Natural Flood Management
Grant Scheme Prospectus

2025 – 2027

Cumberland Council
Westmorland & Furness Council
Working for **Cumberland Council** and **Westmorland & Furness Council**

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
Environment Agency

NATURAL ENGLAND
Lancaster University
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CUMBRIA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

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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[1], 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.

[1] Following Local Government Reorganisation, the CiFR programme is now hosted by Westmorland and Furness Council.

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 6 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 29/05/2025 to 20/06/2025. Response to applications can be expected within 1 month from the closing date.

Delivery of all works must be completed and invoiced for by 1st February 2027.

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 6 will need to be delivered in the target areas and completed by the project end date of 1st February 2027. 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.

There may be the need for the successful applicant to progress flood inundation payments to landowners and/or tenant farmers at an agreed rate.

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.
- 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 based on 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 Stockdalewath

- 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 provided to unsuccessful applicants.

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.

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.

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, focused 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.

6. Primary works

Notes regarding works

- Some of the interventions included in this prospectus are subject to confirmation with the relevant landowner.
- The design of bunds must be resistant to scour in the event of overtopping.
- Impounding bunds must be fenced off from livestock if likely to cause issues.
- All lines on maps are indicative, not the final design.
- Leaky woody dams must not interfere with baseflow.
- Additional modelling for features in the village is ongoing to refine the design and will require consultation with highways

Intervention 1

Location below. Red line. Bund 1.2m high that will tie into demountable barriers to be installed across the road in flood events (subject to design refinements and consultation with the community and highways authorities).

Figure 1: Intervention 1 location and aerial imagery

Intervention 2a

See map below. A raised track designed to constrain high flow and hold water upstream.

Intervention 2b

See map below. Three large leaky wood dams, approx. 10m length each.

Intervention 2c

See map below. A raised track designed to constrain high flow and hold water upstream.

