



Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

Report of:	Portfolio Holder	Date of publication
Mark Billington, Corporate Director Environment	Councillor Michael Vincent, Resources Portfolio Holder and Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood and Community Services	12 August, 2021

Innovative Resilience Fund ECO-CoBS

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek approval to develop the Innovative Resilience Fund to develop Environmental Community Owned Coastal Buffer Strips (ECO-CoBS) along the NW Coast to Outline Business Case (OBC).

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Collaborate with our partners to respond to a range of climate change issues, including our commitment to carbon footprint reduction and tackling flood risk across Wyre.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That approval is given to submit a FCERM7 form application to the Environment Agency for funding to undertake studies, monitoring and consultation in order to develop the Innovation project.
- 3.2 That approval is given by the Resources Portfolio Holder to allow for the appointment of consultants using the Environment Agency's (EA) framework and Cell 11 monitoring framework under the exemptions to Contract Procedures contained within the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules. The Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules; on the grounds that exemptions may apply where "a framework agreement is available that necessitates the Council not having to go out to tender and the goods, works and services will still provide the Council with best value for money".

- 3.3 That approval is given to contribute to consultation expertise through existing partnership arrangements with the Wyre Rivers Trust, Morecambe Bay Partnership and Lancashire Wildlife Trust.
- 3.4 That approval is given to advertise for a programme manager through secondment of existing partner staff or external appointment for a five year period.
- 3.5 That the Capital Programme is updated to reflect spend of £453,000 in 2021/22 with funding provided by the EA.
- 3.6 That the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have made available a Project Development Grant 2021 No 31/5471 of £40,000 and this too should be reflected in the Capital Programme for 2021/22.

4. Background

- 4.1 In the 2020 Budget, the government announced a £200 million fund for the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation programme. The programme will help meet the aims set out in the:

- [Government's policy statement on flooding and coastal erosion](#)
- [Environment Agency's National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England](#)

The programme has allocated £150 million of the £200 million to 25 local areas. Wyre was successful in submitting an expression of interest (EOI) on behalf of the North West Coast for the development of ECO-CoBS for which it has been awarded £6.791m between 1 April 2021 and 31 March 2027.

- 4.2 In order to develop the Innovation projects an OBC will be developed by 31 March 2022. The studies required to develop this OBC are submitted to the EA for approval through a Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Form 7 (FCERM 7). Following approval funding will be provided for the studies.
- 4.3 The ECO-CoBS project will develop a suite of natural buffer strips to increase the coastal resilience of vulnerable hot-spots in the North West. Creating a natural buffer strip around the coast has numerous benefits including reducing flood risk, reducing coastal erosion, increasing biodiversity and water quality, providing carbon capture and other wider beneficial ecosystem aspects such as opportunities for recreation and wellbeing activities. These buffer strips with their rich vegetation, act as natural breakwaters, capturing sediment and dissipating wave energy.

The buffer strips include:

- a. Developing salt marsh,
- b. Managed realignment,
- c. Reclaiming redundant brownfield sites,
- d. Dune systems and
- e. Intertidal lagoons to provide storage of surface water during high tide.

Five key areas will be addressed:

1. Understanding the eco-geomorphological system.
2. Develop innovative solutions to create and maintain buffers.
3. Applications of novel and integrated monitoring techniques including: Autonomous radar, WireWall, Satellite and Drone photogrammetry and Citizen Science to provide a single learning model of the coastal nearshore.
4. Establish adaptation triggers and pathway.
5. Empowering communities; throughout the project, communities will be engaged in a process of co-creation to improve knowledge and co-design of buffers.

4.4 The FCERM7 application for studies will enable the production of the OBC through the following areas:

4.4.1 To undertake a review of best practice guidance in the creation of buffer strips.

- Literature review of relevant national and international completed schemes, studies and guidance.
- Review of current research projects that mutual co-operation and benefit could be gained.
- Review of monitoring practice on a variety of scales and methodologies for providing state indicators for natural system based on bio diversity, carbon capture and social benefits, to provide evidence of successful interventions.

The review will focus on obtaining information regarding

- (i) scientific understanding of the eco-hydro-geomorphological interactions that govern coastal buffer strip evolution;
- (ii) engineering practice regarding coastal buffer strip installation, management and monitoring; and
- (iii) ways of successfully engaging and involving local communities in maintaining and managing these coastal buffer strips so as to maximise their resilience, sustainability and values to society, the local economy and nature.

It is proposed to appoint Lancaster University to undertake this study.

4.4.2 To produce governance structures and consultation plans that deliver eco-buffer solutions that facilitate Co-Design and Co-Ownership with the community.

- Provide funding to extend existing partnerships through Wyre Rivers Trust, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Morecambe Bay Partnership to build upon existing community consultation through partnership officers.
- Provide community, coastal leadership-influencers and practitioner workshops including consultation material at a scheme and regional level.
- Identify local volunteering groups with interest in coastal and marine biodiversity protection.
- Build a network of community groups across NW.

