report reference: CE 15/05

Summary: Following the flooding in January 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) granted £1.5 million to the City. The money has to be spent within the flood affected area, primarily on private sector housing. The proposals (appendix 2) recommended here were endorsed by the Community and Housing Recovery Group at its meeting of the 21st June 2005.

Recommendations: That the Executive endorses the Community and Housing Recovery Group proposals for the allocation of the £1.5 million granted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

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Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS

1.1 Following the flooding in January 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) granted £1.5 million to the City. The money has to be spent within the flood affected area, primarily on private sector housing. The criteria established by the ODPM (through the Housing Intervention Team at Government Office North West (GONW)) specifies that this is a capital grant *'to support, enable and expedite housing renewal to properties affected by the January floods.'* The letter (appendix 1) states that criteria for spend are;

- *'The resource is solely for properties effected by the flooding*
- *Spend must be in line with your Regulatory Reform Order policy*
- *This additional resource should not displace or substitute other funding already identified for the above.'*

1.2 Conversation with GONW has further clarified that the money is for properties in the flood affected area. This allows us to allocate money to issues, such as environmental works, as well as purely housing based initiatives. GONW are also clear that the money is not for community initiatives, such as Communities Re-united or the schemes established and funded to date, mainly through the Community Foundation.

1.3 There is further clarity from the letter that work, such as *'joint work with the CDRP and Environment Agency to improve decency, security and flood resilience of individual effected properties and to make linked enhancements to the immediate environment'* are acceptable. As are works *'where there are cases of exceptional hardship'*.

1.4 Our Regulatory Reform Order does allow us to undertake spending in this way.

1.5 As for the 3rd bullet point, we have developed our proposals for spending the money from scratch as part of the work of the Community and Housing Recovery Group. In some instances, such as with the options for Decent Homes, community safety and energy efficiency, for example, additional resources will be used to add to the £1.5m.

1.6 The proposals recommended are not those of the City Council but those of the Community and Housing Recovery Group. It includes officers from the City and County Councils, the Environment Agency, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, Housing Associations, Carlisle Council for Voluntary Services, Cumbria Community Foundation, Citizens Advice Bureau, Carlisle Churches Flood Response, Communities Re-united, the Department for Work and Pensions and Government Office North West.

1.7 The Community and Housing Recovery Group action plan is based on 3 key objectives, notably;

- Objective 1: To ensure that all flood damaged property is brought back in to use as soon as possible and at the highest possible standard.
- Objective 2: To identify opportunities to add value to the recovery process through the provision of additional improvements.
- Objective 3: To address the short-term housing needs of residents of the flood affected areas

1.8 In line with these Objectives we have identified actions that relate to People, Property and Public Space. The proposals for spend are based on these Objectives.

1.9 In establishing these proposals we have worked with the GONW criteria and also tried to identify actions that will have the greatest impact; target the most vulnerable; and produce a range of options that target both urban and rural flood affected communities.

1.10 The proposals are attached (appendix 2) and were endorsed by the Community and Housing Recovery Group at its meeting of the 21st June 2005. There is additional information about the options attached at appendix 3. The criteria to be used to assess 'vulnerability' is to be presented at the meeting.

1.11 A special joint meeting of all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees has been undertaken (29th June 2005) and their comments will be related to the Executive at the meeting.

1.12 It is important to note that the City council and its partners have a limited timeframe in which to deliver outcomes from this allocation. All partners are ready to implement the actions once agreement is reached.

2. CONSULTATION

2.1 There has been significant sign up to the proposals within this report from the following organisations who have all been party to their production. The City and County Councils, the Environment Agency, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, Housing Associations, Carlisle Council for Voluntary Services, Cumbria Community Foundation, Citizens Advice Bureau, Carlisle Churches Flood Response, Communities Re-united, the Department for Work and Pensions and Government Office North West. A special meeting of all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees was held on the 29th June 2005 and their contributions have been added to the report.

- 2.2 Individual spend options, if approved, will be subject to specific consultation and communication packages dependent on the nature of the work.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive endorses the Community and Housing Recovery Group proposals for the allocation of the £1.5 million granted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

5. IMPLICATIONS

- **Staffing/Resources** – A significant amount of officer time will be focused in the next 6 months on the implementation of the agreed actions. Additional capacity is built in to some bids, in particular the one around cleaning up (New Deal), but the majority are being funded through existing structures.
- **Financial** – The capital grant of £1.5m, awarded by the ODPM, has been received and must be used to provide support towards private sector renewal work necessary as a consequence of the flood and storm in January 2005. Utilisation of the grant, as identified within this report, must be in accordance with the guidance issued by the ODPM. A budget provision for the scheme is contained within the 2005/06 revised Capital Programme reported to the Executive on 20 June 2005 as part of the provisional 2004/05 capital out-turn report (FS8/05), for recommendation to Council on 19 July 2005.
- **Legal** – The grant from the ODPM must be spent in accordance with the terms of the grant (as specified by the ODPM); the Council's Regulatory Reform Order; the Council's Financial Procedure Rules; and, in accordance with the Council's ongoing general fiduciary duty in respect of all public funds.
- **Corporate** – The Community and Housing Recovery process addresses elements of the Council's Cleaner, Greener and Safer priority.
- **Risk Management** – A risk assessment of the actions within the combined Housing and Community Recovery Action plans has been undertaken and agreed by the group. The actions that resulted in the highest risk ratings (relating to impact and Likelihood) were then established as the Group's priorities. These priorities have resulted in the proposals being brought before the Executive today.

- Equality Issues – The spend options outlined in this report aim to address issues relating to the most vulnerable in the flood affected areas.
- Environmental – The spend options relating to the clean up will have a direct positive impact on the environment within the flood affected areas.
- Crime and Disorder – It is hoped that the spend options relating to private security patrols, back lanes, bollards and alleygating will have a positive impact on both crime and fear of crime.
- Impact on Customers – There will be a direct impact on the residents of the flood affected areas who are our customers.

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16 May 2005

Dear Maggie,

Carlisle Private Sector Renewal Grant - Post Flooding January 2005

I write to provide further detail on eligible expenditure further to the confirmation of the above £1.5m grant made to Carlisle City Council on 31st March 2005.

In broad terms, this capital grant was made by ODPM to support, enable and expedite housing renewal to properties affected by the January floods. To ensure it's most effective use, we were happy to permit a significant degree of local discretion in determining spend.

I understand, however, that the following clarification of parameters would now be helpful:

1. The resource is solely for properties effected by the flooding
2. Spend must be in line with your RRO policy
3. This additional resource should not displace or substitute other funding already identified for the above

I am happy that the main priorities established to date by the Housing Recovery Group, have the right balance between the use of this specific grant and other funding, and are appropriate:

- Completion of a Stock Condition Survey
- Joint works with the CDRP and EA to improve the decency, security and flood resilience of individual effected properties and to make linked enhancements to the immediate environment
- Where there are cases of exceptional hardship, works to make properties habitable where the owners were under or uninsured.
- Additional technical staffing capacity to enable delivery

I am aware that these may need to be amended as further stock data becomes available but I feel that the spirit and intention of purpose for this additional funding is clear.

I hope the above is helpful, however, should you require any further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Perry', with a large, stylized 'P' and 'R'.

HEAD OF HOUSING INTERVENTION TEAM

cc: Jackie Potter
Peter Styche
Richard Perry

Appendix 2

Options for spending £1.5m from ODPM as agreed at Community and Housing Recovery meeting 21st June 2005

