

## **SPECIAL ECONOMIC GROWTH SCRUTINY PANEL**

**THURSDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 10.00AM**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Nedved (Chairman), Betton, Bowditch (until 12.30pm), Burns (until 12.38pm), Christian, Mrs Coleman, McDonald and Mitchelson

**ALSO**

**PRESENT:** Mr Brown – Environment Agency  
Mr Lawton – Environment Agency  
Mr Coyle – Cumbria County Council  
Mr Kelsall – Carlisle Flood Action Group  
Mr Milne – Carlisle Flood Action Group  
Councillor Allison – Ward Member for Dalston  
Councillor Bloxham – Ward Member for Longtown and Rockcliffe  
Councillor Higgs – Ward Member for Wetheral  
Councillor Ms Patrick - Ward Member for St Aidans  
Councillor Glover – Leader (from 12.30pm)

**OFFICERS:** Deputy Chief Executive  
Corporate Director of Economic Development

### **EGSP.12/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bradley - Economy, Enterprise and Housing Portfolio Holder and Mr Hendy – Carlisle Flood Action Group.

### **EGSP.13/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest affecting the business to be transacted at the meeting.

### **EGSP.14/18 PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was agreed that the items of business in Part A be dealt with in public and Part B be dealt with in private.

### **EGSP.15/18 CALL IN OF DECISIONS**

There were no items which had been the subject of call-in.

### **EGSP.16/18 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF WINTER FLOODS 2015 TO 2016**

The Chairman welcomed the representatives of the Environment Agency, Cumbria County Council and the Carlisle Flood Action Group to the meeting. He also welcomed Ward Members who were representing communities who had been impacted by flooding.

Mr Brown, Environment Agency, submitted a report estimating the economic costs of the 2015 to 2016 winter floods in England following Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank. A copy of the report had been circulated to the Panel with the agenda for the meeting.

Mr Brown gave a presentation to the Panel highlighting pertinent parts of the report. He identified the properties which had been flooded in winter 2015/16 and reported that the estimate for the economic impact had been £1.6billion. He drew Members attention to Table 1

of the report which detailed the impact categories of the flood along with the estimated economic costs. He added that the report had included an estimate for the impact on health but he felt it had been underestimated. The effects of the flooding were personal and this had to be taken into consideration as part of the economic estimates.

Mr Brown reported that the Cumbria Observatory was undertaking the development of a Cumbria Impact Assessment which would be shared with the Panel on its completion. He finished his presentation by outlining some of the information which had been gathered by the Observatory:

- More than 14,500 people had been affected by the flooding
- 18,000 households lost power
- 700 households lost water
- 100 sewerage issues
- 45 schools were affected
- 1000 medical appointments were cancelled and rearranged
- 350km of roads were damaged
- 800 bridges were effected
- 127 rail incidents resulted in £9m of compensation
- 3000 telephone faults
- 5000 tons of waste moved and 1200 additional tons went to household waste

In considering the report and the presentation Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The Panel felt that the report was a strong well written report and agreed that the health and wellbeing impact of the flooding needed to be taken into account and evaluated.
- A Member commented that a solution to the flooding issues needed to be found to protect the reputation of the City.

Mr Brown responded that the Environment Agency worked closely with Carlisle City Council to ensure that any flood defences were part of the place and giving confidence and assurance to the community was critical.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development agreed that it was important to align where the impact of the flood would be and how the impact could be mitigated. It was crucial that the defences were placed in areas which would make the most improvement to protect the health and wellbeing of communities.

- The estimates had been described as academic figures but Members had understood that the figures would be used to build a business case to show value for money for the flood defence options.

Mr Brown confirmed that some of the information included in the estimated economic impact costs would be used to prepare the business case for government to release the monies for the improvements works. He clarified that not all of the figures from the report would be used in the business case and he detailed the process and guidelines that had to be used to meet treasury requirements.

- The fear of flooding again was a serious issue for residents and businesses and the estimated economic costs of the flooding did not take into account the potential loss of confidence in the city there be further flooding. How could the potential effect of a further

flood on the confidence businesses and residents had in the City be built into the business case?

The Corporate Director of Economic Development confirmed that it was this area of work that the City Council was interested in. It was important for the future of the City to keep businesses and organisations investing in the City and there had to be confidence in the resilience of the City.

Mr Brown welcomed any additional contextual evidence that would support the business case.

- A Member commented that developments were being given planning permission in flood risk areas and he felt that the Development Control Committee were not receiving the correct information to make a decision especially regarding the drainage of development areas. In addition he had concerns regarding the proposed Garden Village development and urged officers to look at the potential drainage and flooding issues.

The Corporate Director clarified that, as the Planning Authority, the Council had a duty to deal with planning applications as they were submitted. She reminded the Panel that planning applications were considered in consultation with the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council and all information was presented to the Development Control Committee for their consideration. The Committee could and did then question officers and request further information as they saw fit.

With regard to the Garden Village, she explained that the proposed development was still in the Master Planning stage and the development site had not been confirmed. The Environment Agency was part of the Garden Village Board and advised on strategic matters which included drainage and flooding concerns.

- Would it be possible for the Council to have a Supplementary Planning Document regarding flood risk which would support the Development Control Committee in refusing planning applications in flood areas if they felt it was appropriate. In addition a Member asked if the winter floods had been taken into account in the preparation of the Local Plan.

The Corporate Director responded that the Planning Inspector had been on site reviewing the Local Plan when the flooding occurred and as a result the Council were asked to explain the allocations in the Local Plan, which they did in consultation with the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council. This meant that the Local Plan had fully considered the issues relating to flooding in Carlisle.

With regard to a potential Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) the Corporate Director welcomed the idea of additional information to support Development Control Committee decision making and advised that there may be more suitable mechanisms to provide the information.

- The report briefly detailed the support that the voluntary sector had provided but the economic impact of that support had not been included. Many voluntary organisations continued to provide support and some organisations had collapsed due to the financial strain.

Mr Brown clarified that the Environment Agency had not carried out any work on the economic impact on the voluntary sector. He agreed that the voluntary sector had provided an excellent response and ongoing support and it had been recognised. He agreed to recommend to the

Cumbria Observatory that they include more detail on the economic impact of the voluntary sector during the flooding.

Councillor Patrick, Ward Member for St Aidans, agreed that the voluntary sector had provided constant support and had concerns that the voluntary sector may not have the economic sustainability to support any future flooding events.

Mr Kelsall addressed the Panel on behalf of Cumbria Flood Action Group (CFLAG). With the agreement of the Chairman he circulated a document which detailed CFLAG's comments in response to the Environment Agency's 'Estimating the economic costs of the 2015 to 2016 winter floods' report. He drew attention to the comments made in the report in section 3.2.1 which had an assumption that 75% of domestic insurance claims were for household contents and the remaining 25% was for building repairs. Mr Kelsall explained that reporting from the Carlisle Flood Advice and Recovery Centre, CFLAG and numerous individuals indicated that the figures were reversed to 75% building repairs and 25% contents.

He also highlighted the 'Regional Impact' section of the document he had circulated which emphasised the cross border impacts and regional and local impacts with particular emphasis on critical infrastructure to society as a whole.

Mr Brown responded that he would investigate the 75/25 split regarding insurance claims in Carlisle.

Mr Milne, on behalf of CFLAG, emphasised the unique situation that Carlisle had in terms of being an interconnector for England/Scotland/Northern Ireland and Eire and the potential disruptions that any flooding on the M6 would cause. He commented that Carlisle had a lot of bridges which restricted the conveyance of water and CFLAG had had discussion with the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council regarding the best way to calculate how water would be moved. In addition he stated that it was important that Carlisle was not considered in isolation as water came from many areas through Carlisle.

Councillor Bloxham, Ward Member for Longtown and Rockcliffe, drew attention to recent flooding events which had taken place in Rockcliffe and reminded the Panel that works undertaken within Carlisle could affect those living in outlying areas.

The Chairman asked who made the final decision for the release of funding and what influences could be made locally on the outcome of the business case.

Mr Brown responded that the final decision would be taken by central government, the money was there and available but the process to release the money had to be followed.

RESOLVED – 1) That the Environment Agency be thanked for the detailed report on the estimates of the economic impact of the 2015 to 2016 winter floods; and Mr Brown be thanked for his detailed and informative presentation.

2) That the City Council give consideration to what further evidence it could bring to bear to strengthen the business case, particularly in respect of:

- Input by the voluntary sector
- Local expert review of the key assumptions
- The cumulative impact of a future flood event on the confidence of individuals and businesses in terms of the fear of flooding and their willingness to live and invest the City.

3) That the Corporate Director of Economic Development be requested to work with partners, including Cumbria County Council to prepare an advisory note (or similar suitable document) to support the Development Control Committee in their decision making process when considering planning applications for flood risk areas and report it to a future meeting of the Panel.

*The Panel adjourned at 11.18am for a short break and reconvened at 11.22am.*

## **EGSP.17/18 FLOOD RECOVERY – SHORTLISTED OPTIONS AND TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Mr Lawton, Environment Agency, gave a presentation setting out the short list options for Carlisle and wider lower Eden area.

Mr Lawton detailed the proposals:

- Parham Beck and Eden Wall and embankment works including construction/enhancement of an earth embankment to the left of the River Eden, immediately downstream of the West Coast Main Line.
- West Coast Main Line Arches including clearance under the railway line, construction of defence walls to provide increased protection to the bridge abutments.
- Willow Holme Defences including construction of flood defences in the form of walls and embankments along the left bank of the River Caldew.
- Etterby Terrace and Eden Place defences
- Bitts Park works including construction of an earth embankment and minor wall raising to the Bitts Park and the Sands area.
- Melbourne Park including extension and raising of earth embankments upstream of Botcherby Bridge, along the River Petteril
- Gosling Syke and Rickerby including land drainage treatment and modification to intercept existing surface water drainage system

Mr Lawton reported that the Environment Agency wanted a project that was affordable, efficient, and effective, trusted, supported and delivering the maximum it could in terms of flood risk and other benefits. The key to achieving the project was strong working with partners such as the City Council, County Council, Network Rail and United Utilities.

Mr Lawton then set out the next steps for the project and the outline delivery programme which estimated the whole scheme to be completed by summer 2022.

Mr Coyle added that the Eden Bridge was a robust asset and Cumbria County Council had no concerns about it. Following Storm Desmond some additional resilience measures had been added to the bridge and the County Council were open to working with the Environment Agency going forward with the scheme.

In considering the presentation Members raised the following comments and questions:

- The proposals for Willow Holme defences had included opening the flow rate to the floodplain, what was the risk in this proposal and would it generate a new channel?

Mr Lawton responded that the Environment Agency had endeavoured to consider such issues and build the potential risks into the project. Mr Brown agreed that the impact of the proposed changes had been considered carefully and was one reason for the project taking such a long time. He explained that the proposed channel would only exist when it was required and would be a dry open viaduct ready for flow.

- The outline delivery programme timescales showed the proposed completion date for the whole scheme as 2022, was this a realistic target?

Mr Brown felt that the delivery programme was achievable. The Environment Agency were confident that the scheme would go forward and had begun ground works and the process to formally appoint main contractors to help move the processes forward. He added that the biggest risk to the scheme was the interface with other organisations and that was why working with partners was critical.

- Was there any additional funding available to Carlisle?

Mr Lawton responded that the Environment Agency had costed the scheme to £25m and the business case supported the figure. The scheme had been supported nationally; however, some aspects of the scheme may require a contribution in land. Any contributions received locally further supported the business case.

- A Member had understood that the Environment Agency would have to submit a bid for the funding and that there was a possibility that the bid would not be successful.

Mr Brown assured the Panel that the funding had been allocated for the scheme and the business case was the required process to release the funding. He reiterated that the Environment Agency felt that the scheme was the most justifiable and appropriate use of public spending. In response to a further comment Mr Brown confirmed that the scheme concentrated on the existing structures and banking. There were new additions such as gravel traps however no changes would take place to bridges. If Cumbria County Council had proposals for any bridges then the Environment Agency would be involved in the proposals as a partner organisation.

- The 2015 flooding had caused gridlock in the City due to the closure of Eden Bridge, how confident were agencies that the bridge could resist further flooding?

Mr Brown responded that Eden Bridge was strong and resilient and Mr Lawton added that the proposals would result in changes to the impact on structures and would reduce the velocity of the water.

- A Member asked if there were any plans for changes to Botcherby Bridge, he also commented that there were issues with gulley and drainage cleaning.

Mr Coyle, Cumbria County Council, explained that Botcherby Bridge had been inspected following the flooding and bridges were on a rolling two year inspection programme. It was important that the County Council worked closely with the Environment Agency to understand the impact the proposed options would have on existing structures.

He explained that drainage issues were the responsibility of United Utilities. Cumbria County Council had a responsibility for gulley's and when they were cleaned it caused a build-up of silt in the drains which United Utilities then cleared.

- There was concern that the River Petteril would default to its natural course as it had done previously.

Mr Lawton had been aware of the issues regarding the course of the River Petteril and it had been included in the design process.

- Had maintenance costs been included in the design process for the scheme?

Mr Lawton confirmed that the whole life cost had been included in the scheme.

- Was there any issues which would prevent the delivery of the scheme?

Mr Brown agreed that public confidence in the scheme was important and he saw no issues which would prevent delivery. Any risks came from third party involvement such as the planning process which was out of the control of the Environment Agency.

The Corporate Director of Economic Development added that the City Council, as the planning authority, would help with the planning process as much as possible assist the development of the scheme.

Mr Brown confirmed that the scheme would go ahead but reminded the Panel that there would still a residual risk of flooding.

- How much had been spent to date on the consultation and report?

Mr Brown reported that there were two funding streams available, £25m for the scheme and a separate £3m for the whole of Cumbria to cover the preparation costs for the business case and the consultation process.

- What work was being undertaken in terms of clearing river banks and the dredging of river beds?

