

REPORT TITLE: Annual Review of Flood Risk Management Activities

Meeting:	Environment & Climate Change Scrutiny Panel
Date:	11th February 2026
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Graham Turner
Purpose of Report: To provide an annual review of Flood Risk Management Activities.	
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note and comment on the contents of the annual review of activities of Flood Risk Management activities. 	
Resource Implications: Delivery of the programme outlined within this report will continue to place significant demands on existing staffing resources. While the service has secured external funding to support feasibility and capital development activity, internal capacity remains the principal constraint on pace of project development, risk investigation and statutory planning consultee responses. Additional pressures may emerge should Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 be enacted, due to the need for a dedicated SuDS Approval Body function.	
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	David Shepherd Executive Director for Place – 30.01.26

Electoral wards affected: All wards affected.

Ward councillors consulted: No consultation undertaken.

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes, no personal data is contained in this report.

1. Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of flood risk management activity undertaken by Kirklees Council during 2024/25, including statutory responsibilities, delivery of funded studies and capital schemes, emerging partnership work across West Yorkshire, and the implications of changes to national funding profiles administered by DEFRA and the Environment Agency. Significant progress has been made in securing Local Levy funding and developing feasibility studies aimed at reducing long-term flood risk. However, the removal of several Grant in Aid (GiA) allocations for 2026/27 presents a challenge to future programme delivery and necessitates the development of alternative funding routes. The report also highlights early work to establish an integrated cross-directorate network to improve co-ordination of landscape resilience, natural flood management and climate adaptation activities.

2. Background Information

2.1 Introduction

Kirklees Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), has statutory responsibilities for managing local sources of flood risk, including surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. This report outlines the progress made in discharging those duties over the past 12 months and identifies emerging opportunities and risks.

The potential enactment of Schedule 3 of the Floods and Water Management Act 2010 for will have significant resource implications as the Council would become an approval board for sustainable drainage schemes, subsequently adopting and maintaining drainage assets. However, there continues to be little movement from DEFRA on the subject and therefore no indication of its immediate implementation.

Statutory duties under Floods and Water Management Act 2010 – Ongoing.

- Statutory Consultee for planning applications regarding flood risk and drainage.
- Prepare and maintain a flood risk management strategy for the district.
- Maintain a register of assets.
- Investigate significant flood incidents
- Co-operate with other risk management authorities, e.g. Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water.

In addition, other roles and legal duties include:

- Providing consents for work in ordinary watercourse (Land Drainage Act 1991)
- Enforcement action for obstructions to flow in ordinary watercourses (Land Drainage Act
- Play a key role in Emergency Planning before, during and after a flood event.

2.3 Progress update

The 2024/25 year has been characterised by an increased emphasis on feasibility and early-stage design as a precursor to major capital works. The service has worked closely with the Environment Agency in promoting and developing opportunities alongside local delivery partners with shared goals. This year witnessed embedding a more structured co-operative relationship with Yorkshire Water with a focus on problem solving and better project management, with Flood Management playing a key role as a gateway to other Council departments. Internal cross department networks have been established to best prepare the Council for effective and co-ordinated investment opportunities around Nature Based Solutions and in turn provides a base to better align the Council with emerging regional priorities on managing water provision, quality, and flood risk with Yorkshire Water, WYCA, Environment Agency and surrounding districts.

Kirklees Flood Management & Drainage, having been successful in 2024/25 in obtaining grants from Local Levy funding, is now in the process of developing feasibility studies with partners and developing project scope and further procurement to expand investment activity in flood risk management.

A summary of the studies and projects is provided below.

Flood Risk Mental Health and Well Being £36,000 (Mental Health First Aid Training Completed. Partnership with Huddersfield University acquired a further £22,000 (2025) for research and project scoping, including direct involvement with Kirklees residents.

Middlemost Pond Flood Alleviation Feasibility Study £32,000 (Primary Stage Completed, detailed feasibility/development stage commenced).

Ludhill Dike Natural Flood Management Design and Landowner Engagement £55,600 – Partners River Holme Connections commenced work.

Natural Flood Management Design and Landowner Engagement (Selected Clusters) £128,000 – Procurement Stage.

In addition, the following capital scheme (Grant in Aid Funding) is in progress:

Howley Beck Capital Scheme (with Network Rail) £150,000 – Commenced.

Debris Screen Studies (2026) £670,000, maximum allocation decision imminent. Local EA board assured grant. Regional assurance decision imminent (February 2026)

The following Kirklees driven schemes have been removed from 2026/7 funding pools.

Albert Street, Lockwood (WYCA Funding) – Feasibility and timescale issues. This project can be revisited but potential cost/benefit analysis is likely to be unfavourable. The EA has had to withdraw funding for their own phase of this scheme.

The Environment Agency's £1.5m Mirfield Flood Alleviation scheme feasibility study has also been withdrawn in a reassessment of funding provision via DEFRA This does not directly affect Kirklees resources.

Also under the re-evaluation of Grant in Aid funding from DEFRA via the EA, Kirklees projects have lost funding for 2026/7 for construction phase for Middlemost Pond alleviation scheme and Cluster 4 (Linthwaite) further development study.

All Councils have had GIA projects removed that were not currently 'spade ready'. The Middlemost Pond scheme will be reapplied for 2028+ but we are exploring opportunities with WYCA to fund and offset the loss of the Albert Street scheme. In addition, we are working with the EA to look at Local Levy grants stepping in as a makeweight for loss of Grant in Aid funding.

Initial discussions are underway with Yorkshire Water, Environment Agency, WYCA and West Yorkshire Councils to explore joint working for 'Integrated Water Management' at a West Yorkshire Level. Predicted water shortages through population growth and climate change, alongside increasing flood risk, to be looked at cohesively alongside water quality, biodiversity, landscape restoration.

Kirklees Flood Management has already set up an internal network with departments under the Place directorate but with different management hierarchies and portfolio holders. The Partners are Flood Management, Landscape Architects and Woodland Management. Initial scope is to work at Kirklees level for opportunities mapping, joint bid development, multi-discipline scheme enhancement. The network will liaise with regional and local stakeholders as necessary. Skill and resource sharing, learning opportunities and developing best practice are sighted as favourable outcomes.

The Flood Management and Landscape Resilience Network will sit comfortably with early aspirations being developed by any West Yorkshire Integrated Water Management group. Further development of regional co-operation will require senior management decision making and governance input.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Council Plan

Flood risk management activity contributes to the Council Plan by supporting:

- Sustainable Industrial Growth – by protecting homes, infrastructure and employment sites from flood risk.
- Inclusive Communities – through engagement with residents affected by local flooding and partnership work on mental health and wellbeing.
- Climate and Nature – by delivering schemes incorporating natural flood management, biodiversity improvements and landscape resilience.
- Efficient and Effective Organisation – ensuring statutory responsibilities are met and risks are managed proactively.

3.2 Financial Implications

There are no immediate unplanned revenue implications arising directly from this report. However, future staffing and delivery pressures linked to large-scale scheme development, recovery of GiA funding, and potential implementation of Schedule 3 may require further financial consideration. Finance colleagues will work with the service to assess long-term budget pressures as the programme matures.

3.3 Legal Implications

All activity described in this report is undertaken in accordance with statutory duties under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Land Drainage Act 1991 and associated Regulations. Should Schedule 3 be enacted nationally, the Council will be required to establish a SuDS Approval Body (SAB) which will have legal implications relating to governance, enforcement, adoption of assets and long-term maintenance responsibilities.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

Flood risk management is a core component of the Council's climate adaptation approach. The shift toward natural flood management, multi-functional landscapes and integrated water management supports improved carbon sequestration, soil health, biodiversity and air quality. The partnership work outlined also contributes to building long-term resilience across the borough's communities and infrastructure

The projects described support wider climate adaptation objectives, helping to build resilience to more frequent and intense rainfall events. The integration of natural flood management (NFM) approaches reflects a shift towards multi-benefit interventions aligned with biodiversity, carbon capture and landscape restoration goals.

3.5 Risk, Integrated Impact Assessment

Key Risks include:

- Loss or delay of national funding impacting the delivery programme.

- Increased frequency of severe flooding events due to climate change outpacing current capacity.
- Insufficient staffing resource to meet statutory duties or deliver large-scale capital programmes.
- Dependency on external partners for shared schemes, introducing delivery and governance risks.
- Reputational risk if community expectations are not met

Integrated Impact Assessment:

Integrated Impact Assessments will be developed where required as schemes move into detailed design, reflecting environmental, socio-economic and equalities considerations associated with capital works or service changes.

4. Consultation & Engagement

Engagement continues with the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, WYCA, internal Council services, landowners, and community groups. Consultation with ward members is undertaken on a scheme-by-scheme basis. Wider public engagement will be built into feasibility and design phases, particularly for capital interventions affecting local residents.

6. Next steps

- Completion of ongoing feasibility studies and commencement of procurement where appropriate.
- Reappraisal of schemes impacted by GiA funding withdrawal and exploration of alternative funding routes (Local Levy, WYCA, partnership contributions).
- Development of the Kirklees Landscape Resilience and Flood Management Network.
- Continued participation in regional work on Integrated Water Management.
- Preparation for potential implementation of Schedule 3, including staffing and governance considerations.

8. Contact officers

Paul Farndale, Strategic Partnership Lead for Flood Management & Drainage

Mathias Franklin, Head of Planning & Development

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

n/a

10 Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed action plan for 2025/26

11 Service Director responsible

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