

Report to Councillor Roger Elkins, Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure in consultation with Councillor Duncan Crow, Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue and Communities

January 2021

Operation Watershed Active Communities Fund Applications - December 2020

Report by Director for Highways, Transport and Planning

Electoral division(s): Billingshurst, Midhurst, Hurstpierpoint & Bolney, Hassocks & Burgess Hill South, Petworth

Summary

The purpose of Operation Watershed is to support people in their local communities who want to work with the County Council to become more prepared for, or to reduce the risk of, flooding. Local groups are encouraged to apply for funding to finance schemes and projects of all sizes as a way of achieving this.

£1.500m is allocated for Operation Watershed in the Capital Programme agreed by Full Council in December 2017. The allocation for 2020/21 is £0.375m. In this period five full applications have been received and evaluated totalling £90,771.72 and are set out in Appendix A.

Recommendation:

- (1) The Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure approves the applications from the community groups or parish councils set out in Appendix A of the report.
-

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1. The purpose of Operation Watershed is to support people in their local communities who want to work with the County Council to become more prepared for floods and help reduce the likelihood of highways or neighbouring land flooding.
- 1.2. Local groups are encouraged to apply for capital funding to finance schemes and projects of all sizes as a way of achieving this. £375,000 has been allocated in the 2020/21 capital programme to the 'Operation Watershed Active Communities Fund'.

- 1.3. The funding is open to communities who are willing to develop, support and sustain partnerships. Bringing together local people, businesses and landowners can help to minimise the risk of local flooding. There are now many examples of those who suffer from the effects of flooding, and those responsible for maintaining a huge network of drainage systems and ditches, working together to agree and implement the best local solution.
- 1.4. The required demonstrable criteria for applications to be successful from April 2018 comprise the following three tests (a-c):
 - Tackle a recognised surface or ground water flood risk
 - Meet at least one of the following elements in its technical scope:
 - Provide new infrastructure installations or build
 - Make material change improvements to existing infrastructure
 - Increase the drainage capacity of existing infrastructure
 - Provision of assets for community groups usage to protect their local area
 - Evidence 'Community Commitment' to deliver the project including all and any future maintenance
- 1.5. Officers will work with local members; parish representatives and other appropriate community leads to understand local pressures and concerns and help ensure that any proposed funding bids demonstrate a long-term community benefit.
- 1.6. In this period five full applications have been received and evaluated as meeting the required standard totalling £90,771.72 and are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.7. This is the third tranche of applications presented for approval for the Active Communities Fund 2020/21 as outlined in Table 2 below.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1. Details of grant funding for flood risk mitigation projects against applications from the community groups and parish councils are set out in Appendix A.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1. The County Council could undertake all of the work. However, in many cases local communities are best placed to carry out smaller scale works to either assess the flood risk or reduce the risk of local flooding. In some cases, the County Council has already undertaken larger scale flood alleviation works and Operation Watershed funding can contribute towards maintenance costs.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1. The applications listed in Appendix A are promoted by the local communities and supported by the respective local Member.
- 4.2. All applications have been considered by the Operation Watershed Steering Group, comprising the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure, the Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue and Communities and programme leads assigned by the Heads of Service, following the evaluation of the project

proposals against an established and agreed matrix including technical evaluation and “value for money” assessment.

5 Finance

5.1 Revenue consequences

There are no revenue implications regarding this proposal

5.2 Capital consequences

£1.5m is allocated for Operation Watershed in the Capital Programme agreed by County Council in December 2017 and is funded by WSCC Corporate Funding. The allocation for 2020/21 is £375,000.

	Year 1 2018/19 £m	Year 2 2019/20 £m	Current Year 2020/21 £m	Year 4 2021/22 £m	Year 5 2022/23 £m	Total £m
Capital budget	0.342	0.088	0.375	0.375	0.320	1.500
Applications previously Approved	0.342	0.088	0.297	-	-	0.727
Accelerated Funding from 2021/22	0.000	0.000	0.013	-0.013	0.000	0.000
Remaining budget	0.000	0.000	0.091	0.375	0.320	0.786
Applications for Approval			0.091			0.091

- 5.3 The applications recommended for approval in this Decision Report represent allocation of monies from available funds. It is anticipated that the total in year budget allocation will be awarded within this financial year.

Description	Number	Value (Capital)	Table 2
Applications for approval December 2020	05	£90,771.72	
Applications for approval July 2020	08	£261,971.09	
Applications approved – April 2020	04	£34,769.30	
Approved Available Funds 2020/21		£375,000.00	
Remaining Available Funds			- £12,512.11

- 5.4 The £0.013m shortfall against funding in 2020/21 will be met by accelerating funding from the £0.375m allocation for Operation Watershed in 2021/22.

- 5.5 The effect of the proposal:

- (a) **How the cost represents good value**

Funding community groups and parish councils is considered to be an effective and efficient means of alleviating local flooding problems in their area.

Rigorous evaluation of all applications has been undertaken against the published Evaluation Scorecard by the project team in consultation with officers with key experience in the functions of Drainage Strategy and Flood Risk Management, Community Development, Community Resilience and Highways.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered** Not applicable

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

There are no Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact implications arising from funding these applications

6 Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
There is a risk that the funding does not cover all the anticipated costs of a project and community groups bear the risk of under-budgeting.	WSCC working closely with officers and the local Member to identify potential problems before any funding is allocated.
Under spending on projects has to be returned to the County Council or utilised to deliver further works.	WSCC works in partnership with community groups to agree approach on project by project basis.

7 Policy alignment and compliance

7.1 The County Council provides services to more than 850,000 residents every day and the West Sussex Plan sets out how the County Council plans to shape its services for the next five years, focusing on:

- Giving our children and young people the best start in life
- Ensuring West Sussex is a prosperous place
- Our communities will be strong, safe and sustainable
- We will support you in later life to remain independent; and,
- We will be a council that works for our communities

7.2 Within 'Our communities will be strong, safe and sustainable' theme, Operation Watershed is one of the measures to deliver the 'A safe place' corporate outcome.

7.3 The panel considering any application will be alert to the need to consider any equality implications arising from the bid or the way the money is to be used if indicated in the bid information. There are no identifiable impacts arising from the applications relating to obligations contained in the Equality Act 2010. The applications will support communities to address local flooding issues and do not have a disproportionate impact on individuals with protected characteristics.

- 7.4 Supports and development of community groups actively involved in resilience and flood awareness and preparedness.
- 7.5 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from funding these applications.

Matt Davey

Director of Highways, Transport & Planning

Contact Officer:

Gary Rustell

Project Manager, Operation Watershed
Tel: 0330 222 6397

Appendices

Appendix A: Table of grant applications for approval and supporting application forms

Background papers

None

Appendix A

The following applications are recommended for approval:

Ref No.	Community Group or Parish Council	Brief Description of Project	£ Requested
7013	Billingshurst Parish Council	Ditch work, culvert Headwall and trash screen. Plus CCVT & jetting	£11,680.00
7021	Rogate Parish Council	Install positive outfall from the highway to ditch line. Including new culverted pipe, access gullies & manholes.	£50,665.80
7035	Bolney Parish Council	Installation of 2 new soakaways, filter drain and pipework	£21,427.30
7038	Hassocks United Reform Church	Installation Sustainable Urban Drainage	£2,000.00
7039	Fittleworth Parish Council	New improved trash screen	£4,998.62
		Total Funding Requests	£90,771.72