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English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

Meeting date: 9 October 2012

Item no. 8

Paper by: Programme Manager

Subject: English Severn & Wye Key Issues

Recommendations

The English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is asked to:

1. Consider and discuss the key issues presented in this paper and make recommendations for alternative key issues to be included in future papers.
2. Note that options for progressing schemes in the Key Issues paper will be presented at the January meeting for discussion and decisions.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to set out and provide an update on key issues in the English Severn and Wye RFCC area.
- 1.2 It is the intention that the committee note the progress of key issues and advise where members could assist with their progress.
- 1.3 It is also the intention for the committee to suggest items for inclusion on future key issues papers.

2.0 Severn Vale WLMP

- 2.1 Further to the report presented to the July Committee, the project was successful in gaining business case approval which means that the land purchase can progress in 2012/13.
- 2.2 At this moment in time there is no allocation to undertake works in 2013/14, but we are confident that we will attract funds in 2014/15 to complete the works.

3.0 Wooton Wawen Pool

- 3.1 Further to the report presented to the July Committee, a proposal for the RFCC to consider, with different options for supporting the scheme solely from Local Levy, will be included in the January RFCC papers for members to discuss. There is also the option to bring this project into the 2013/14 programme using the Committees 'local choices' in the October RFCC meeting. This is discussed in more detail in section 3.10 of Item 9.

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4.0 Fish Pass Programme

- 4.1** The Water Framework Directive (WFD) states that all water bodies must reach 'good ecological status (GES)' or 'good ecological potential (GEP)' by 2027. If fish are unable to complete their life cycle the status of the whole water body is reduced (under the one out, all out principle). In many cases the barriers to migration are Environment Agency assets either in the form of gauging structures or Flood Risk Management structures, flap gates, weirs and sluices. This programme of works aims to remove barriers to fish passage.

5.0 Mousesweet Brook, Quarry Bank

- 5.1** Mushroom Green Dam is located at the downstream section of the Mousesweet Brook, near the confluence with the River Stour, Dudley. A 50m culvert, which runs through the 10m high embankment is failing (grade 4) due to its poor condition. In 2000 land behind the dam (a local nature reserve) flooded to approx 120,000 m³ volume and began seeping through the embankment. The EA & LA's attended the scene and over-pumped to draw down water and prevent a sudden failure. From the EA's 2010 Breach scenario hazard mapping study a minimum of 142 properties (including 42 residential) and critical infrastructure such as roads, services and a sewage treatment works are at risk should the dam fail.

- 5.2** The embankment is NOT deemed to be classified as a Reservoir, due to it historically acting as a former mineral railway.

- 5.3** A long term solution in partnership with the EA, Sandwell MBC and Severn Trent Water is sought to reduce the risk of a breach if a large event re-occurs or the culvert collapses. Dudley MBC undertook a ground investigation in 2012 to ascertain the condition and composition of the embankment, which was found to be made of unsuitable material.

- 5.4** Currently the project has a PF Score of <100% and therefore had a moderation case submitted in July to enable it to be moderated in to the 2013/14 Programme. This was rejected by National Allocation Team and therefore contributions are required to raise the PF Score to above 100% to enable the project to go ahead.

- 5.5** A proposal for the RFCC to consider, with different options for supporting the scheme solely from Local Levy, will be included in the January RFCC papers for members to discuss. There is also the option to bring this project into the 2013/14 programme using the Committees 'local choices' in the October RFCC meeting. This is discussed in more detail in section 3.10 of Item 9.

6.0 Navigation & Uneconomic Assets (Nafford Sluice)

- 6.1** Under the PF Principles Capital Maintenance on Environment Agency assets costing over £100k needs a PF calculator to attract funding in the same way new schemes do. This requires the ongoing FCRM benefits of doing each piece of maintenance over £100k to be quantified and assessed against the costs. As assets deteriorate, new schemes are implemented with the focus from defending agricultural land to defending property being demonstrated in the PF Calculator there is the potential for uneconomic assets to arise.

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- 6.2** One example of this is the River Avon, Nafford project which bid for FCRM GiA in 2013/14 to carry out maintenance work on the sluice gate. The FCRM benefits for maintaining the asset are very low and the PF Score is close to 0%. This project will not attract any FCRM GiA until a significant contribution can be found to increase the PF score to 100%.
- 6.3** In this case there are other beneficiaries of the sluice being kept in operation, namely for navigation on the River Avon and therefore it may be that these beneficiaries are required to contribute to the maintenance. This is being pursued however this situation is likely to occur frequently along the River Avon where many structures are maintained with the largest beneficiary being Navigation rather than Flood Risk.
- 6.4** This means assets we currently maintain may require contributions to continue to maintain the Standard of Protection at the current level. There may be a need to manage a withdrawal from maintenance in these areas. Flood risk in some locations may increase as a result of this causing political pressures and scrutiny of the rest of the Programme.
- 6.5** In order to mitigate this risk the EA Asset Performance teams need to fully investigate and understand the risk and where we might require contributions ahead of next year's bid.
- 6.6** We will also consult with RFCC Members and externally where maintenance requires a contribution well ahead of maintenance funds being withdrawn. As well as communicate the EA's uneconomic assets policy and how to dispose of assets which do not perform a flood defence function. This consultation is likely to begin in future RFCC Papers.
- 7.0 Recommendations**
- 7.1** RFCC members are asked to consider and discuss the key issues presented in this paper and make recommendations for alternative key issues to be included in future papers.

Hannah Rees, Programming Advisor
September 2012