Issue	Cost	Running total
1. Stock condition survey	98,000	98,000
2. Decent homes Identified through the stock condition survey	325,000	423,000
3. Uninsured vulnerable properties Based on 13 properties at approx. £25,000 each	325,000	748,000
4. Energy efficiency Loft insulation, air source heat pumps and ICE packs to vulnerable people	50,000	798,000
5. Private security patrols (CDRP to provide additional £45,000)	15,000	813,000
6. Spring clean/landscaping/drainage/footways (inc. New Deal arrangements)	130,000	943,000
7. Pilot flood resilience work in the rural area for vulnerable people	180,000	1,123,000
8. Lanes in the flood affected areas To cover works such as, for example surfacing and increased lighting.	297,500	1,420,500
9. Small landscaped areas	10,000	1,430,500
10. Allotments (Willowholme, St Aidans and Botcherby Paddock)	65,500	1,496,000
11. Enhancement of private land adjacent to highway	3,000	1,499,000
12. Warwick road alleygating (£5,000 funded through CDRP)	0	
13. Restoration of bollards behind Warwick Road	1,000	1,500,000

Additional information about the options

1. Stock Condition Survey – On-Going

2. Decent Homes

In order to match-fund Capital funding from the Housing strategy programme, work on houses within the flood-affected area will be carried out to meet the Decent Homes Standard using information from the Stock Condition Survey.

3. Uninsured vulnerable properties

There were a small number of properties affected by the flooding where the home owner has no insurance. We are currently contacting those people that we are aware of to ascertain their circumstances and decide if they fall within our criteria for vulnerability. We are starting to inspect this week with a view to having all contactable owners visited, inspections carried out and specifications for renovation produced by 24th June 2005. Some of these inspections have already been carried out which has excluded a number of properties due to the fact that work is nearing completion, even though they are uninsured. One property however, has experienced structural problems and the cost of remedial works will greatly exceed the average.

We will continue to try and trace the "missing" owners by liaising with Communities Re-united and the volunteers who are visiting all affected properties 16/17th June 2005.

Approximate costings at this stage are :-

13 properties @ an average cost to renovate
of £25,000 = £325,000.

Total for uninsured properties - £325,000

4. Energy Efficiency

For an investment of £100,900, £50,000 of which will come from the £1.5M, funding from other sources (i.e. Public Utilities) will amount to a further £196,450. This will enable work to be carried out on a considerable number of vulnerable properties. Included in this work will be cavity wall insulation

(where properties do not currently have cavity wall insulation), loft insulation, low energy light bulbs, draught proofing and 9 air source heat pumps.

These pumps will be fitted in "hard to treat" properties, i.e. one's which are not on the mains gas system.

The air- source heat pumps will not add to greenhouse gases, as all they are doing is drawing in warm air from outside, through a type of refrigeration process, turning this into warmth to heat the building. (a very simplified explanation, but one that will in a small way reduce the amount of greenhouse gases and help to reduce the impact of fossil fuels). This type of system is best used in conjunction with other energy efficiency measures.

These works will contribute towards the Decent Homes standard target within the Housing Strategy.

5. Private security patrols

Additional patrols in affected areas to increase the sense of security and deter opportunistic acquisitive crime and criminal damage, particularly as people return home. The CDRP are proposing to provide £45,000 with an additional £15,000 coming from the £1.5m.

6. Spring clean/landscaping/drainage/footways (Including New Deal arrangements)

Spring Cleaning

The flood affected areas are in a generally dirty condition due to the debris arising from the building works and the fact that regular cleaning has been difficult due to all the skips, builders vehicles etc.

The estimated cost of the additional cleaning needed is £20,000. This work would include graffiti removal, washing where required, removal of weeds, street sweeping etc. in the areas affected and the areas immediately around. Allowance has been made for one clean now and a further clean later in the year when building repair works are complete.

Landscaping Areas

To clean, weed, prune and replant landscaped areas in and immediately around the flood areas. These areas have been neglected for months. The

estimated cost of work is £15,000. This would include some work along riverbanks to remove debris still remaining from the flood. Some channels are colonised with weeds. We would suggest removing them rather than just treating them with weed killer. Those weeds on CAPITA roads would not be treated by CAPITA until September, which is too long to wait.

Footways

Other than where flagging is crazed or split it is difficult to determine any damage at present. Unfortunately the damage will not be evident until the winter when the freeze thaw cycles occur. At this point the unstable bedding will fail requiring the flags to be relaid. The broken flags can be replaced now from City and County budgets where relevant however this will eat into an already low allocation for this type of work which must be used throughout the City not just the flood affected areas. It would be prudent to allow an additional £10,000 to cover immediate problems and problems which may arise in Winter.

Repair / Clean Gullies / Drains

Many of the drains and gullies in the flood areas are reported to once again be in need of cleaning and / or repair. The activities of the builders have resulted in debris and concrete being dumped in the gullies. It is proposed that a thorough clean of the gullies and drains be carried out in the flood areas. Estimated cost of this work is £25,000. It seems many of these gullies are so badly blocked that they may need to be replaced and allowance for this has been made in the costs shown. It would be advisable to replace pot gulleys with integral gulleys as they have more storage capacity and are less prone to blockages.

7. Pilot flood resilience work in rural area for vulnerable people

Carry out a pilot flood-resilience scheme, in order to increase public confidence in a rural area(s) and evaluate the process. This would involve the installation of individual door/window/air brick barriers to individual, high-risk, vulnerable properties. In the event of a positive evaluation, a bid could be submitted to Central Government for the provision of this type of measure to

all affected and vulnerable properties, both Rural and Urban. In light of the global flood defence work to be carried out in Carlisle Urban area, and after discussing the proposal with Ian Warner, Environment Agency (EA), we consider that a Rural pilot will be more appropriate.

This would produce a managed response to the flooding problem, and we could then justify to Central Government, a bid for additional funding to carry out similar flood resilience measures for all flood affected and vulnerable properties.

The Environment Agency have given their full backing to this proposal, and will co-operate fully in the provision of maps that show the actual flood affected areas, and details of other vulnerable properties in the area. The EA have advised that, even if the flood defences are completed in the Carlisle Urban area, there is no guarantee that they will not be over-topped at some time in the future. Added to which, if continuous rainfall has nowhere to discharge within the defended areas, and drainage systems surcharge, there is every possibility that vulnerable properties will be affected again.

8. Lanes

In the flood affected areas a total of 19 lanes have been identified as in need of repair. Also, to support the environmental improvement to back lanes including new lighting and co-ordinated to the Alleygate proposals with the cost of repair which totals £297,500.

9. Small Landscaped Areas

There are a number small landscaped areas within the overall area affected by the floods. It is estimated that £10,000 would be required to revamp these sites.

10. Allotments

The 3 allotment sites listed below were directly affected by the flooding. Some money has already been secured for improvement works e.g. fencing around Willowholme allotments, but further works are required.

WILLOWHOLME ALLOTMENTS

At present the service road which feeds which various plots is in a poor state of repair. It is proposed that £15,000 be spent on improvements in this facility by carrying out hardsurfacing works. Each of the allotment sites below are managed by an Allotment Association who are at present working with the Parks and Countryside Section and are looking at way of funding some of the projects

ST AIDANS ALLOTMENTS

It is proposed to carry out new fencing works to the perimeter of the site, improvement to the existing footpaths that service the plots. It is also proposed to improve the entrance to the site by hardsurfacing the area. The total estimate for carrying out works to this site is £29,500.

BOTCHERBY PADDOCK ALLOTMENTS

Many of the problems that are being encountered in St Aidans allotments are inherent to Botcherby Paddock. Therefore the cost for this site would be £21,000 as it is of a slightly smaller size.

11. Enhancement of Private Land adjacent to Highway

Particularly on the main routes through flood areas there are areas of private land which if improved would greatly improve the general appearance of the area. Suggest we encourage owners to improve or offer to do work on their behalf at Council expense. Suggested items of work are hedge cutting, weed control on boundaries etc At Harraby Green Road and High Crosby the ferocity of the floods resulted in the tarmac verge and sub-base hard standings being washed away. To repair these areas would cost in the region of £3,000.

12. Warwick Road Alleygating

The CDRP propose to spend £5,000 on alleygating in the lower end of Warwick Road.

13. Restoration of bollards behind Warwick Road

To prevent corner cutting from Greystone Road, it is proposed to restore the bollards at the rear of Warwick Road.