



Natural Flood Management Grant Scheme Prospectus

2023 – 2027



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1. Introduction

Natural Flood Management – what is it?

Natural flood management (NFM) measures can help slow, store and filter floodwater, and are often used in situations where traditional engineering techniques aren't viable. Environmental, and other benefits (such as reduced soil erosion) can be provided simultaneously with reducing flood risk. Along with making existing flood defences more resilient to climate change, it can help us achieve Water Framework Directive, Floods Directive and biodiversity goals at the same time.

“It is now widely accepted that flood risk cannot be managed by simply building ever bigger hard defences. Softer approaches, such as flood storage and land management, can offer more sustainable ways of managing the risk, and can complement and extend the lifetime of more traditional defences”

Pitt Review 2008 (PDF, 7.47MB).

The Benefits of NFM

NFM measures can help us to increase society's resilience to floods. They can be cost-effective, reduce flood risk to people and property, and help to protect and improve water, land and biodiversity. Such measures may be the most viable option for small settlements. We already use NFM measures, but there are lots of opportunities to do much more.

It should be noted that NFM is not appropriate in every location. That is why it should be considered on a catchment scale, so we can tackle problems at source. Where NFM approaches can also provide other benefits, there may be good opportunities to build funding partnerships to implement, operate and maintain them.

NFM Delivery Programme

In Autumn 2020 the Environment Agency/Defra invited bids for funding from Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) to demonstrate how practical and innovative actions could improve resilience to flooding and coastal erosion.

Cumbria County Council, after submitting a successful bid, are leading one of 25 projects across England, named the Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience (CiFR) programme.

CiFR is an innovation programme, meaning that it will evolve significantly over the course of its life span to March 2027.

Modelling and engagement work has been ongoing, in relation to the type of NFM interventions that are likely to be effective and deliverable for each project location.

2. Processes and Timescales

The Grant Process

A package of measures to be delivered in each location has been defined, specifying the areas that modelling has identified as suitable for storing water during a flood event, the target volume of water to be stored, and the type of NFM structure identified to achieve this storage. This information can be found within section 5 of this prospectus. The successful applicant(s) will be selected based on pre-defined grant criteria (see section 3) and will enter into grant agreement with Westmorland & Furness Council.

Other strands of activity within the CiFR programme will monitor the effectiveness of the NFM interventions (in relation to flood risk and water quality), explore blended finance options, support communities to become more resilient to the residual flood risk, and gather evidence and learning.

Timescales

The grant programme will be open for applications from 1st December 2023 to 12th January 2024. This has been extended from what will usually be a 4-week response time due to the Christmas period.

Response to applications can be expected within 1 month from the closing date.

Delivery of all works must be completed and invoiced for by 31st October 2025.

Grant award

Funding for this grant comes from the Environment Agency. The Programme is not obliged to allocate any of the funding or award any grant funding if no suitable applications are forthcoming.

Any such payment made under the terms of this grant programme will be on the basis of a Grant Funding Agreement.

3. Grant requirements

Criteria for Grant funding

The NFM works as described in section 5 will need to be delivered in the target areas and completed by the project end date of 31st October 2025. Applicants will need to be confident they can deliver in that timeframe. The volumes required for each location are critical success factors as they provide a specific set of benefits that the project is aiming to achieve.

Applicants will need to understand the need for those volumes and the target locations and be prepared to deliver as close to those targets as possible. It is expected that the NFM aspect of the project will be delivered using more than one funding provider.

Successful applicants will be required to work with our Farming and Community Officers to enable conversations with landowners and release some of that additional funding. Successful Applicants will also be required to work with landowners to ensure agreements are in place for NFM works to remain in situ for a period of at least 7 years.

Criteria for selection

Eligibility

In order for an application to be considered, the applicant will have a proven track record of:

- delivering NFM in Cumbria, or an area with similar landscapes.
- delivering for biodiversity, water quality, carbon sequestration and habitat improvements.
- working with flooded communities.
- working with farmers and landowners.
- working with the flood and environmental permitting regulations.
- working within the planning regulations including those required by the World Heritage Status of the Lake District National Park.
- delivering on time and within budget and showing value for money.
- attracting additional funds for NFM / nature-based solutions.

Selection

Eligible applicants will be compared on this basis of the below criteria.

Organisational Experience and Capability:

- Applicants will be able to demonstrate a proven track record in delivery of NFM / nature-based solutions of a similar type and scale of the proposed works, and show the benefits made to a community in relation to reducing flood risk.
- Applicants will need to be able to demonstrate good management practices and ability to work with large budgets over several years of delivery.
- Applicants should be able to demonstrate a track record of developing good working relationships with landowners and land managers.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have the resources to deliver the project within the timeframe.

Proposed works in Grasmere

- Applicants must be able to demonstrate cost of the specified works and how target volume will be achieved.
- Applicants will have the opportunity to demonstrate the potential to attract additional funding (this grant can be used as match funding).

4. The Application Process

How to apply

- Download the NFM Grant Application Form from the Council's website.
- Complete the NFM Grant Application Form and send to cifr@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk along with any additional information as requested to allow the team to evaluate against the criteria set out in section 3.
- Any queries and requests for a site visit should be directed to cifr@westmorlandandfurness.gov.uk

The Programme team will review your application against the criteria and will advise whether your application will be progressed for approval by the Board.

Inducements

The Council operates a Code of Conduct for its officers. Full details of these are published as part of the Council's constitution and standing orders. Offering an inducement of any kind in relation to obtaining this or any other grant within the Council will disqualify your application from being considered and may constitute in a criminal offence.

Costs and Expenses

You will not be entitled to claim from the Council any costs or expenses which you may incur in preparing your proposal whether or not your proposal is successful.

Feedback

Feedback will be available to unsuccessful applicants on request.

Freedom of Information

The Council is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. Accordingly, all information submitted may need to be disclosed in response to a request for information. If you consider that any of the information included in your application is commercially sensitive, please identify it and explain (in broad terms) what harm may result from disclosure if a request is received, and the time period applicable to that sensitivity. You should be aware that, even where you have indicated that information is commercially sensitive or submit information marked as 'confidential', this is of indicative value only and the Council may still be obliged to disclose it if a request for information is received.

Funding

As outlined above, the result of any grant application will be subject to approval by the Project Team and decision at Director level. Bids will be assessed via the Grant Award Criteria, with one successful bid chosen for each area.

Publicity

In any publicity the project team must be contacted to add comments e.g., for press releases, offered opportunities with media. The project must be mentioned and credited prominently with funding the project (and any other support it has provided). The project logo must be displayed on any public facing material e.g., Interpretation material. Failure to do so could result in the

withholding of funds.

Management Information

Throughout the term of the Grant Funding Agreement, the Council may require information in order to assess the successful outcomes of the grant funding programme. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Up to date expenditure profile
- Up to date information on outcome deliverables against target
- Information on any blockers to delivery
- Issues involving permitting or planning
- Issues in terms of staff or other resources that could affect the project