Mr Brown clarified that the Environment Agency were not funded or legally allowed to work on river banks. Any erosion had to be corrected by the land owner they would be required to seek permission from the Environment Agency depending on the nature of the work. Guidance was available detailing who had responsibility regarding river banks and what work could be carried out.

The Environment Agency had carried out a range of maintenance works within the City that had strategic significance, other than that it was a choice for the riparian owners to carry out works on river beds.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members that a written response had been circulated from Green Spaces regarding the river banks and river beds and riparian rights.

Mr Kelsall, Carlisle Flood Action Group, commented that he felt that the scheme would not protect the City from another storm. He also felt that the proposals did not demonstrate that the water coming in from the East would slow sufficiently or that water leaving the West would speed up sufficiently.

Mr Brown responded that the aim and aspiration was to deliver a scheme which would stand up to a storm at the same level as Storm Desmond. He explained that the Environment Agency had commissioned 3D modelling of the scheme to allow a replica of the exact nature of a storm to be modelled in real time. The outcome would give clarity and a greater understanding of

what the scheme could achieve. If the 3D modelling did not match expectations then other options would be considered.

Mr Kelsall commented that he was concerned that the business case had been based on modelling and photos which had not necessarily been accurate.

Mr Brown confirmed that a wide range of methods had been pursued to ensure that the impact of the proposals were understood and the 3D modelling would give the best understanding of the impact of the scheme.

RESOLVED – 1) That Mr Lawton be thanked for his detailed presentations on the Options for the Carlisle District Future Flood Investment;

2) That an update on the Future Flood Investment be submitted to the Panel in six months' time;

3) That officers of Carlisle City Council, in partnership with the Environment Agency, work to define the residual flood risk for Carlisle and report back to a future meeting of the Panel.

## **EGSP.18/18 CUMBRIA STRATEGIC FLOOD PARTNERSHIP INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON SECTION 19 REPORTS**

Mr Coyle, Cumbria County Council, submitted a report on the Oaklands Drive, Carlisle November 2017 flooding.

Mr Coyle reported that Cumbria County Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), had prepared the report examining the flooding at Oaklands Drive, Carlisle on 22 November 2017. The main cause of the flooding had been the inability of the drainage infrastructure behind Oaklands Drive to accommodate surface water runoff from neighbouring fields due to a blockage downstream and insufficient capacity.

The report identified several actions which would reduce the risk of future flooding and most of the actions required partnership working from the Oaklands Drive community and Story Homes Ltd with clear guidance and support from the LLFA working with Making Space for Water officers.

Mr Coyle also updated the Panel on the flooding at Rockcliffe which had been a result of high rain and coastal flooding. The flooding issues would be examined in detail with the Environment Agency before being reported back to the local community for their input.

In considering the report the Panel raised the following comments and questions:

- Had a full assessment been carried out on the impact of the development?

Mr Coyle explained that some elements of the development had already been granted planning permission and some concerns should have been identified earlier. The LLFA were working closely with the planning authority and a Highways Officer attended a weekly meeting with planning officers to discuss issues and scrutinise the proposed allocation of land.

- Had the consultation process resulted in any feedback?

Mr Coyle responded that there were two levels of consultation. The first level was for less than 5 properties; this consultation would take place with the individual householders and would not



be public. For more than 5 properties public consultation took place and some information was redacted.

- Had there been an increase in the sign up rate for the Flood Warning alert system and how did householders know to sign up for the service?

Mr Brown confirmed that the service was advertised through various media outlets and partners also promoted the service. The Corporate Director added that the service had been promoted through the Carlisle Focus.

- Had the flooding history at Rockcliffe affected a similar number of properties?

Mr Coyle confirmed that a similar number of properties had been affected in 2013/14 and issues should have been identified at the time. Work was being carried out on how best to protect the properties and if there was any funding available.

- It had been clear that there was no drainage at the start of the development at Oaklands Drive and that the drains had not be cleared.

Mr Coyle clarified that the drainage system at the development had not been a maintainable system by Cumbria County Council. The issues that the drainage system had caused would not happen in future developments as the County Council asked for maintainable systems to be included in developments.

Mr Coyle added that members of the public could call Cumbria County Council to report flood risk issues if they had concerns and the County Council had a duty to investigate the matter. They had the powers to ask the land owners to correct the issue and if necessary could take the land owners to Court to force them to undertake the work. The County Council did offer support and advice to land owners who had issues on their land.

RESOLVED – 1) That Mr Coyle, Cumbria County Council, be thanked for his report and his thorough responses to Member's questions.

2) That the Policy and Communications Manager produce a report based on the findings of today's Panel meeting and report back to the Panel to form resolutions to be shared with the Executive.

3) That the Panel receive feedback from the Strategic Flood Partnership.

(The meeting ended at 12.50pm)