

River Exe - Exeter

Profiling Partnership Funding

August 2013

Summary

Exeter's 1960s flood defences need improving to better protect lives, homes and businesses from flooding from the River Exe. The scheme has become viable for implementation in 2014 following financial contributions by Devon County Council and Exeter City Council.

The opportunity to reduce flood risk

This scheme will raise and extend the existing flood defences through the city to maximise the channel's flood flow capacity. When the scheme is complete, 2,079 homes and 1,050 businesses will benefit for at least 60 years from an improved level of flood protection - a 1% chance in any given year.

Vital statistics

Scheme cost - £26.3 million (whole life)

Total FCRM economic benefits - £204 million

FCRM GiA - £14.3 million

Growth Fund - £6 million

Contributions total: £6 million

Devon County Council - £3 million

Exeter City Council - £3 million



3D modelling of 1% flood event in central Exeter

Key issues

Raising awareness of flood risk in Exeter.
Identifying effects on the city's economic future.

Building a funding partnership with the local authorities, based on enabling local investment choice, informed by economic analysis and getting long term FCRM investment needs into local infrastructure plans.

Overcoming an initial local preference for an unaffordable and unviable upstream option.

Working with Network Rail to agree a solution following the high profile 2012 flooding and closure of the railway at Cowley Bridge.

Engagement & partnership working

Comprehensive modelling was used to produce strong visual evidence in the form of a 3D video of the impact of a 1:100 probability flood event on the city. These powerful images secured considerable media interest and helped to establish a common understanding of flood risk and the need for action.

The local Environment Agency team helped establish a funding partnership with the City and County Councils over a 10 month period through a series of presentations, meetings and briefings. These were based around communicating the



Leaders of both Councils and EA Regional Director

flood risk, along with impact and beneficiary analysis, and emphasising key messages:

- A scheme was eligible for FCRM GiA funding, but this was partial and based on the scheme's benefits, not its costs.
- Progression of a scheme would only be possible with significant local contributions that would make it financially viable.

Partnership building was successful because it was informed by analysis and encouraged and empowered the two local authorities, enabling them to take an active role in the development and management of the project - including influencing the scheme's design, as well as taking responsibility for its promotion and funding.

Both Council's are represented on the Project Board and are involved in the technical, funding and communication working groups.

Partnership working with the local authorities is underpinned by proactive communication with key stakeholders and local communities. Through local media, a scheme web-page, public consultation displays as well as dedicated meetings with local groups of residents and their Ward Councillors, we have been able to keep key groups informed and involved in the scheme.

The 2012 flooding highlighted the vulnerability of the main railway line at Cowley Bridge on the northern edge of Exeter. The Environment Agency and Network Rail have sought to achieve mutually acceptable flood defence solutions to offer better protection to local rail infrastructure.

A Regional Environment Agency and Network Rail Strategic Working Group has been established to strengthen working relationships and facilitate the resolution of such issues across the south west.

Extra local outcomes

The scheme will support sustainable economic growth, safe-guarding existing jobs, stimulating investment in the renewal of commercial sites and benefiting neighbourhoods in the south of the city, helping to generate new business activity and jobs.

Analysis indicates that the scheme could safeguard 4,700 existing jobs, and enable a further 1,000 new jobs. It will protect 26 hectares of commercial development land and will add at least £388 million to the local economy.

Partner perspective

Councillor Pete Edwards, leader of Exeter City Council, said: *"I really want everyone to get involved. There is only a short period of public consultation but it is important that people participate"*.

People

Project manager - Julian James (NCPMS)

Stakeholder and community engagement - George Arnison, Devon PSO Team

Economic and beneficiary analysis - Richard Walker



Flooding at Cowley Bridge rail line, November 2012 (Source: ITV News).