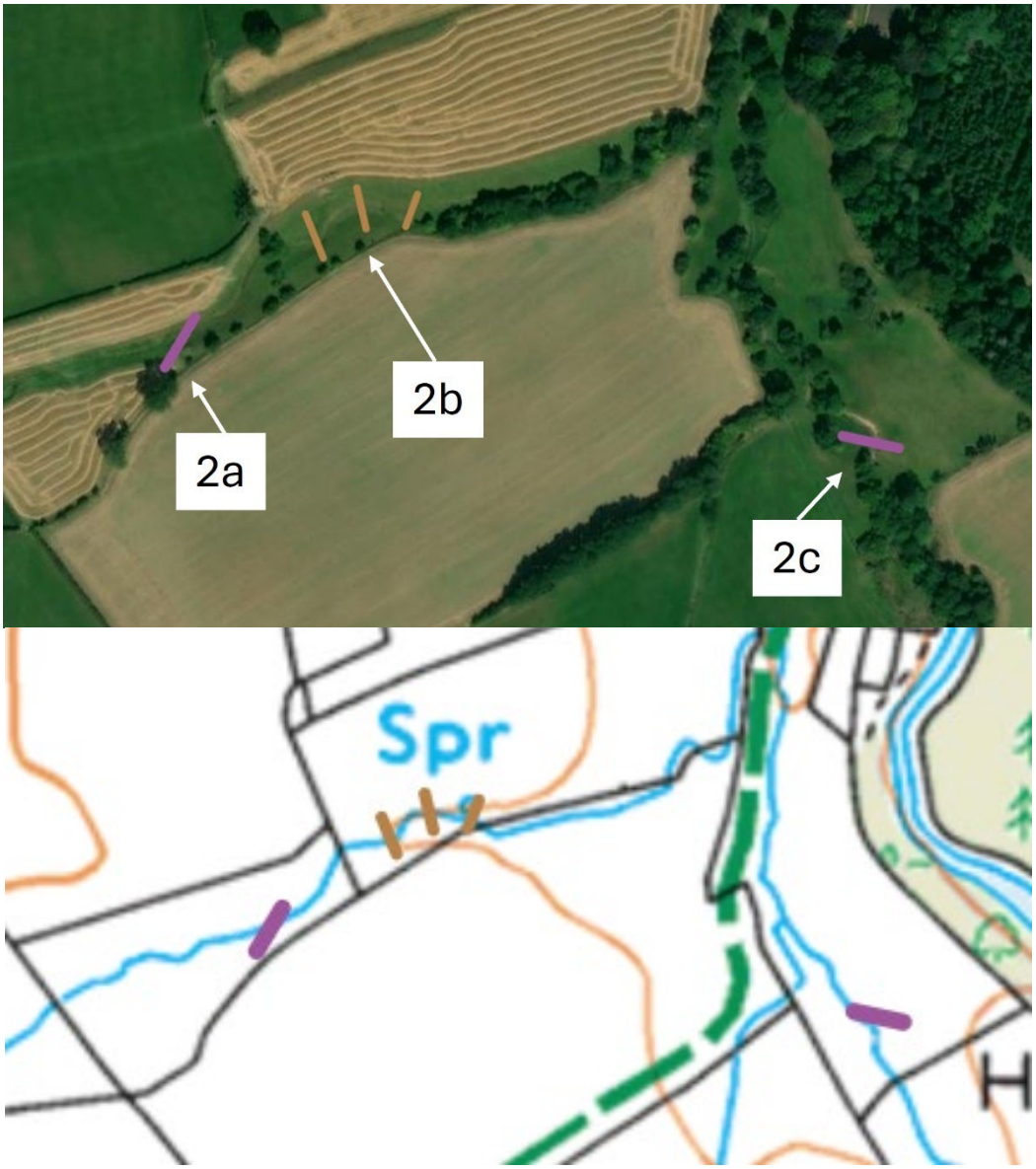

Figure 2: Location and aerial imagery of interventions 2a, 2b and 2c, all located on the same farm.

Intervention 2d

Red line on map. Bund 0.5-1m high. Western section approx. 85m in length, eastern section approx. 35m in length.

Figure 3: Location and aerial imagery of Intervention 2d, on the same farm as 2a,2b and 2c.

Intervention 3

Red line on map. Bund 0.5-1.0m high, approx. 90m in length. Subject to conversations with homeowners

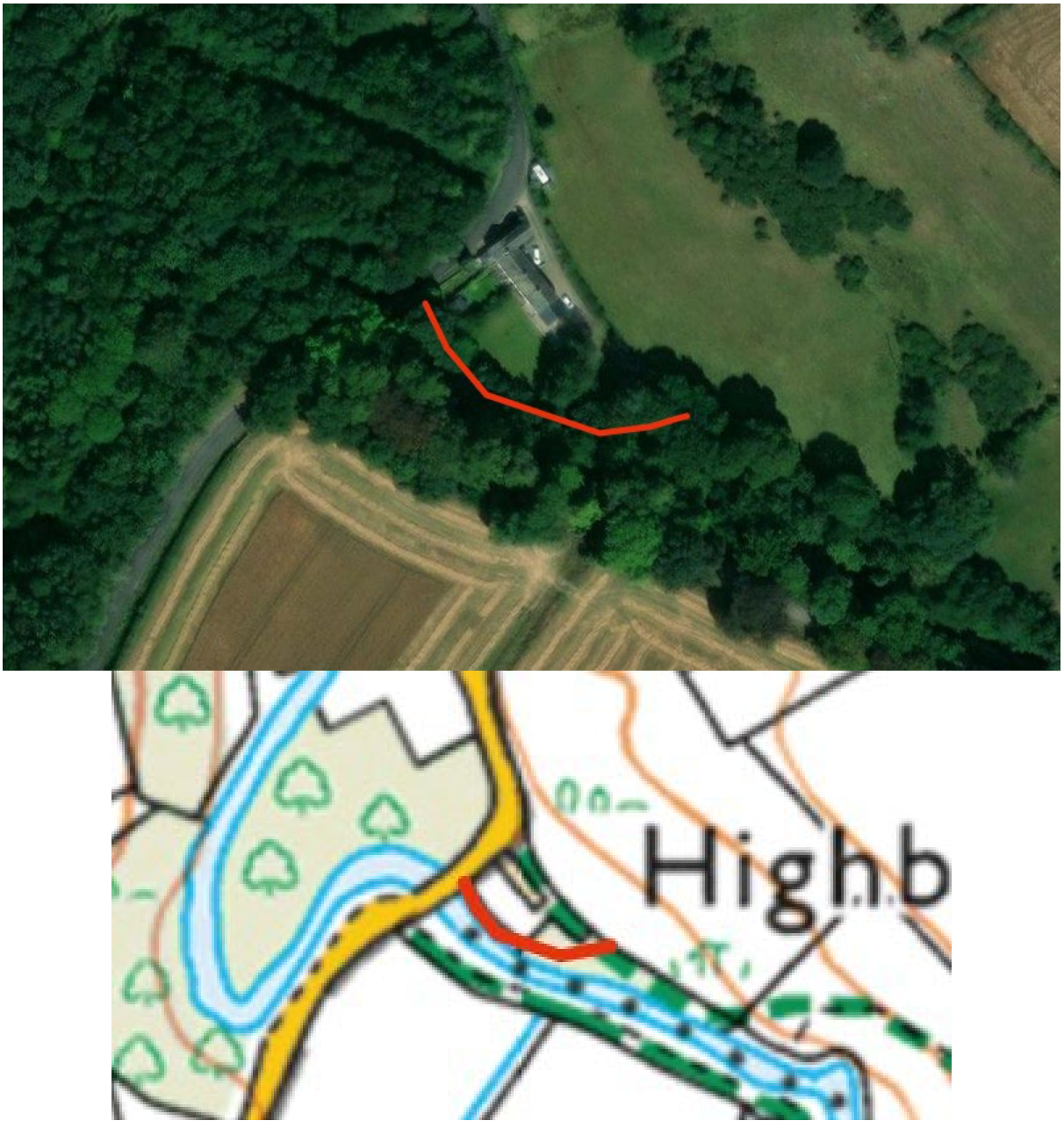

Figure 4: Location and aerial imagery of intervention 3

Intervention 4

Green line on map below. Kested hedgerow to interrupt surface flow from slope. Located on residents side of boundary. Approx. 100m in length. Approx. 0.5m high

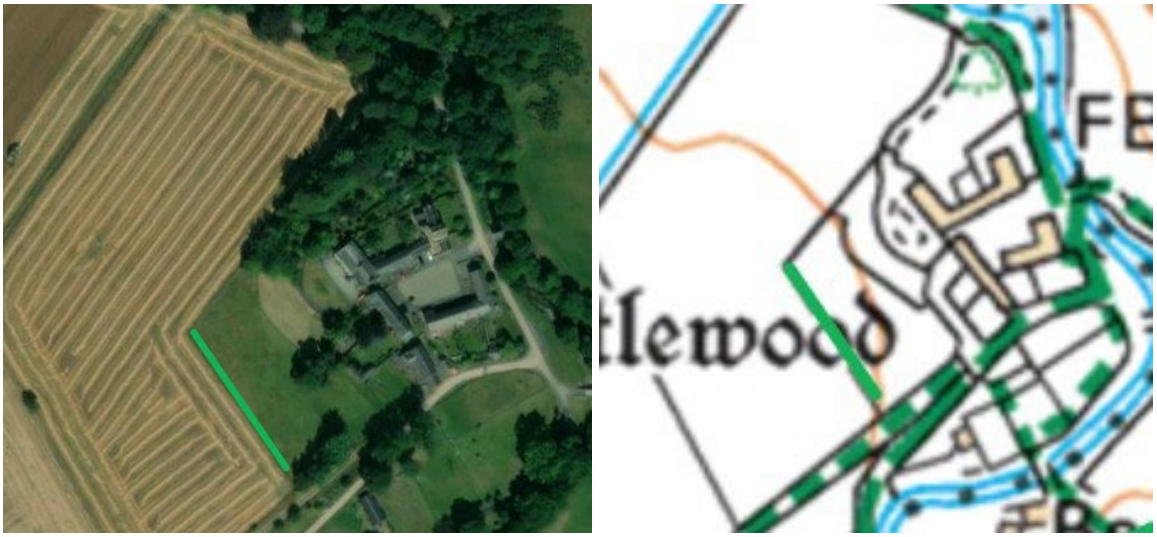

Figure 5: Location and aerial imagery of intervention 4.

Intervention 5a

Location shown below. Brown lines on map. Large Leaky woody dams, 2-3 in this location dependent on potential storage due to levels. Approx. 3-4m in length.

Intervention 5b

Location shown below. Purple line on map. A raised track designed to constrain high flow and hold water upstream.

Figure 6: Location and aerial imagery of intervention 5a and 5b.

Intervention 5c

Shown on map below, brown lines. A series of leaky woody dams, up to 14 units ranging from large dams (approx. 15m) to smaller dams (approx. 4m).

Intervention 5d

Shown on map below, purple line. A raised track designed to constrain high flow and hold water upstream. Approx 25m of track length. Approx. 2.5m high

Intervention 5e

Shown on map below, green line. A kested hedgerow, designed to interrupt surface flow from upslope. Approx 190m in length approx. 0.5m high

Figure 7: Location and aerial imagery of interventions 5c, 5d and 5e. On the same farm as 5a and 5b.

Intervention 6a

Shown on map below, brown lines. 3-4 large leaky woody dams, approx. 20-25m in length. >1.5m high, double stacked. To be planted with willow to create living structures.

Intervention 6b

Shown on map below, green area. Additional tree planting. Approx. 0.5ha.

Intervention 6c

Shown on map below, green line. Kested hedgerow designed to interrupt surface flow from upslope. Approx. 170m in length approx. 0.5m high

Intervention 6d

Shown on map below, red line. 0.5-1.0m high bund, approx. 85m in length.

Figure 8: Location and aerial imagery for interventions 6a, 6b, 6c and 6d. All with the same landowner.

Intervention 7

Shown on map below, red line. Bund 1.0m + high to cut off surface flow. Approx. 200m in length.

Figure 9: Location and aerial imagery of intervention 7.

Intervention 8a

Shown on map below, blue area. A 0.5m deep scrape, area 5,600m^2, that will fill from the watercourse as water bypasses the upstream end of intervention 8b.

Intervention 8b

Shown on map below, red line. A 1.0+ m high bund. 2.0m wide crest and 1 in 2 slopes. Positioned against watercourse, bund will hold water on the floodplain and in intervention 8a rather than it flowing back into the river.

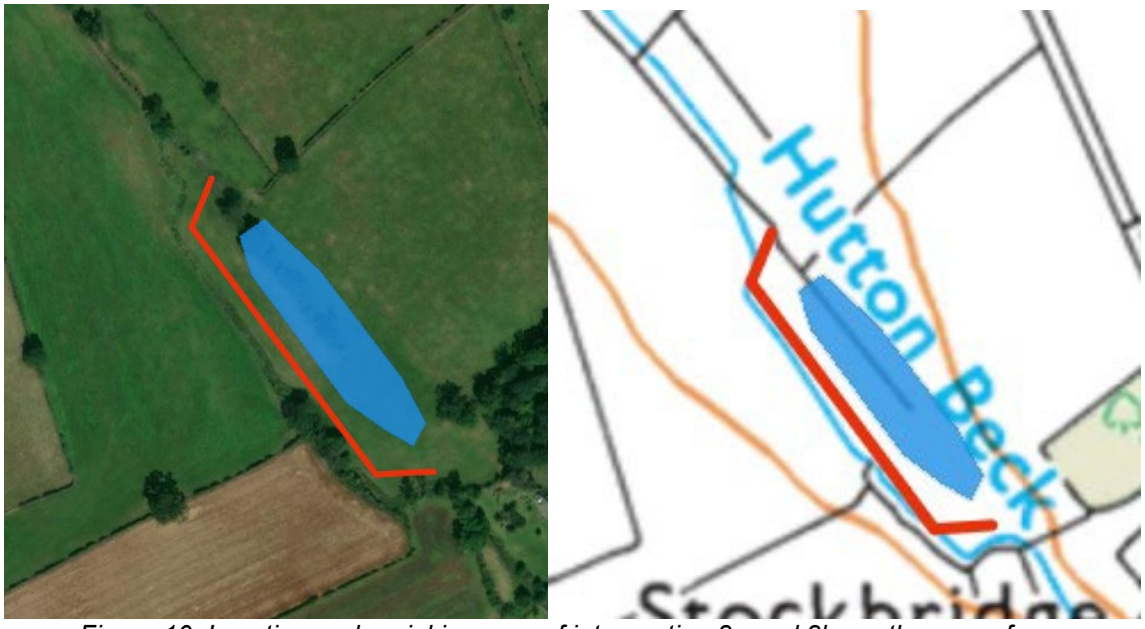

Figure 10: Location and aerial imagery of intervention 8a and 8b, on the same farm.

Intervention 9a

Shown on map below, blue area. Left bank pond/scrape, 1600m^2.

Intervention 9b

Shown on map below, blue area. Right bank pond/scrape, 3,000m^2.

Intervention 9c

Shown on map below, red line. 1.0m+ high bund, 2.0m wide crest with 1 in 2 side slopes. 65m long tying into the high ground at either end.

Figure 11: Location and aerial imagery of interventions 9a, 9b and 9c, on the same farm.

Intervention 10a

Shown on map below. Blue area. 1.0m deep pond/scrape. Area 2,500m^2.

Intervention 10b

Shown on map below. Red line. 1.0m high bund. 2.0m wide crest with 1 in 2 side slopes. 65m long tying into high ground at either end.

Figure 12: Location and aerial imagery of interventions 10a and 10b, on the same farm.

Intervention 10c

Shown on map below. Blue area. 1.0M deep pond/scrape. Area 5,500m^2.

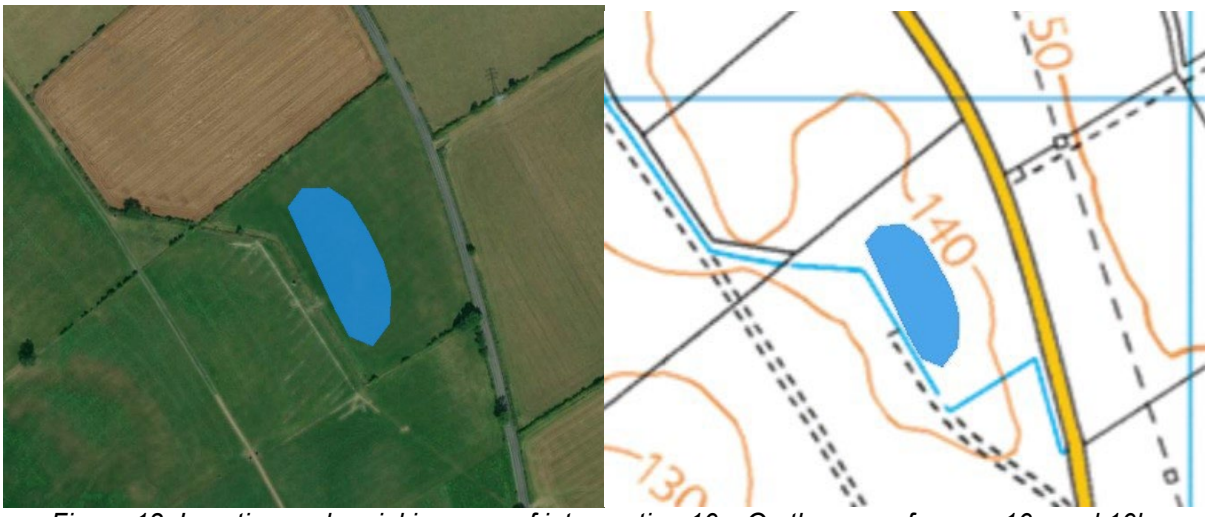

Figure 13: Location and aerial imagery of intervention 10c. On the same farm as 10a and 10b.

7. Additional options

The CiFR project is open to additional Natural Flood Management works that would benefit Stockdalewath and have done some exploration of this within the modelling. Costed ideas and suggestions can be included within the application. These can include habitat works where there is a flood reduction benefit.