

Authority to enter into a Partnership Agreement with the Environment Agency for the Yorkshire Natural Flood Management Community of Practice & West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme.

Date: 23 December 2022

Report of: Executive Manager, Flood Risk & Climate Resilience

Report to: Chief Officer, Highways & Transportation

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## Brief summary

To enter into a partnership agreement with the Environment Agency for Yorkshire Natural Flood Management Community of Practice and West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme, this will allow the council to utilise Local Levy funding administered by the EA and subsequently bring in resources to undertake the tasks required for the two partnerships.

## Recommendations

The Chief Officer, Highways and Transportation is recommended to approve the following:

- a) To note the contents of this report and the terms of the related partnership agreement.
- b) To enter into a partnership agreement with the Environment Agency (EA) with a total value of £250,000 to deliver the Yorkshire Natural Flood Management Community of Practice and West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme.

## What is this report about?

- 1 The partnership agreement with the EA combines funding and schedules for 2 initiatives: Yorkshire Natural Flood Management Community of Practice (NFM CoP) and West Yorkshire Flood Innovation Programme (WYFLIP). The legal agreement has been developed with Procurement and Legal colleagues.
- 2 The Council provides management and co-ordination of the NFM CoP, this collaborative collective of NFM professionals has received funding through the Yorkshire Regional Flood & Coastal Committee Local Levy fund administered through the EA. The NFM CoP will be delivered in partnership with University of Leeds (UoL) who hold specific expertise in this specialist area and provide hosting and facilitation work through a separate partnership agreement with the Council.
- 3 The Council provides programme management for the WYFLIP in conjunction with the UoL (their services are covered by a separate partnership agreement between UoL and the Council). The programme will deliver a range of innovative projects that will enhance the climate and flood

resilience of West Yorkshire by working collaboratively. WYFLIP has received funding through the Yorkshire Regional Flood & Coastal Committee Local Levy fund administered through the EA.

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

- 4 This proposal aims to utilise funding already secured through the Yorkshire Regional Flood & Coastal Committee Local Levy fund administered through the EA to manage the delivery of two regional partnerships. The funding allows the council to bring in external resource to manage, support and co-ordinate and co-ordinate the partnerships. The NFM CoP continues to grow in its important at both a regional and national level and is helping to develop the skills, capacity and experience within Yorkshire around the topic of Natural Flood Management. By helping to sustain this important forum the Council is playing a lead role in enhancing the regions capabilities around NFM. The WYFLIP is a developing programme of innovative projects that is building a portfolio of partnership projects that look to tackle flood and climate risks, increasing the climate resilience of the region. It is sponsored by the West Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership, which is chaired by the leader of Calderdale Council. The Council provides programme leadership and utilising external resource from UoL to manage the programme on behalf of the other 4 local authorities, West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and the EA. New technologies, techniques and solutions are being developed and trialled across West Yorkshire and the learning and legacy from these projects will be shared across West Yorkshire the wider region and nationally.

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 5 This partnership utilises Local Levy flood funding to sustain and develop two important regional partnerships. The work these partnerships help to deliver engage and support communities, develop new technologies and techniques and help make the city and wider region more resilient to climate change. The NFM CoP in particular promotes the use of nature-based solutions to reduce the impacts of climate risks like flooding but also enhances biodiversity and many of the measures provide carbon sequestration.

### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

Wards affected: N/A

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 6 The Executive Member for Infrastructure and Climate has been directly engaged in these work areas and is also the Council's elected representative on the Yorkshire Flood and Coastal Committee who took the decision to fund this partnership.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 7 Council Officers already engage with these programmes and initiatives, the additional funding received from the EA allows for additional resources to be procured from external partners.

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

- 8 Resources are needed to maintain and manage these programmes; this risk is mitigated by partnering for delivery with external suppliers and securing funding.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 9 The partnership agreement itself is a legal agreement which has been drafted by the EA and as such legal terms and risks have been identified and confirmed within the agreement document with input from Legal Officers within Procurement and Commercial Services.
- 10 Due to the value of the partnership agreement, this is a Significant Operational Decision and is not eligible for call-in. There are no grounds for keeping the contents of this report confidential under the Access to Information Rules.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

- 11 The roles the Council will undertake have been agreed and promoted through established partnerships and endorsed by the Yorkshire Regional Flood & Coastal Committee. Local Levy funding is controlled by the Grant Memorandum set out by the Government and administered through the EA, as such initiatives of this type where funding is used as revenue to support the establishment and management of collaborative programmes the existing mechanisms for transferring funds from the EA to local authorities cannot be used. A bespoke procurement strategy has been agreed with DEFRA and the Partnership agreement drafted for this specific purpose has been finalised and agreed between the EA and the Council's legal officers.

### **How will success be measured?**

- 12 A programme of key milestones and deliverables are outlined in schedules 1A and 1B of the partnership agreement.

### **What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?**

- 13 Jonathan Moxon – Exec Manager Flood Risk & Climate Resilience. The Partnership period is 1 February 2022 to 31 March 2024.

### **Appendices**

None.

### **Background papers**

None.