

Report to Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item:
A.4

Meeting Date: 1st December 2016
Portfolio: Cross Cutting
Key Decision: No
Within Policy and Budget Framework: No
Public / Private: Public

Title: FLOOD UPDATE REPORT
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive - Darren Crossley
Report Number: SD.31/16

Purpose / Summary:

This report is part of a series of regular update reports prepared for Overview and Scrutiny Committees on flood recovery activities and 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 by the Environment Agency and Cumbria County Council.
- Provide details of the Carlisle Flood Response Plan

Recommendations:

1. That member of the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee Panel consider this report and the progress made to date in the continued efforts to reinstate a range of Council assets.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	1st December 2016
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 This report aims to set out an update of the recent and future planned work associated with recovery from the 2015 flood and plans to deal with any future such events.
- 1.2 During the past eleven months 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 As outlined in previous reports Phase 2 of the Asset Reinstatement programme is now well underway. The Council has employed WYG as programme managers. WYG are to design, specify and deliver the reinstatement works to all scheduled properties, including the procurement process and management of the construction works. A number of controls are in place to ensure effective delivery of the programme to budget, quality and time. A plan is in place for effective communication of progress and for early identification of any issues and emerging risks. During the detailed design stages, consultation and sign-off procedures will be scheduled to ensure the relevant stakeholders are involved in the process.

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

Warwick St properties	06/2016 - 12/2016
Adriano's	06/2016 - 02/2017
Sands Centre and Swifts	07/2016 - 01/2017
Stoney Holme (inc. Depot)	10/2016 - 04/2017
John St properties (Hostel and Annex)	06/2016 - 03/2017
Shaddongate Resource Centre	06/2016 - 03/2017
Botcherby Community Centre	06/2016 - 02/2017
Bitts Park (Depot, Lodge, Pavilion & WCs)	Dates to be confirmed await design/costings
Caldew Riverside Properties (demolition)	06/2016 - 03/2017
Old Fire Station	Complete
Sheepmount	10/2016 - 04/2017

Funding for the recovery of these assets is the subject of ongoing work with our insurers.

2.2 Civic Centre and Customer Contact Centre

As reported previously, Customer Contact services continue to be provided from the temporary portababin accommodation located in the car park as the ground floor and basement remain out of action. Work has commenced on investigating options for

the future use of the Civic Centre and Customer Contact Centre. This exercise includes investigations into:

- Accommodation requirements having regard to current and future staffing, service delivery needs and working practices;
- The current costs of occupying, running and maintaining the Civic and comparison with the costs of relocation;
- The scope and demand in the marketplace for alternative uses for the ground floor, basement and any surplus office space in the tower from both the public and private sector, and the income generating potential which might arise;
- Any building and engineering constraints and opportunities, together with associated costs, which need to be taken into account if alternative uses are considered;
- Practical and cost efficient flood resilience measures which can be built into the reinstatement;
- The insurance monies available to fund the cost of reinstatement.

WYG have been appointed (via the same framework agreement as our other recovery projects) to assist the Council through this work. Officers have now met with architects and quantity surveyors on site and ground floor proposals are now being developed for consideration in December.

2.3 Bitts Park

The upper tennis courts have been open to the public since Easter. Permanent repair works to the fencing and floodlighting for these courts is now complete.

The lower courts remain out of action, however they were due to be resurfaced and redeveloped as part of the proposed canopy development. On that basis we have not progressed repair works as they will be unnecessary as and when the canopy project commences. We are currently awaiting the release of funds from the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association).

The Pavillion was insured and will form part of the Council's reinstatement programme, however we are still working alongside WYG to form a view on the best provision and layout of facilities in the park (taking account of future needs and the insurance settlements and functions of the Pavillion, Park Keeper's Lodge and Bitts Park Depot).

The play area has now benefitted from a complete array of new equipment, designed to be fully accessible. This facility was re-opened in October and is proving to be very popular

2.4 The Sheepmount

The Athletics facilities have reopened in a limited and controlled manner. They have limited ancillary facilities at this stage (a small portacabin and portaloos). The track and some field facilities are back open for club training.

Temporary changing rooms are operational for football season and repair works to the pitches and turf have been completed.

We now have a recovery project underway and are liaising closely with our operator (GLL) and user groups/clubs. In addition temporary car park arrangements are in place to ensure access to the site for users.

3. FLOOD GRANTS & HOUSEHOLD PAYMENTS (FIGURES AS OF 11th NOVEMBER 2016)

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.

Up to 11th November 1,670 households have been confirmed as flooded by Storm Desmond, of these 1,602 are eligible for the £500 community support grant. The Council has made payments made to 1,567 households equating to 97.84% and totalling £783,500.

This is being recovered from the County Council upon 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 over 1000 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 Council are also working in partnership with BERG (see para 4.1) and Newground (EA supported organisation providing resilience in the communities).

The Flood Resilience grant covers both residential and commercial properties and is being administered by the Housing Department. 714 applications (43%) have been received, 642 approved and payments made to 329 households (as of 11th October) totalling £1,315,920. The 714 applications equate to approx. £2,253,430. This is 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 2,177 householders which amounts to £2.164 million for the affected properties. Business rates discount awarded to 107 properties amounting to £506,409 in total.

The total number of businesses affected was 203, with 129 properties now being re-occupied.

4. BUSINESS EMERGENCY RESILIENCE GROUP (BERG)

- 4.1 An initiative of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales, the Business Emergency Resilience Group helps businesses and communities across the UK to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies such as flooding, cyber-attacks and civil unrest. BERG has been imbedded within the Council Contact Centre since July 2016 and helps small to medium-sized business' and residents within the process of applying for Flood Resilience Grants.

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

5.1 Carlisle City Council

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

Additional locations for Reception Centres are being identified with feedback from communities at risk from flooding. A risk assessment for each location will be 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).

The Council's own actions in the draft Carlisle Flood Response Plan (See para 7.0) have now been shared with local Community Flood Action Groups for feedback. Meetings have taken place to discuss the draft plan with members of the community from Warwick Bridge, Stockdalewath and Crosby on Eden.

5.2 Cumbria Resilience Forum

The Cumbria Resilience Forum (CRF) consists of all organisations and agencies involved with emergency response in Cumbrian communities. The CRF was set up in response to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to co-ordinate the response to major incidents in Cumbria.

The Community Resilience Network is a sub-group of the CRF which focuses on improving community resilience. This group will be the an important link to a new Big Lottery Funded project called 'Rebuilding Together' . This new programme will take place over the next 3 years, led by Cumbria CVS and delivered in partnership with Cumbria Action for Sustainability (CAfS) and Action with Communities in Cumbria (ACT). 'Rebuilding Together' will help to build on the partnerships we already have, and support local communities and organisations to increase their resilience and confidence to respond alongside statutory organisations.

CRF have commissioned a debrief report on the ongoing recovery. This is a separate debrief to the CRF Storm Desmond Report, which focused on the immediate acute phase of the emergency. The recovery debrief work is been led by an Hugh Deeming, an independent consultant.

6. UPDATE FROM PARTNERS – ENVIRONMENT AGENCY AND CUMBRIA COUNTY COUNCIL

- 6.1 Representatives from these two organisations are invited to the Scrutiny meeting and will present an update of their work to Committee.
- 6.2 The Carlisle Flood Response Plan 2016/17 which is being drawn up in partnership with the Environment Agency and the County Council. It is a working document which will be used by partners to direct actions/activity to reduce the flood risk and improve community resilience across the Carlisle City Council area. With regard the City Council actions this includes the following
 - A planned programme of checking and maintaining water courses we are responsible for
 - A Floor Response Team
 - Recovery Communication Strategy
 - Guidance to communities

The plan is being finalised and we anticipate being able to share the main points at the meeting.

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**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 –

Resources -