

Report to Leader

Subject: Property Flood Resilience Recovery Schemes (“PFR 2020”).

Date: 7th December 2020

Author: Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Officer

Wards Affected:

All

Purpose

To seek approval for a local Flood Recovery Scheme that will provide residents and a business who suffered from Flooding internal damage during Storm Ciara and Dennis in February 2020 with financial support.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision

Recommendations

THAT:

- 1. The Council joins the Property Flood Resilience Recovery Scheme (“PFR 2020”) to be implemented in accordance with the latest Defra guidance;**
- 2. The Gedling Borough Council Local Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme (“PFRRSS”) at Appendix 2 be approved;**
- 3. A Property Flood Resilience Recovery Scheme Payment budget of £130,000 be established by virement to be funded by Defra Grant; and**
- 4. The Director responsible for Health, Safety and Emergency Planning be authorised to:**
 - a. approve the grant application process including any conditions applicable to the grant.**
 - b. determine grant applications under the PFRRSS;**

- c. approve the list of officers that will undertake the required eligibility checks necessary to process applications to comply with data sharing agreement requirements;**
- d. amend the PFRRSS as necessary, if Defra makes any alteration to its guidance or requirements on the Council under the PFR 2020.**

1 Background

- 1.1 In a severe weather event that affects a significant area, local authorities may need central support to help their communities and businesses return to normal. HM Government Ministers determine whether any additional support will be made available. Flood incidents with localised impacts will not usually trigger a recovery support package. However, following the flooding caused as a result of persistent wet weather during the winter of 2019/20 and the storms of February, namely Storm Ciara and Dennis Ministers approved a Flood Recovery Scheme.
- 1.2 The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) will provide funding to eligible local authorities to implement a local Property Flood Resilience Recovery Schemes where properties were flooded internally as a result of Storm Ciara or Dennis. Districts and Borough Council's that were affected by either Storm Ciara or Dennis or both storms and meet the 25 or more properties severely affected threshold are eligible to apply to Defra for PFR 2020 grants. The grants are for amount of up to £5000 inclusive of Value Added Tax and will be available to assist people whose properties are eligible for the scheme, to make their homes more flood resilient.
- 1.3 The Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme [2020] Local Authority guidance at Appendix 1 sets out a framework for how the Council will be expected to administer a local scheme, with a view to it being both effective and consistent.
- 1.4 The Council is eligible for the Defra Scheme because it has evidence that 26 properties (25 residential and 1 business) in the borough were flooded internally as a result of Storm Ciara or Dennis. If the Council agrees to implement a Scheme, those unfortunate residents and businesses will now be eligible to apply for a grant.
- 1.5 The grant can be used for property flood reliance measures. Property flood resilience refers to any measures that can be applied building to make people and the property less vulnerable to the physical impacts of flooding.
 - PFR Resistance is the use of materials and approaches to safely

keep water out of the property.

- PFR Recoverability is the use of materials, products and construction methods that mean a building can be quickly brought into use after flooding: i.e. managing the level and consequences of damage, if there is water entry.

- 1.7 The presence of property flood defences does not mean that the people they protect will never be flooded: there is always a residual risk. Flood resilient communities are places where local people are aware of their flood risk; know what this means for them, their property, and they have the confidence and ability to cope with events. Property Flood Resilience brings together a range of behaviours, actions and measures that together will help people become more resilient to the impacts of flooding and reduce the length of time needed for recovery, if flooding were to re-occur.
- 1.8 It is not always possible to completely keep out flood water as floodwater may overtop resistance measures like current flood barriers used by residents or seep through brickwork. This investment is most effectively used where it is supporting the additional cost of measures and repairs that enhance the future reparability and recoverability of a property in the event of a floodwater entering the property.
- 1.9 From a local authority perspective, greater individual flood resilience will have wider positive knock-on-effects such as a potential reduced need for the Council to respond to a particular address or historically flood affected community. For example, the Council ran a similar scheme in 2015/16 and a large proportion of the applicants were in Calverton. Since this scheme was administered we have had no reports of flooding from this community. Although, of course this does not mean that the Calverton community has not suffered from flooding from this date, but it is likely to have had a positive reduction in flooding impacts.

