

Impact Assessment



Assessment of: **Managing Big Problems in Small Places project**

Service: Transport, Planning & Environment

Head of Service: Dave Black

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Assessment carried out by (job title): Special Project Manager (Environment and Major Schemes)

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

A partnership lead by Devon County Council including district councils, risk management authorities, local Non-Governmental Organisations and universities were successful in securing £7.6 million of capital funding until 31 March 2027 following the submission of an expressing interest to the Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme managed by the Environment Agency on behalf of DEFRA.

The project is called Managing Big problems in Small Places in Rapid Response type Catchments.

This is an ambitious project which looks to see:

- Measurable reduction in potential flood damage and disruption in hard to help communities which will go beyond the properties directly at risk and extend to community assets, businesses, local infrastructure and communities downstream.
- Improved and more informed planning decisions in Rapid Response 'type' Catchment areas including future climate impacts considerations.
- An increased knowledge of the state of resilience of communities or catchments in Devon in order to better inform future flood resilience projects, and collaboration between Risk Management Authorities.]

2. Reason for change / review

This is a large project (value of £7.6 Million over 6 years) which require approval from cabinet. As the project will trial flood resilience solutions to targeted locations in Devon, the solutions implemented and piloted will directly affect local communities. This impact assessment will help ensure the approach used to deliver flood resilience solutions will help manage potential effects on communities, local economic conditions, individuals and vulnerable/potentially vulnerable groups.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

The project aims to increase flood resilience at a catchment level within communities in rapid response 'type' catchments where traditional flood defences are shown not to be appropriate or cost beneficial.

Devon has a long history of flash flooding in rapidly responding catchments. These events are the result of intense periods of heavy rainfall occurring on the steep, small, fast responding catchments that typify Devon's flood risk. A national programme identified 384 'very high' or 'high' risk Rapid Response Catchments in England, 20% of which are located in Devon and Cornwall. Locally, thousands of properties are at risk of flooding from Main River, minor watercourses and surface water risks, and several major transport links in and out of the county are as a result vulnerable. The allocation of funding nationally does not reflect the very real risks and issues in Devon. With only a handful of large urban areas, the risks spread across small communities meaning it is often difficult to deliver a step-change in levels of resilience under the current national funding rules. As a result, disparate measures are delivered over a long period of time, if relevant funding opportunities allow, often losing the ability to follow a strategically planned approach and efficiently deliver as much resilience net gain as possible.

This project seeks to address the above challenges and pre-existing barriers to delivering flood resilience in rapid response type catchments. The delivery plan of the project has been developed and locations where work will take place identified.

The project objectives are:

1. Empower local communities and stakeholders to participate in the development, delivery, monitoring, maintenance and ownership of flood resilience interventions by piloting a range of low-cost resilience actions including Nature Based Solutions
2. Promote and support the installation of Property Flood Resilience measures in community assets and with small businesses so that they can recover quicker from flooding
3. Enhance existing warning systems by developing local and tailored surface water flood warning tools so that targeted communities are able to react in time.
4. Identify & develop alternative funding models for communities to fund and maintain flood resilience measures.
5. Develop new spatial planning tools and approaches which can:
 - support the delivery of flood resilience measures at a catchment scale in Rapid Response type Catchments
 - improve and embed flood resilience in planning and land use policies and decisions.
6. Define, quantify and share levels of community resilience and potential for resilience gain within a catchment through the development of Flood Resilience Hub on the web.
7. Deliver robust and replicable learning: Demonstrate how different actions work together at a catchment level; identify what level of protection can be afforded to a community; improve evidence on the costs and benefits of innovative resilience actions including co benefits (biodiversity, carbon, socio-economic and health).

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

[Community, Staff and Service profiles are available [online for you to refer to](#). Delete this note and insert text here]

Locally within the Devon County Council Boundary there are approximately 2,500 properties at risk of flooding from surface water flooding and 23,500 properties at risk of flooding from rivers and sea and several transport links in and out of Devon are considered vulnerable.

Pilot Communities- the project will work with communities in Devon, Plymouth and Torbay and will co design flood resilience solutions including piloting nature-based solutions.

Pilot Communities have been identified and will be targeted based on the following criteria:

- their location - in a rapid response type sub catchment or catchment and at risk of flooding
- where traditional flood defences are shown not to be appropriate or cost beneficial
- Communities are either:
 - already engaged with a project partner through another project or initiative including flood resilience and where potential for project complementarity exists or
 - regularly affected by flooding but are not engaged or have not taken up any resilience measures/support currently on offer.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

The following stakeholders have been identified:

- Parish and town council and neighbourhood wards where interventions will take place. High Interest.
- Local emergency or flood groups if they exist. Other local groups and volunteers interested in participating in the project
- Residents identified as vulnerable will also be engaged via the Parish or Town council or Devon County Council services
- Landowner where nature-based solutions could be implemented to improve flood resilience.
- Risk Management Authorities: the Environment Agency, South West Water and local authorities
- Devon County Council's flood risk officers and highways services
- Devon Community Resilience Forum

6. Additional research used to inform this assessment

All the project partners have met during several workshop to identify stakeholders, understand barriers to engagement, share experience in engaging stakeholders and agree principles of engagement. A Stakeholders Engagement Strategy and Plan is currently being develop for the project which will set out the types and groups of stakeholders, engagement principles and engagement methods.

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Each participating communities will be invited to co design flood resilience solutions in partnership of project partners. When options have been developed, public consultation will take place on the flood resilience proposed options.

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).

- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
<p>All residents (include generic equality provisions)</p>		<p>The project seeks to pilot innovative way of engaging communities in Flood Resilience issues but also encourage communities to be part of the solution hence building capacity.</p>
<p>Age</p>		<p>Mixture of face to face and online engagement activities</p> <p>We will encourage project partner to use plain English and to follow our DCC accessible communication standards.</p> <p>Including providing additional support or alternative formats including an interpreter/translation, large print, audio or braille.</p>
<p>Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people</p>		<p>Mixture of face to face and online engagement activities.</p> <p>Consider transporting resident including residents with disability or mobility issues, flood group members or residents where public transport is limited in locations upstream of their community in order to visit, identify potential nature base flood solutions for Natural Flood Management</p>

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<p>Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion and belief</p>		<p>Part of the project is to consider innovative way of engaging participating communities. This will include debiasing the approach to community engagement. We will encourage project partner to use plain English and to follow our DCC accessible communication standards.</p> <p>We will consider the need to providing additional support or alternative formats including an interpreter/translation, large print, audio or braille.</p>
<p>Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed)</p>		<p>Part of the project is to consider innovative way of engaging participating communities. This will include debiasing the approach to community engagement.</p>
<p>Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership</p>		<p>Part of the project is to consider innovative way of engaging participating communities. This will include debiasing the approach to community engagement.</p>

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<p>Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban</p>		<p>Part of the project is to consider innovative way of engaging participating communities. This will include debiasing the approach to community engagement.</p>

9. Human rights considerations:

Devon County Council and partners are fully committed to Human Rights legislation and national policies

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered and resourceful?

The project aim is to develop and deliver Flood Resilience. The activities will include encouraging community participation, co design, and implementation of flood resilience measures.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

By definition these actions are designed to improve community resilience and the ability to recover from flood events and therefore will improve the mental health and wellbeing for those at risk or previously at risk.

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

The project will look to trial and pilot innovative ways to engage and involve the community in flood resilience issues in their area.

11. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	x
Planning Permission	
Environmental Impact Assessment	
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:		Individual projects will have a strict waste minimisation policy
Conserve and enhance wildlife:		Priority will be given to projects that have a positive impact on wildlife
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:		Priority will be given to projects that have a positive impact on wildlife distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:		The project will ensure that any activities conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:		Part of the project is to consider carbon sequestration as a result of nature-based solutions being implemented.
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):		Part of the project is to consider water quality improvement as a result of nature-based solutions being implemented.
Contribute to reducing water consumption:		Not applicable

Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):		The overarching objective is to ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change
Other (please state below):		

12. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:		This is a pilot project aimed at increasing knowledge and skills.
Impact on employment levels:		There will be a range of consultants and contractors involved that have a positive impact on employment
Impact on local business:		Local businesses will be employed where possible

13. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

The project is a pilot project which will gather a wide range of learning on impact and outcomes including social, environmental, and economic benefits.

14. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

As this is a pilot project a full benefits realisation assessment will be included in the final report

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

As this is a government funded pilot project a full benefits realisation will be include in the final report.