

Report to Business & Transformation Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 5th January 2018
Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Key Decision: Not Applicable:
Within Policy and Budget Framework NO
Public / Private Public

Title: FINAL FLOOD UPDATE REPORT
Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number: CS09/18

Purpose / Summary:

This report is the final update report prepared for Overview and Scrutiny Committees on flood recovery activities and any future programmed work.

This report will:-

- Update Members on the recovery of Council assets, including the Civic Centre
- Update Members on the provision of grants and relief to those households and businesses directly affected by the flood.
- Update Members on the activities being undertaken in partnership with the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council.

Recommendations:

That members of the Scrutiny Panel review this report, note the progress made to recover Council assets and the work undertaken to deliver grants and other forms of financial support.

Tracking

Executive:	N/A
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	N/A

BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 This report aims to set out a final update of the work associated with recovery from the 2015 floods and emerging plans to deal with any future such events.
- 1.2 During the past two years an extensive range of recovery activities have been undertaken, these work areas are outlined in the report and officers will be present to answer questions associated with these.

2. CITY COUNCIL ASSET RECOVERY PROGRAMME

- 2.1 During this period the Council has been engaged in an extensive programme of asset recovery using insurance payments and where appropriate Council resources. This capital value of this programme is circa £9.6M and has allowed the Council to take stock of these assets, engage with the Environment Agency and plan for the future.

Phase 2 of the Asset Reinstatement programme is now nearing completion with most of our facilities now being reinstated. The Council employed WYG as programme managers for both phase 1 (recovery, stripping and drying) and phase 2 (full recovery and / or adaptation).

WYG have designed, specified and delivered the reinstatement works to all scheduled properties, including the procurement process and management of the construction works. Their performance has been monitored by the Council's Property Team, who have dedicated time to this recovery whilst also delivering their annual programme of activities and development work.

Controls have been in place to ensure effective delivery of the programme to budget, quality and time. The works have been monitored on a monthly cycle with WYG and City Council officers meeting to review the programme and any variations occurring.

During the detailed design stages, consultation and sign-off procedures have been scheduled to ensure the relevant stakeholders are involved in the process.

This programme has included all the flood damaged properties owned by the City Council. The start and target end dates for significant individual assets/recovery have been updated and are shown in the overview below:

Adriano's	10/2016 – 02/2018*
Warwick Street properties	Completed, account settled
Stoneyholme Golf facility	Completed, account with Loss Adjuster
John Street Hostel	Completed, small amount of outstanding snagging, account with Loss Adjuster
Shaddongate Resource Centre	Completed, account with Loss Adjuster

Botcherby CC	Completed, small amount of outstanding snagging, final account being prepared
Caldew Riverside (Demolition)	Completed, account settled
Old Fire Station	Completed, account settled
Sheepmount Sports Facilities	10/2016 – 03/2018
Swifts Golf facility	Claim settled and closed
Sands Centre	Claim settled and closed
Car Parking (Incl. Income)	Claim settled and closed

*Adriano's: The original completion date for this property was scheduled to be 06/02/2017 however during the completion stage of the works it was discovered that the kitchen ventilation design did not meet required building control standards and could not be approved. This failing led to a protracted dispute with the original contractor. The works are now being progressed to the correct standard by a new contractor.

A more detailed assessment of the insurance claims, payments and costs for reinstatement will be presented to Council via the annual outturn of budget exercise.

2.2 Civic Centre and Customer Contact Centre

As reported previously, the floods had a significant impact on the ground floor and basement of the Civic Centre. This damage precipitated a more detailed review of the use of the Civic Centre by the Council and our partners.

A review of the use of the existing space and proposals to reinstate the Civic Centre were presented to Executive (31st July and 29th August) and the Business and Transformation Scrutiny Panel (3rd August).

The key features of this new layout are described below (taken from the Executive report August 2017)

- A new customer entrance is proposed to give the building a renewed presence and also to assist with energy efficiency.
- A new reception creates a focal point for all visitors and customers.
- A new waiting area has been designed to the left of the reception area where visitors meeting staff and members could wait.
- A new customer contact centre has been designed to the front elevation of the building with a waiting area, service desks and 13 private interview rooms. The interview rooms have separate access arrangements to ensure safety.
- To the left of reception and through the visitor waiting area is a soft meeting space and quiet working area for members, staff and partners. Opportunities for agile working are available in the areas designated.
- An improved delivery area is proposed via the rear of the building and a

storage area is planned in this vicinity.

- The customer contact telephone centre could also be contained within the ground floor tower area, allowing management of both face to face and phone teams from one point.
- In addition, there is also space for customer toilets and staff showering facilities (these were previously in the basement).
- There is an additional area under the tower which has been identified for possible partner occupation and benefits from separate access if required.
- The existing space within the former rates hall and beyond has been converted into flexible meeting and conference space.
The existing facility, located at first floor level within the Octagon is not fit for purpose, access is poor and non DDA compliant, temperature control is difficult, audio / visual services are outdated and furniture and fittings are tired and in need of replacement. These factors result in very low levels of usage with the facility only used on average twice every six weeks.
- To the rear of the proposed new chamber is a suite (3) of flexible meeting spaces with full audio-visual equipment provided. These could be used to supplement the new chamber or for separate functions. All the spaces would be serviced by accessible toilets at ground floor level and by a kitchen located adjacent to the meeting rooms.

Should these new proposals be agreed the following plans for the existing chamber may come into consideration:

- Seek an occupant for the lower and upper floor of the chamber block.
Considering the aforementioned problems, specialist advisors have concluded that it would be difficult to let the space and it would have low potential for income generation.
- Demolition of the existing chamber would allow the existing Civic Centre car park to be expanded and this option provides significant and reliable income generation potential. Further work is required to develop the business case around this option Chamber, but as a minimum there would be a reduction in business rates and savings on maintenance and utilities should the chamber be removed. The investment in this option would be seen as an 'invest to save' opportunity with the Council seeking to get a return on the capital costs of demolition and construction of car parking spaces. Should this proposal be worthy of consideration a full investment case could then be prepared.

Since the August reports the programme team have been conducting a thorough review of the initial designs to build up a detailed analysis of the capital costs for delivering this scheme before returning to Executive with final proposals for reinstatement and development. The decision making timetable for this project is outlined below.

Executive
Business and Transformation Scrutiny Committee
Executive

12th February 2018
15th February 2018
12th March 2018

2.3 Bitts Park – Pavilion, Play Area, Tennis Courts and depot

Work to recover the key assets damaged in Bitts Park has been ongoing over the past two years.

The children's play area has been completely renovated with new surfaces and equipment. These play facilities opened October 2016 as did the upper tennis courts.

The lower courts remain out of action, they will be resurfaced and redeveloped as part of the canopy development. The canopy project was approved for implementation after the Scrutiny call in meeting 30th October 2017. A full project plan, delivery timetable and contract is now being implemented.

The Parks and Green Spaces Depot at Bitts Park has received minor works to repair essential flood damage to the site and the facilities are back in use.

The pavilion and toilet block were both badly damaged by the flood and following a thorough review of options it has been proposed to demolish both buildings and replace these with an extension to the Bitts Park lodge.

The development of this property is the subject of a report presented to Executive 18th December 2017. The programme for this development is anticipated to run from March 2018 to May 2018.

3. FLOOD GRANTS & HOUSEHOLD PAYMENTS (FIGURES AS OF 15th DECEMBER 2017)

3.1 Community Support Grant - £500 Household Scheme

Further to the floods the Government announced an immediate assistance scheme targeted to support households affected by the event. This offered a one off Community Support Grant payment of £500 to each household.

1,671 households were confirmed as flooded by Storm Desmond and of these 1,602 were eligible for the £500 community support grant. The Council made payments made to 1,567 households equating to 97.82% and totalling £783,500.

This has been fully recovered from the County Council following submission of fortnightly grant claims.

3.2 £5,000 Flood Resilience Grant

Flood resilience grants are available to assist householders and business to make their properties more flood resilient in future. The grants can be used to cover costs associated with resistance products such as flood doors and barriers or they can be

used to make properties more resilient, so water proof plaster, moving electric, boilers etc. above the flood water. Since the introduction of the scheme, the Housing team have provided advice to flood affected property owners, through online enquires, telephone, advice sessions. The scheme has also been widely publicised through partner agencies, local press and social media.

The Council are also now working in partnership with JBA consulting, who are able to provide independent Property Protection reports. The report costs are covered by the £500 allowance within the grant and the Council are arranging payment on behalf of the owner through the process, so there are no upfront costs for the property owner. The report will be invaluable for those who require advice on what measures might be best to future protect their properties.

The Flood Resilience grant covers both residential and commercial properties and is being administered by the Housing Department. 1,369 applications have been approved with a value of £5,515,879, with 21 grants currently still to be paid. This approved sum is fully recoverable from the County Council.

3.3 Council Tax & NNDR discount schemes

County wide schemes have now been approved with the DCLG paying £400,000 to the County Council to fund the local discretions (second homes / empty properties / flood affected businesses) contained within the County wide schemes.

Districts are submitting monthly claims to recover the costs incurred. Funding for discounts offered in line with the Government Scheme will be paid through a S31 grant directly to us. Council tax discount awarded to 2,219 householders which amounts to £2.133 million for the affected properties. Business rates discount awarded to 111 properties amounting to £667,893 in total.

4. ONGOING WORK OF THE ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED IN THE FLOOD RECOVERY

4.1 Strategic Flood Update

We continue to work in partnership with the Environment Agency, the County Council and other partners on resilience and resistant measures to address specific issues arising from the floods in December 2015 and manage flood risk in the future. The Environment Agency are in the process of completing their data analysis of all the options and ideas following public meetings held in the summer.

In the New Year, another round of public engagement will take place to get an opinion on a shortlist of interventions.

This will be followed by tenders for design and build, business case development followed by implementation.

Within Carlisle work will include extension / enhancement to the existing defences and key bridge work. It is likely that initial works will be focussed around the Sands Centre, making 'relatively straightforward' changes to the existing defences to have maximum effect. This will have a significant effect on reducing risk in this part of the city.

Other early works will include the Rickerby area and improvements to bridge crossings, particularly the two rail bridges. This will be crucial work to address restrictions on water flow which will also have a significant effect on reducing flooding risk in these areas.

A special Overview and Scrutiny Panel has been arranged for 8th February 2018.

4.2 Carlisle City Council

The Carlisle Emergency Plan was reviewed and signed off by the Senior Management Team on 30th August 2016. The plan is now stored on the Resilience Direct system, a national extranet for Emergency Planning.

Additional locations for Reception Centres have been identified with feedback from communities at risk from flooding. A risk assessment for each location has been carried out and once an agreement has been reached with the centre's owners and operators they will be added to the Carlisle Emergency Plan and the Cumbria Resilience Forum Welfare Plan (Emergency Assistance Centres).

Contact Officer: Darren Crossley

Ext: 7004

**Appendices
attached to report:**

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

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -