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From: **Chesterfield Climate Alliance** <chesterfieldclimatealliance@gmail.com>
Date: Thu, 14 Aug 2025 at 09:59
Subject: Rivers Trust response to Government flood consultation and more about Natural Flood Management Locally

Dear all

As noted in my last email a government consultation on their approach to flood funding has just ended which looks at the criteria for the allocation of funding and how to prioritise flood projects. The Rivers Trust (the umbrella charity for the various river trusts including the Don Catchment Rivers Trust) has submitted a lengthy response which can be found at this link here.

250729_Consultation-on-reforming-flood-funding-formula_The-Rivers-Trust-and-signatory-member-Rivers-Trusts.pdf

It is quite technical in parts but it contains a lot of useful info on Natural Flood Management (NFM) which we have taken the liberty of summarising below.

Highlights from the Rivers Trust's response to the government consultation on reforming their approach to floods funding

We need to use all the tools available to help reduce flood risk i.e. hard engineered schemes, Natural Flood Management (NFM), property flood resilience etc. Capital projects are very much needed and NFM can work well with these projects to increase their longevity and sustainability.

But the government's current approach to flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM) is too narrow and rigid and favours traditional engineered schemes. Current funding for capital projects will not deliver the long term. landscape-scale resilience to flooding that is urgently needed in the face of climate change and increased development.

We need delivery and maintenance of Natural Flood Management (NFM) and wider catchment management approaches, such as healthy soil management, that are proven to increase overall flood risk resilience. NFM alone is not the solution, but we need a lot more of it in combination with everything else.

Land management, and particularly soil health, is the key to managing flood risk. 4 million ha of farmland is at risk from compaction and is therefore not allowing water to infiltrate. Modelling has found that average peak flow can be reduced by more than a fifth (17%) in downstream catchments and over a quarter (28%) in upstream catchments through a combination of runoff attenuation features and wider soil management.

The current process for assessing value for money for schemes disadvantages NFM as not enough weight is given to the wider benefits such as biodiversity, carbon reduction and protection for existing engineered flood infrastructure (e.g. if more water is stored naturally upstream of flood defences, these defences can retain a standard of protection for longer). NFM provides good value for money, especially when considering the additional multiple social and environmental benefits realised.

· NFM was found to deliver £10 of benefits for every £1 invested over 30 years

· Modelling has shown that the potential economic benefits of NFM across the Soar Catchment would amount to nearly £2million per year in damage avoided

· Since NFM interventions were installed to protect the village of Gissing in Norfolk following flooding in December 2020 that caused property damage, no flooding has been reported despite the arrival of 8 named storms in the area, including Storm Babet. These measures effectively protected 24 homes and provided a 17:1 return on their investment from the cost of restoring flood-damaged homes.

NFM assets must be recorded, monitored, maintained, and refurbished in the same way that engineered assets require.

Maintenance for NFM is largely paid for through agri-environment schemes (ELMS) which is a highly uncertain revenue stream. The schemes are improving overall catchment resilience and must be far more integrated into the government's flood schemes.

Around 10% of the flood funding budget could effectively be invested in NFM interventions. Voluntary contributions, which are unreliable and unpredictable, will not be enough to address the funding gap. Investment from across the insurance industry could be pooled into a fund that delivers NFM in priority areas. This would primarily provide capital or revenue match contributions in exchange for data and reporting.

Water companies, developers and infrastructure providers (eg National Highways, Network Rail) should be contributing more to manage flood risk. Development can increase the risks of flooding if not designed with permeable features to allow water to drain mor thoroughly. The Government should mandate SuDS in all new development.

Water and sewerage companies should be investing in the flood resilience of their assets and supply chains and contributing to catchment scale resilience to flooding. Government must take action to drive water companies to contribute a fair share to these kinds of catchment flood resilience projects.

A regional scale of governance is essential to aggregate alternative sources of funding, with public funding, around a pipeline of investible nature-based projects, including NFM. Regional Mayors can play a key role in bringing businesses to the table for partnership working. Giving Regional Mayors more revenue raising powers could

facilitate this. However, it is essential that there is coordination across catchments to ensure that action in one area doesn't create more problems up or down stream.

2. Debbie Coldwell of Don Catchment Rivers Trust has also asked me to mail out the following for anyone owning land in the catchment:

The Don Catchment Rivers Trust (DCRT) are looking for landowners who are keen to help tackle the climate emergency. There are a number of management options and measures that can be installed that help reinstate or mimic natural processes so that land is better able to capture and store rainfall. This can not only help to reduce flood risk, but can also be beneficial in times of drought. There are a wide variety of measures that can be considered to suit the land use (including farming), from improving soil management to reduce compaction and runoff, through to temporary or longer lasting water storage ponds.

Some preferable criteria are listed below. If you would like to find out more and be put in touch with DCRT to consider whether your land is suitable and if they can support you, please get in touch with some basic details e.g. land holding size and location, current use, if you have ideas of what you'd like to do.

Helpful starter criteria

- Land sits within the Upper Rother Catchment (see attached map), includes areas upstream of Renishaw
- Minimum land area of 0.5 ha (1.2 acres)
- Land incorporates or is near to ditches, streams, rivers **or** has areas where water runs over or sits on the surface

Thanks,

Debbie

Even if you don't own land yourself, perhaps you know someone who does.

Best wishes

Steph