



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, Director of Environment	Councillor Lesley McKay, Resources Portfolio Holder and Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder	14 November 2024

Flood and Coast Resilience Innovative Programme – Our Future Coast Development

Key decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To seek approval to procure services from a number of consultants and organisations in order to progress packages of work which are part of the Our Future Coast (OFC) programme funded through the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovative Programme (FRCRIP).
- 1.2 To seek approval in Wyre Council's role as accountable body for OFC to request approval to transfer contingency funding into a capital delivery budget to enable land acquisition and the extensions of a nature based capital works project, which meets the requirements of the FCRIP.

2. Council priorities

- 2.1 To continue collaboration with our partners and to respond to a range of climate change and community resilience issues, including our commitment to carbon footprint reduction and tackling flood risk and the associated community impact across Wyre.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That approval is given to appoint consultants as set out below: under the exemption to Contract Procedures contained within the Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules, on the grounds that: "There is no genuine competition for the goods, works or services being procured".

- 3.1.1** V. Holden as a consultant to support the delivery of WP3 monitoring and evaluation
 - 3.1.2** The University of Lancaster through contract to provide an Adaptation Pathways for Communities study as part of the delivery of WP4 Adaptation Pathways and WP1 Engagement and Communications.
 - 3.1.3** The Land and Water Group through the Environment Agency Asset Operation Management Response framework Lot 3 for the production of necessary design, licences and approvals to allow preferential use of dredged material to create saltmarshes in the Fleetwood Dock area. with funding through the Restoring Meadow, Marsh and Reef (ReMeMaRe) project.
- 3.2** That approval is given to reallocate £1,500,000 OFC contingency budget into a capital delivery budget for the acquisition of a land and nature-based solution through project partners Lancashire Wildlife Trust.

4. Background

- 4.1** Our Future Coast (OFC) (the updated name for Eco-Cobs) previously obtained approval in the Portfolio Holder's Report of 12 August 2021 for officers to develop Environmental Community Owned Coastal Buffer Strips (ECO-CoBS) along the NW Coast to the Outline Business Case stage through the DEFRA Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovative Programme (FCRIP).
- 4.2** The £6.791 million OFC initiative seeks to identify sustainable methods of delivering the Shoreline Management Plan for the North West by working with nature to achieve Nature Based Solutions to coastal management. The OFC initiative is split into the following work packages (WP):
- WP 1 Community Resilience – Engagement & Communications
 - WP2 Nature Based Solutions Test & Trials
 - WP3 Monitoring and Evaluation
 - WP4 Adaptation Pathways
 - WP5 Changing Practice & Policy
 - WP6 Dissemination
- 4.2** The OFC board consists of nine members as follows:
- Chief Executive of Lancashire Wildlife Trust and Morecambe Bay partnership (chair);
 - Area Director Natural England;
 - Area Director Environment Agency;
 - Coastal Habitat Creation Specialist ABP Mer;

- Chair of North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC);
- Head of Strategic Marine Licensing Marine Management Organisation;
- Senior National Consultant of the National Trust;
- Senior Lecturer at Lancaster University; and
- Wyre Council's Assistant Director of Engineering.

4.3 The OFC board act as a steering group for the project but ultimate responsibility for financial management, delivery of the scheme and adherence to procurement rules remains with Wyre Council. Further information on the OFC project can be found in Background papers.

5. Key Issues and Proposals

Programme Funding

5.1 The funders FCRIP have requested a reduction in the programme's contingency budget from 30% to 10-15% by March 2025, otherwise these funds will be clawed back for reallocation. The proposals as outlined in this report to reduce the contingency were agreed with FCRIP on 24 Oct 24.

To further the learning of the programme and ensure full compliance with the capital delivery targets Wyre invited Lancashire Wildlife Trust to submit a proposal for the acquisition of land and delivery of a nature-based solution for hinterland flood management. Lancashire Wildlife Trust has an established relationship with the landowner and are agile enough to complete the sale before the FCRIP deadline and the capital works delivery during the required delivery cut off point of 31 Mar 2025 and – 31 Dec 2026 respectively.

Monitoring and Evaluation Work Package 3

5.2 As the project moves into the delivery stages key procurement decisions are required. The Our Future Coast project would like to contract a geomorphological consultant, V. Holden who is best placed to support the work within the monitoring and evaluation work package 3 (WP3) owing to their previous research in this coastal area and specialist knowledge of saltmarsh and sand dunes, especially saltmarsh and sediment monitoring methods. The services are of a specialised nature carried out by only one company with no reasonably satisfactory alternatives available. A suitable consultant has been identified whose rates have been compared against regional frameworks to represent best value.

Adaptation Pathways

5.3 Another aspect of the project that has been defined in more detail in recent months has been Adaptation Pathways (WP4) which has a series of assets assigned against it that require specialised mapping of habitat, infrastructure risk, coastal management opportunity and priority areas and green finance opportunity mapping for coastal management. The WP will

also create interactive maps of historic evidence for communities which will also contribute to WP1 objective as part of a Heritage Coastal engagement project in the programme.

- 5.4** The Adaptation Pathways work package needs to feature a clear study on how to move communities towards the changes that are necessary for long term coastal management. A study has been scoped and approved by the OFC board to be completed through project partners, The University of Lancaster. The services are of a specialised nature carried out by only one provider who has been linked to the programme from the beginning. There are no reasonably satisfactory alternatives available within the timescale and budget available for this work. However, a suitable research doctorate has been identified and rates have been tested and challenged against regional academic costings to represent best value.

Fleetwood Saltmarsh

- 5.5** An application to the Environment Agency for development of the Fleetwood Saltmarsh preferential use of dredging for £150,000 has been made. The Business Case has been endorsed at Financial Review stage and will now progress to the final stage of EA National Projects Assurance Service (NPAS) approval. This development funding through the ReMeMaRe initiative allows progression of the project through the design and licensing phase and fulfils a major objective of the OFC project. The works are highly technical and it is proposed that the Land and Water Group working with ABP Mer are appointed through the EA Asset Operation Management and Response (EA Asset OMR) framework Lot 3.

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** Obtaining multiple quotations for the provision of the services listed above would be unsuccessful owing to the unique position the consultants are in in terms of skills, knowledge, understanding of the project objectives and contacts.
- 6.2** Although we have not obtained multiple quotations for the monitoring consultant, or the research study due to the unique position they present, we have checked the day rates against the current consultant and research markets and find the rates are very competitive.

7. Delegated functions

- 7.1** 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."

7.2 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, Legal/MO and Climate Change implications	
Finance	<p>The geomorphological consultant has been costed at £25,000 (£12,000 for a Saltmarsh and Sand Dune literature review and report, £10,000 for support on monitoring over 2.5 years, £3,000 allowance for travel and expenses.). All costs are within the OFC budget for the project and are externally funded through FCRIP by DEFRA.</p> <p>The research study has a total cost including access to the full range of academic facilities, resources and supervision of £97,600. All costs are within the board approved OFC budget and externally funded through FCRIP by DEFRA.</p> <p>The programme's current contingency is £1,858,162. Transferring £1,500,000 into the capital works for the acquisition and delivery of an additional site in the programme reduces the contingency to just over 15% in line with FCRIP guidance. This action also reduces the risk of lack of compliance with funders expectation of capital delivery by providing an additional site into the programme.</p> <p>An additional line in the OFC budget should be made to reflect the additional ReMeMaRe funding of £150,000 and the appointment of the Land and Water Group to undertake this service.</p>
Legal/MO	<p>The council will enter into contracts for services with the suppliers referred to in the report. The exemptions cited in the report comply with the Council's Financial Regulations and Financial Procedure Rules on awarding contracts. A grant agreement will be developed to create the delivery mechanism for the additional capital works site in the programme.</p>
Climate Change	<p>This project has a positive climate impact, the minimal negative implications are offset by the initiatives through the OFC project seek to adapt and mitigate against the impacts of climate change by engaging with the local community, providing demonstration projects on low</p>

	carbon NFM initiatives, biodiversity net gain and carbon capture.
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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	x
equality and diversity	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
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
OFC Board Information		Available on request

List of appendices

Appendix 1 Background Paper – Partner Workshop