

Report of Civil Engineering Manager – Flood Programme

Report to Director of City Development

Date: 26 March 2021

Subject: Phase Two Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, name(s) of ward(s): Hunslet & Riverside, Little London & Woodhouse, Kirkstall, Armley, Bramley & Stanningley, Horsforth, Calverley & Farsley	
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: 10.4(3)	
Appendix number: 1	

Summary

1. Main issues

- In February 2019, recognising the Government’s position at the time on the shortfall of funding, the Executive Board approved a two step approach to the delivery of a 1 in 200 year level of flood protection as part of the Phase Two Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme (LFAS2).
- This approach has successfully facilitated the expedited delivery of the scheme. The Step One measures are currently under construction and on schedule to be completed in Spring 2023 whilst the Step Two measures have continued through the design and Government business case approval processes.
- The Executive Board previously approved ‘*Subject to the affordability of tendered prices, delegate authority to spend consultant and contractor costs to progress the recommendations of this report to the Director of City Development subject to agreement with the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning and the Leader of the Council*’. (NOTE the recommendations of the report encompassed Step One and Step Two).
- Due to a combination of design development and successful lobbying for the remaining funds, the Step Two measures are now affordable and a two year construction programme can commence this summer.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- The scheme embodies many of the priorities and outcomes sought in the Best Council Plan (BCP), particularly around: supporting the sustainable growth of the Leeds economy; making communities more resilient and allowing people to be safe and more engaged; helping people to live in clean and well cared for places and for people to enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts; and being able to move around a well-planned city easily.

3. Resource Implications

- All costs associated with this report have been previously approved by the Executive Board and are mainly funded by sources external to the City Council.

Recommendations

In consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles and the Leader of the Council, the Director of City Development is requested to:

- a) give authority to spend £36,201,000 in respect of the Phase Two Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation scheme; &
- b) approve the instruction for BMM jv Limited to undertake the Phase Two Step Two Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation scheme works.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report seeks authority to spend in relation to the LFAS2 and requests approval to instruct the Step Two works to BMM jv Limited.

2. Background information

- 2.1 In the aftermath of the 2015 Boxing Day flood which was of a magnitude in excess of 1 in 200 years, a commitment was made by the Government to provide Leeds with a good standard of protection. Since then, the City Council and the Environment Agency (EA) have been working with a team of contractors and consultants to prevent a reoccurrence.
- 2.2 Recognising the Government's position in November 2018 that they were unable to provide any more than £65million of funding and the need to move forward with urgent flood defence measures as soon as possible, the Executive Board in February 2019 approved a two step approach to the delivery of a 1 in 200 year level of flood protection.
- 2.3 The first step is the delivery of a scheme which provides a 1 in 100 year level of protection to the area upstream of the train station through a number of different flood interventions. It includes a catchment wide Natural Flood Management programme that will bring transformational change, delivering several of the Government's strategic ambitions as set out in the 25 Year Environment Plan and do so on a landscape scale. It will significantly contribute to realising the vision of the Northern Forest in the Aire catchment, restore and create new habitat, increase biodiversity resilience, improve water quality through reduced sedimentation and provide circa £90million worth of benefits through carbon sequestration.

- 2.4 The second step is for attenuation work to provide a 1 in 200 year level of protection to all areas of Leeds along the River Aire including ultimately allowance for climate change to the year 2069, alleviating the impact of a reoccurrence of the 2015 Boxing Day flood. This will better protect 1,048 residential properties within the flood zone and unlock housing land for 1,613 new homes and help to create an additional 1,669 jobs. It will provide improved flood protection to 370 businesses and is estimated to generate Gross Value Added (GVA) benefits of £774million.
- 2.5 This standard aligns with the recent National Infrastructure Commission recommendation that all properties should where feasible benefit from a minimum 1 in 200 year level of protection or greater for large urban areas and also with the Upper Aire Flood Risk Management Strategy, produced by the EA in 2010. Crucially, the inclusion of an attenuation area means this level of protection would be provided across both the Phase One and the Phase Two areas, effectively eliminating the requirement for future interventions.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 In February 2019 the Executive Board approved '*Subject to the affordability of tendered prices, delegate authority to spend consultant and contractor costs to progress the recommendations of this report to the Director of City Development subject to agreement with the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning and the Leader of the Council*'. (NOTE the recommendations of the report encompassed Step One and Step Two).
- 3.2 Following on from this a design and build contract with BMM jv was procured and although the £119,375,000 overall cost at the time was not affordable, approval was ascertained to utilise the £75,981,000 available. In doing so, physical site works for the Step One measures commenced in December 2019 and are on schedule to be completed in Spring 2023, whilst at the same time the design of Step Two has continued to be developed which has resulted in the overall cost being reduced to £112,182,000.
- 3.3 In parallel with the continuation of both steps, the required Defra and HM Treasury approvals have been sought and were confirmed in January 2021. Subsequently and after successful lobbying throughout, the Government have increased their contribution to £89million which together with the other funding secured has led to the Step Two measures now being affordable and the opportunity for a two year construction programme to commence this summer.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 The Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles and the Leader have been consulted and are in agreement with the recommendations within this report.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 Equality and diversity issues relating to the scheme were addressed in the Executive Board report approved in February 2019.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The scheme embodies many of the priorities and outcomes sought in the BCP as outlined below:

- i) Good Growth – the scheme will seek to support the sustainable growth of the Leeds economy through safeguarding jobs in the area protected by flood defences. The progression of measures to reduce flood risk with regard to opportunities presented by the South Bank Master Plan (Europe’s largest regeneration area with the potential to create 35,000 new jobs and 4,000 new homes), HS2, the A65 Kirkstall corridor and its interface with wider existing Network Rail infrastructure will directly support the BCP ambition for a strong economy.
- ii) Resilient Communities – adopting a catchment based approach to flood defence offers a high level of community confidence against future flood events, enhances public citizen and stewardship involvement, and helps with the moving toward a more holistic solution to a flood defence initiative to vanguard community ownership and their association to local flood protection measures. This will support the BCP outcome for people to be safe and feel safe. It will also directly support the BCP ambition for a more engaged public.
- iii) Transport and Infrastructure; Low Carbon – the scheme seeks to enable the growth of the city whilst protecting its distinctive green character; it will enhance the waterfront areas through new or improved public spaces to support leisure and amenity uses, in keeping with the urban context, sense of place and identity. This will support the BCP outcome for people to live in clean and well cared for places and for people to enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts.
- iv) The scheme will better protect road, rail and pedestrian/cycle accessibility to the city centre from the west, safeguarding local multi-modal commuting routes and city regional transport links and through the protection afforded to the South Bank and Leeds Station area, it helps the city become ready for HS2, Northern Powerhouse Rail and the interchange facilities to be provided at the remodelled ‘Yorkshire Hub’. This will support the BCP outcome of moving around a well-planned city easily.

Climate Emergency

4.3.2 Aside from the environmental benefits listed in 2.3 above, LFAS2 has set itself targets to reduce embodied emissions (from materials) by 20% and 10% from construction activities with initial assessments from the ongoing works indicating the project is on track to meet these targets.

4.3.3 Furthermore, in order to ensure that LFAS2 is utilising the latest technology in carbon reduction techniques, regular workshops are held bringing global experts together from many organisations to share best practice and strive further for the climate emergency.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

4.4.1 The total scheme cost of LFAS2 is estimated to be £112,182,000. Previously authority to spend £75,981,000 has been approved. This report requests authority to spend the remaining amount of £36,201,000.

4.4.2 Also refer to the Confidential Appendix.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

4.5.1 All activities relating to this procurement are being executed in accordance with the Public Procurement Regulations 2015 and the LCC Contract Procedure Rules.

4.5.2 The information contained in the appendix is exempt under Access to Information Rule 10.4(3) as it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the Council). It is considered that the public interest in maintaining the content of the appendix as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, as doing so would prejudice the Council's commercial position and that of third parties, should they be disclosed at this stage.

4.5.3 The report is not eligible for call in. This report sits under a previous key decision which went to Executive Board and was approved in February 2019.

4.6 Risk management

4.6.1 Leeds is the third largest employment centre in the UK and contributes £16.3 billion GVA to the UK economy annually. Managing flood risk effectively is essential to sustain commercial confidence and to ensure that Leeds remains an attractive location in which to do business. Leeds is a major transport hub centred on Leeds train station, the future terminus of HS2. The station is the busiest in the north of England, used by over 100,000 people a day and even without HS2 or HS3, a 114% increase in passengers is forecast resulting in flows on par with Gatwick Airport. The A65 passes along the river corridor, and this is the primary highway connection between the train station and Leeds Bradford International Airport, and for many businesses and commuters based in the west of the city. A flood protection scheme that responds to the 2015 Boxing Day floods needs to provide a 1 in 200 year level of protection.

4.6.2 In order to reduce the risk of a repeat in the catastrophic impacts to residents and business which occurred in 2015, it is imperative this essential flood defence scheme progresses without delay to ensure the risk to people's homes and livelihoods is mitigated at the earliest opportunity.

5. Conclusions

5.1 The vision for Leeds is to be the best city in the UK: one that is compassionate and caring with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities. A key element of the Leeds Inclusive Growth Strategy is supporting people, place and productivity through the provision of 21st century infrastructure. In line with the Council's Best Council Plan, the scheme will make communities more resilient, support the further growth and regeneration of the Leeds economy, and protect key transportation infrastructure and the high quality public services it supports.

5.2 By progressing with a stepped approach, the expedited delivery of the scheme has been successfully facilitated. In a decade since the conception of the Phase One

proposals and at a total overall cost of approximately £162million, the city will have been defended from the River Aire through the benefit of an holistic 1 in 200 year level of protection with allowance for climate change to 2069, reducing the risk of the devastating physical and economic damage which can occur from flood events.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 In consultation with the Executive Member for Environment and Active Lifestyles and the Leader of the Council, the Director of City Development is requested to:
- i) give authority to spend £36,201,000 in respect of the Phase Two Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation scheme; &
 - ii) approve the instruction for BMM jv Limited to undertake the Phase Two Step Two Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation scheme works.

7. Background documents¹

- 7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.