It is proposed to contribute to two existing community partnership officers (non-Wyre staff) to lead on this work concentrating on the areas South and North of Fleetwood to the National boundaries with Wales and Scotland.

4.4.3 To provide an understanding of the existing physical conditions, environmental constraints and opportunities for consideration to allow outline design of the innovative solutions.

- Undertake analysis of existing data and reports on coastal change and habitats at the project sites through Regional Monitoring Team and framework consultants.
- Undertake monitoring to provide a baseline of spatial, geomorphological and environment conditions, through Framework consultants Marlan and NOC.

It is proposed to appoint specialist framework consultants Jacobs, Marlan and NOC to assist with these studies.

4.4.4 To analyse the legislative constraints and requirements to satisfy planning, licencing and environmental requirements to deliver the solutions.

- Undertake environmental scoping with NE and agree processes and requirements to optimise environmental benefits, whilst developing no regret ECO-CoBS testing labs.
- Agree with MMO scope of licence requirements.
- Identify with LA planning authorities any planning requirements working through Coastal Concordat where appropriate.

It is proposed to engage and scope requirements with NE, MMO and LA planners to produce guidance for development of the schemes as part of the FCERM7 studies.

4.4.5 To identify beneficiaries and payment mechanisms for landowners.

- Quantify likely benefits to bio-diversity and net gain using DEFRA metrics, water quality and social benefits.
- Identify future revenue streams for maintenance of innovations.
- Quantify investment opportunities and structured agreements with landowners including ELMs and payment for public benefits.

It is proposed to engage with National Farmers Union (NFU) through the promoting LA (estates officers) and an allowance for this has been made within the consultation and professional advice packages.

4.4.6 To evaluate and quantify the resilience measures to be achieved.

- Fully quantify benefits to resilience of infrastructure and communities.

It is proposed this activity is led by the promoting LA with support from framework consultants and North West and North Wales Coastal Group (NW&NWCG) working groups.

- 4.5** A full time project management resource will be required to deliver the programme of works and an appointment will be made for the five year duration of the scheme. An allowance for an interim project manager on a consultancy basis together with an allowance for the promoting LA's project administration has been made within the FCERM7 (this will be a contribution to existing administration staff of approximately £6,000 per annum for Wyre). A job description and specification will be prepared for the programme manager and an appointment made during the development of the OBC period.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** A FCERM7 has been prepared for submission to the EA. This will allow the development of the OBC to deliver Innovation ECO-CoBS schemes along the North West coast.
- 5.2** It is proposed to appoint Lancaster University to undertake a review of best practice guidance in the creation of buffer strips.
- 5.3** It is proposed to contribute to two existing community partnership officers to lead on governance structures and consultation plans. These will deliver eco-buffer solutions that facilitate Co-Design and Co-Ownership with the community. A partnership officer will take the lead on the area North of Fleetwood to the Scottish border and one will lead on the area South of Fleetwood to the Welsh border.

- 5.4** It is proposed to appoint specialist framework consultants Jacobs, Marlan and NOC to assist with providing a baseline understanding of the existing physical conditions, environmental constraints and opportunities for consideration to allow outline design of the innovative solutions.
- 5.5** It is proposed to engage and scope requirements with NE, MMO and LA planners to produce guidance for development of the schemes as part of the FCERM7 studies.
- 5.6** It is proposed to engage with National Farmers Union (NFU) through the promoting LA (estates officers) and an allowance has been made for this within the consultation and professional advice packages.
- 5.7** It is proposed to evaluate and quantify the resilience measures to be achieved and that this is led by the promoting LA with support from framework consultants and North West and North Wales Coastal Group (NW&NWCG) working groups.
- 5.8** It is proposed to appoint a project management resource to assist with the delivery of the studies and programme of schemes.
- 5.9** The Capital Programme for 2021/22 is to be updated to include the £40,000 grant from DEFRA and £453,000 from the EA to undertake initial project development and OBC work.

6. Delegated functions

- 6.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Neighbourhood and Community Services Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution):

“To consider any matter relating to the Council's responsibilities for coast protection or the provision and maintenance of sea defences.”

The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the council's constitution):

“To consider departures from Rules relating to financial and contractual matters if appropriate.

- 6.2** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the council's constitution):

“To consider departures from Rules relating to financial and contractual matters if appropriate.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	<p>The Environment Agency have a reserved allocation of £6,791,000 for the ECO-CoBS Innovation project.</p> <p>The FRCERM 7 form requests funding of £453,000 for the financial year 2021-22.</p> <p>The full grant provision will be made during 2022-2027 as detailed in the EOI.</p> <p>DEFRA have made available a Project Development Grant 2021 No 31/5471 of £40,000 to assist in the period between now and September 2021 when the anticipated approval of the FCERM7 will be received.</p>
Legal	Contracts will be entered into with the consultants identified above through the relevant frameworks.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	✓
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	✓
climate change	✓
ICT	x
data protection	x

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'privacy impact assessment (PIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a PIA will need to have been completed and signed off by Data Protection Officer before the decision is taken in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None		

List of appendices

None

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