5. Guidance for applicants

Cumbria Innovative Flood Resilience Strategic aims and objectives

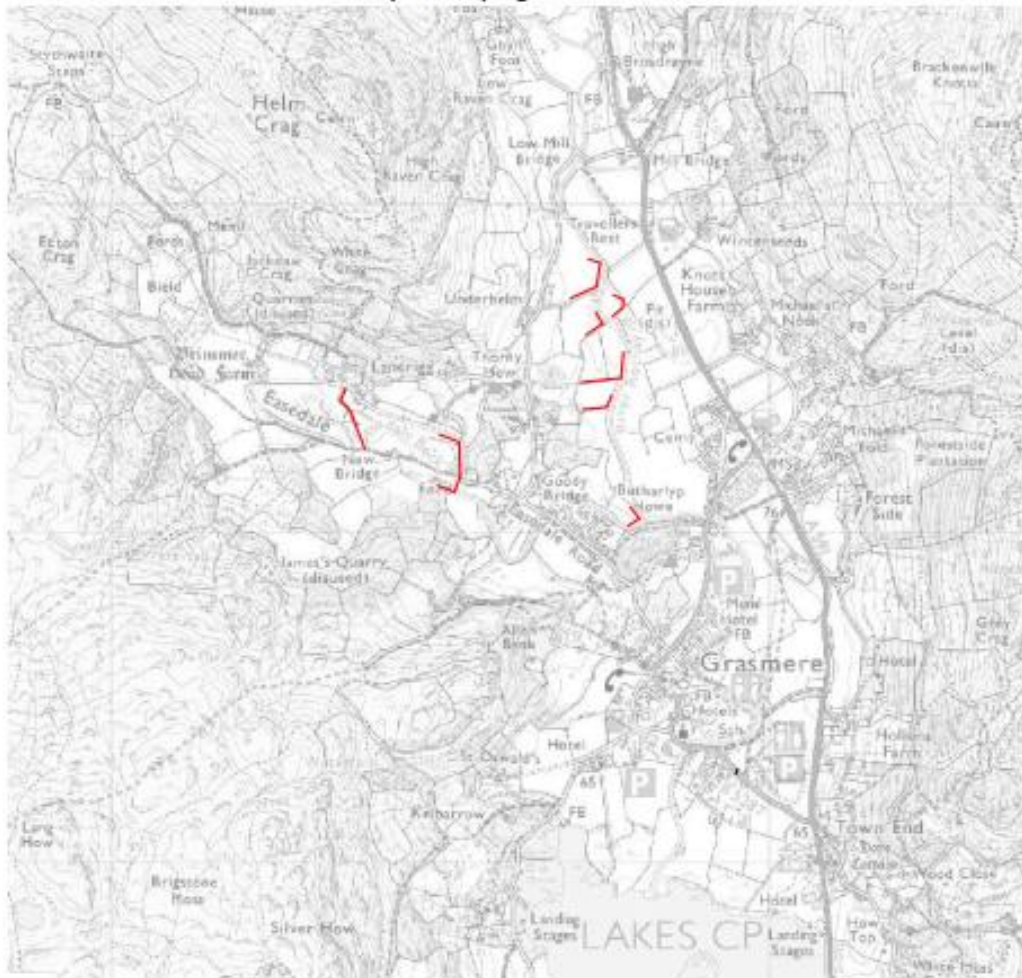
The project will demonstrate the benefits of NFM features to at-risk communities. The project involves work with specified representative communities where preparedness, warning systems and measures on the ground will be co-designed with communities and landowners to increase their own resilience.

Lessons learnt will shape a Cumbrian wide Strategy to deliver a long-term impact. Additionally, the project will demonstrate water quality and other ecosystem benefits like drought reduction that NFM features can provide.

Using dedicated catchment Farming and Community Officers, focussed on project outcomes, CiFR will demonstrate potential benefits from this mechanism of farm support. The potential for attracting private investment into the Cumbrian landscape to deliver flood risk and other benefits will be explored and has the potential to deliver long term investment into flood resilience and wider ecosystem services.

Areas of need

Phase 1: CiFR Interventions funded by CiFR in progress.



— Bund design approximation, awaiting final design.

Phase 1: Consists of works that have been agreed with landowners so can proceed at greater pace.

These consist of:

- 1.1. Bunds across the floodplains at Easedale Beck. Awaiting final design and size.
 - Bund 1 from bridge to road approx. 200m long approx. 1m high.
 - Bund 2 around ford 250m long approx. 1m high
- 1.2. Bunds across floodplains on the Western and Eastern Side of the Rothay. Awaiting final design and size.
 - Bund 1 (top) 150m long approx. 1m high
 - Bund 2 (both sides combined) 220m long 1m high
 - Bund 3 130m long 1m high
 - Bund 4 100m long 1m high
 - Bund 5 100m long 1m high at confluence

VAT

A grant of money to an organisation will normally be outside the scope for VAT.

Applications should specify costings exclusive of VAT and identify separately any irrecoverable VAT that will be incurred by an organisation. Reference should be made to His Majesty's Revenue and Customs for VAT queries.