2 Proposal

- 2.1 It is proposed that Gedling Borough Council joins the Defra Scheme to ensure that owners of eligible properties within the borough which were flooded internally as a result Storm Ciara or Dennis can access grant funding. This will enable them to carry out flood resilience measures so that if flooding were to reoccur, damage levels would be considerably lower and householders and businesses could return to their properties much more quickly.
- 2.2 A Gedling Borough Council Local Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme 2020 has been prepared (Appendix 2) so that the Council can implement the scheme locally in accordance with the government guidance. It is proposed that the Local Scheme at Appendix 2 be

approved.

2.3 There is no established budget in place at the present time and therefore it is proposed that a budget is established to allow the payment of the grants in relation to eligible properties which meet the criteria set out in the Scheme.

2.4 In view of the fact that this is a new Scheme, there are currently no officer delegations in place to enable officers to administer the scheme. In addition, although the eligibility criteria are clearly detailed in the local scheme, as is an outline of the application process, the detailed administrative process for grants and any conditions which will be included on the award letter, for example where repayment of the grant may be necessary, are not yet finalised. It is therefore proposed that the Director responsible for Health, Safety and Emergency Planning be authorised to:-

- approve the final application process for grants including the conditions on grant award.
- determine applications for grant funding that meet the criteria under the Local Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme. Each grant will not exceeding £5000 inclusive of VAT;
- approve the list of officers that will undertake the required eligibility checks necessary to process applications to comply with data sharing agreement requirements set out in the Memorandum of Understanding with Defra;
- amend the Local Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme as necessary, in the event that Defra makes any alteration to its guidance or any requirements on the Council under the Defra Scheme. This will ensure that the Council's Local Scheme remains fit for purpose.

3 Alternative Options

3.1 The Council could choose not to administer the scheme. This would mean these grants would not be available to the eligible residents and businesses in our local community for flood resilience investment.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 This scheme has a zero cost implication as all flood grant funds will be reimbursed by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra).

4.2 The Council will have some administrative work which can be achieved within existing resources. The Customer Services Manager will be

supporting the administration of the scheme as the HSEPO is currently heavily engaged in the Covid-19 emergency response. The HSEPO does not have spare capacity to be able to administer the scheme other than supporting the establishment of the scheme which falls within the remit of his role.

- 4.3 It is anticipated that maximum expenditure in 2020/21 will not exceed £130,000. This scheme is also expected to run into quarter 2 of 2021/22 in terms of the final returns to Defra for reimbursement to Council funds. Finance colleagues will be supporting the financial returns for this scheme.
- 4.4 In accordance with financial regulations a budget for the scheme will need to be established which will require Portfolio Holder approval of a virement to add £130,000 for flood grant expenditure financed initially by £130,000 of Council reserves.
- 4.5 The section 151 officer, or their deputy in their absence will sign off all returns to Defra

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 A Memorandum of Understanding with Defra must be complied with to ensure that the funds are received during the administration of this scheme.
- 5.2 This scheme positively contributes towards a reduced burden in future of the Council in terms of the planning for emergencies such as flood incidents which forms part of the Council's duties outlined within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 There are no equalities implications directly arising from this report.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 There are positive impacts that are possible from the implementation of this scheme. For example, this could likely include the potential reduction in Council resources required for responding to residents and businesses from imminent danger of flooding where we have historically received request for sand bags, along with the resources required to respond to and recover from flood events. This would also see a reduction in fuel usage and wear and tear on Council fleet vehicles.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme [2020]

Local Authority Guidance

- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Gedling Borough Council Local Property Flood Resilience Recovery Support Scheme 2020

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None identified.

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To ensure that owners of eligible properties in the borough affected by Storm Ciara or Dennis are able to access government funding. Agree a scheme for administering a flood scheme grants for residents and businesses which will have an overall positive impact on improving lives and commercial viability and economic prosperity in the Borough.
- 10.2 To agree a framework for administering a local scheme grants which complies with the government guidance and will have an overall positive impact on improving lives and commercial viability and economic prosperity in the Borough.
- 10.3 Budgets are required where the Council acts as a “principal” in line with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting.
- 10.3 To allow for smooth day-to-day operational management, ensure the timely award of the grants and efficient decision making and avoid the Executive being burdened with operational decisions.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Date:

**Approved on behalf of the Monitoring
Officer**

Date: