

Divisions Affected - All

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

21 MAY 2026

Flood Risk Funding Allocation

Report by Director of Economy and Place

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to:

- a) **Note the use of multi-year flood prevention funding agreed by Council in financial year 2025/26.**
- b) **Note the spend to date on the current community grant scheme and approve the continuation of these grants for 2026/27 according to the grant scheme set out in Annex A.**
- c) **Adopt a discretionary grant/direct works scheme for the delivery of formal flood investigations recommendations as set out in Annex B.**
- d) **Delegate the decisions on individual business cases and funding allocation approval to the Director of Economy and Place within their existing financial delegations and within the requirements of the scheme.**

Executive Summary

1. Oxfordshire County Council has experienced a number of significant flood events in recent years, with 2024 resulting in widespread impacts across the county. In response, the Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), has completed 55 formal flood investigations under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, identifying the causes of flooding and recommendations to reduce future risk and improve community resilience. Full Council approved £2 million of one-off funding in 2025/26 to support proactive flood resilience measures, alongside permanent funding for additional flood risk management officers. This investment builds on existing activity, including delivery of community flood resilience grants, small scale flood mitigation works and support for flood wardens. Community grants have been well received and have enabled locally led action to improve flood preparedness and resilience.

- 2. However, many Section 19 recommendations require collaborative working and financial contributions to enable delivery at a level beyond the financial thresholds of the current community grant scheme. This report therefore seeks approval to establish a discretionary grant and/or direct works scheme to support the implementation of selected Section 19 recommendations, funded from the existing proactive flood measures allocation. Funding would be subject to clear criteria, a proportionate business case, and delegated approval by the relevant Director, enabling targeted investment and effective partnership working to reduce flood risk across Oxfordshire.

- 3. In addition, this report updates on spend against the flood measures budget so far, including on existing community grants scheme.

Background

- 4. A one-off multi-year fund was allocated by Full Council ahead of the financial year 2025/26 to provide investment in pro-active flood measures. This sits alongside a permanent investment to provide flood officers to promote and work with communities to become more flood resilient.

2026EP10	Investment in pro-active flooding measures and working with communities who have suffered flooding (one - off)	2,000
2026EP11	An ongoing investment of £0.1m is proposed for an additional two flood officers to recruit, train and support Flood Wardens or equivalent those places that have s19 reports associated, and to work with Emergency Planning and local resilience bodies to encourage relevant Parish and Town Councils or equivalent to complete emergency plans	100

- 5. The County council already work in a number of workstreams as Business as Usual (BAU) in the following areas:
 - Completion of Section 19s and implementing their recommendations
 - Undertaking small scale works through highways contractor or direct contract including through the Lead Local Flood Authority Team’s Drainage and Minor Groundworks Framework.
 - Issuing of grants/funding for community/groups/parish/district Councils and other bodies to undertake a range of community actions.
 - Identifying and training flood wardens

Community flood resilience grants

- 6. The LLFA has over the last two years developed grants to other organisations such as Parish/town councils, charities and other legal entities. The grant scheme is set out in Annex A. Annex A also sets out the grants delivered so far under 2026EP10.

7. Current spend for 2025/2026 for these grants is £620,000 and 56 grants have been issued. These support a wide range of projects including natural flood management, culvert replacement, river sensors, community flood storage and resilience. Further information on the types and locations of the flood resilience grants has been provided in Annex A. These have been successful and well received by these groups.

Section 19 Recommendation Interventions proposal

8. During 2024 Oxfordshire had a number of significant flood events that required the preparation of 55 number Section 19 formal flood investigations as per the legal responsibilities in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
9. These reports describe the flood event and what happened in that location often from reports of local residents, communities and fire and rescue colleagues. The reports also include recommendations for flood resilience works to reduce flooding impacts to the area covered by the report. The responsibility of many of the recommendations within the reports may be with several bodies, including landowners, the Environment Agency, District Councils, Thames Water etc.
10. These reports were prepared and completed over 2025, and we are now monitoring the recommendations from these with many of them being the responsibilities of other Risk Management Authorities, however some require a collaborative approach to move forward, which could include physical measures or works.
11. Officers are therefore proposing to utilise a proportion of the pro-active funding in 2026/27 to implement some of the recommendations of the Section 19s by contributing funding to recommendations that other authorities are undertaking. These are linked to the community grants and works required by others but will be part of a more collaborative approach. It is proposed to:
 - Consider contributions for recommendations in a published Section 19 report.
 - Make any application subject to a business case.
 - Sign off as delegated decision to the Director of Economy and Place.
12. The proposed criteria for grant funding for direct works schemes are set out in Annex B.

Corporate Policies and Priorities

13. The proposals support the Corporate strategy in its aspirations around Greener Oxfordshire by developing work on community led initiatives and locally specific works.
14. The proposals are directly delivering the Local Flood risk Management Strategy Objectives and measures:
 - (a) Objective 2: Take a collaborative approach to reducing flood risks, using all available resources and funds in an integrated way and in so doing manage and reduce overall flood risk.
 - (b) Objective 3: Take a sustainable and holistic approach to flood risk management, seeking to deliver wider environmental and social benefits, climate change mitigation and improvements

Financial Implications

15. The funding will come from the funding 2026EP10. This is a one-off fund but was intended to be spent over multiple years and any unspent funding at year end is held in reserve for future years. Current spend and proposed future spending is provided below. The balance from 2025/26 is being transferred to the corporate reserve through our finance business partner. Any unspent balance from 2026/27 would be dealt with through normal year-end processes.

Item	Description	Spend for FY 2025/26	Allocated for FY26/27
Community grants to groups	Small grants under £25k spend issued to improve flood resilience, capacity dependent on the community groups to deliver	£620k	£600k
County wide flood resilience works	PFR pilots and flood prioritisation mapping updates. These have yet to come forward and spend is dependent on	N/A	£265k
Section 19 recommendations interventions	Discretionary grants	N/A	£515k
Total spend		£620k	£1,380k

Comments checked by:

Matthew Kocak, Finance Business Partnering Manager,
Matthew.Kocak@Oxfordshire.gov.uk (Finance)

Finance sign-off is provided on a light-touch and proportionate basis, reflecting timetable constraints, and is limited to confirmation of funding availability and headline figures. It should not be interpreted as detailed assurance over delivery, profiling or individual grant or business case decisions.

Legal Implications

16. It is proposed that funding awarded as grants will be issued pursuant to the council's powers under section 1 the Localism Act, 2011. Legally binding grant agreements will be entered into based on standard grant agreement terms provided/agreed by Legal Services. It is not expected that there will be any subsidy control implications, but Legal Services will continue to provide advice as and when necessary.
17. Where projects/services are to be procured, the intention is to directly award these as call-off contracts under the existing Drainage and Minor Groundworks Framework where permissible. Where this is not possible, other Frameworks will be considered and where neither of these options is possible, a full tender process will be followed in accordance with Contract Procedure Rules.
18. Should work be required on third party land, notices will be issues using the council's legal powers, including but not limited to the Land Drainage Act 1991. Where such powers are not appropriate or applicable, a legally binding landowner agreement will be entered into.

Comments checked by: Jayne Pringle, Principal Solicitor – Contracts
Jayne.pringle@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Staff Implications

19. It is proposed to deliver this through the existing Flood risk management team. Additional funding for resources was provided on a permanent basis for two additional officers in FY2025/26.
20. These were successfully recruited to and commenced at the end of 2025. They are currently providing the co-ordination of the Section 19 recommendations and flood warden promotion as well as developing a communications plan. The County Council do not envisage additional resource requirements to implement this.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

21. The proposals set out in this report have been considered against the Council's equality duties. Flood risk and the impacts of flooding can disproportionately affect some groups.
22. The proposed discretionary grant and direct works approach is intended to support community led and locally targeted flood resilience measures, helping to reduce these disproportionate impacts. Funding criteria and decision making will be applied consistently and transparently, with consideration given to areas and communities that are more vulnerable to flooding and its consequences.
23. Engagement with communities will be inclusive and proportionate, using accessible formats and existing local networks where appropriate. All grants and works will be delivered in line with the Council's accessibility standards and equality policies.
24. On this basis, the proposals are not expected to have a negative impact on any protected group. A full Equality Impact Assessment is not considered necessary at this stage; however, equality considerations will continue to be reviewed as individual projects and grant applications are developed and assessed.

Sustainability Implications

25. The proposals in this report have positive sustainability and climate adaptation implications. They directly support Oxfordshire County Council's response to climate change by reducing flood risk, increasing community resilience, and helping communities adapt to the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events.
26. The discretionary grant and direct works approach enables the delivery of locally appropriate flood resilience measures, including nature based and small-scale interventions where suitable. These measures can provide wider environmental benefits, such as improved water management, reduced surface water runoff, and enhanced green infrastructure, alongside social benefits through increased community preparedness and resilience.
27. The proposals are consistent with the Council's climate and ecological commitments and support a sustainable, preventative approach to flood risk management. As the funding supports the implementation of existing Section 19 recommendations rather than introducing a new policy or programme with additional emissions impacts, a separate Climate Impact Assessment is not required.

Risk Management

Risk	Description	Mitigation	H/M/L
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Lack of team resource to deliver	Recommendation grants not reviewed and issued on time	Have dedicated resource allocated from the new permanents	M
Lack of interest from organisations	Recommendations are not delivered	Discuss recommendations pro-actively with the recommendation owners	M
Reputational Damage	Projects funded or delivered which cause reputational damage to OCC	Project selection process followed	L
Legal liability	Projects funded or delivered which cause unacceptable legal liability to OCC	Standardise grant agreements and legal contracts templates	L

Consultations

28. There has been no external consultation in relation this proposal. The follow OCC Teams/individuals have been consulted on this paper.

- Legal
- Finance Business Partner

Robin Rogers
Director Economy and Place

Annex A: Community Flood Grant process and allocations
Annex B: Discretionary Grants for Section 19 recommendations

Background papers: N/A

Other Documents: Floods and Water Management Act 2010 [Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#)
Local Flood Risk Management Strategy [oxfordshire-local-flood-risk-management-strategy-v5.0.pdf](#)
Section 19 Flood investigations
Oxfordshire County council Corporate Strategy [OCC Strategic Plan 2025 to 2028](#)

Contact Officer: Alice Dimaline, Team Leader, Flood Risk Management

May 2026

Annex A - Community Flood Grant Process and allocations

Priority Actions Grant Funded Projects Process

1. Information inviting expressions of interest is issued.
2. Communications are sent to parish and town councils, flood groups and catchment partnerships, and information is published on the Flood Toolkit website.
3. A deadline is set for submitting expression of interest forms to the Flood Risk Management Team.
4. The Flood Risk Management Team reviews the expressions of interest and seeks clarification where required.
5. Each application is scored in line with agreed scoring criteria – see scoring criteria below.
6. Applications are then ranked up to the available budget.

Priority Actions Grant Funded Projects Scoring Process

Priority Action grants are assessed on weighted scoring to prioritise across applications. Each project is scored on a scale from 0 to 4 against four criteria, with the final score a weighted contribution of each. Each scheme is scored against the criteria shown across the top of the table.

Additional information is recorded for each project, including the delivery lead, location, source of flooding, and comments for where the county council require clarity on questions raised during scoring. These factors inform the assessment process but do not directly affect the weighted score, however the council aim where possible to have a distribution of funded projects across all Oxfordshire Districts/City.

	CRITERIA			
Score	Level of risk	Ease/confidence in deliverability - track record, the project, delivery mechanism	Cost	Quality of submission
4	Highest risk - critical infrastructure, 5 or more properties internally, very disruptive highways flooding	High	High confidence in costs and offers good value for money	Very detailed
3	High risk - 2 to 4 properties internally flooded, or significant highways disruption	Reasonably high	Some confidence in cost, offers reasonable value for money	Detailed
2	Medium risk - 1 property internally flooded or significant highways disruption	Medium	Low confidence in costs, or offers weak value for money	Acceptable
1	Low risk - No properties at risk. Minor highways or garden flooding.	Low	No cost information available yet	Very Limited
0	No evidence of disruption from flooding	Very low/none	Costs unreasonable or unrealistic	Insufficient information

Priority Actions Grant Funded Projects Allocations

Priority Action number	Location	Delivery mechanism
15	Hornton – Junction of Millers Lane and Quarry Road	Priority Action Grant Fund
29	Cassington Road, Yarnton	Priority Action Grant Fund
38	Tackley, Medcroft Road, culverts works	OCC DMGW Framework
46	Thame, Rear of Cedar Crescent	Priority Action Grant Fund
47	Chalgrove	Priority Action Grant Fund
60	Bablock Hythe- additional bank protection	Priority Action Grant Fund
62	Brightwell cum Sotwell (Brightwell Stream)	Priority Action Grant Fund
67	Filkins and Broughton Poggs	Priority Action Grant Fund
72	Nuneham Courtenay (maintence)	Priority Action Grant Fund
73	Nuneham Courtenay (new culvert)	Priority Action Grant Fund
83	West Challow (Challows Canal Weir)	Priority Action Grant Fund
89	Kidlington - Garden City culvert survey	OCC DMGW Framework
91	Abingdon - Nash Drive hedge maintenace and embankment modification	Priority Action Grant Fund
92	Banbury, Salt Way (Blessed George Napier School), Banbury	OCC DMGW Framework
93	Bloxham, Work House Lane	OCC DMGW Framework
95	Bicester, Howes Lane, ground investigations	Priority Action Grant Fund
97	Bucknell, topographic and drainage survey	Priority Action Grant Fund
98	Caulcott, topographic and drainage survey	Priority Action Grant Fund
99	Abingdon, Nash Drive, small scale flood reduction works modelling assessment	Priority Action Grant Fund
100	Abingdon, Appeleford Drive, Flood Response Kit	Priority Action Grant Fund
103	Bampton	Priority Action Grant Fund
105	Bloxham , NFM study	Priority Action Grant Fund
107	Buscot, Natural Flood Management	Priority Action Grant Fund

108	Carswell Marsh	Priority Action Grant Fund
110	Sydenham, roadside ditch works	Priority Action Grant Fund
111	Clifton Hampden, Watery Lane	Priority Action Grant Fund
112	Culham, Europa School	Priority Action Grant Fund
113	East Hanney, Ebbs Lane	OCC DMGW Framework
114	Fewcott, Hydraulic model	Priority Action Grant Fund
115	Finmere, Fulwell Road 2	Priority Action Grant Fund
117	Hook Norton, watercourse maintenance	Priority Action Grant Fund
118	Kelmscott, community flood resilience works	Priority Action Grant Fund
121	Little Milton, Natural Flood Management	Priority Action Grant Fund
122	Oxford, Earl Street	Priority Action Grant Fund
125	Sunningwell, Land Drain	Priority Action Grant Fund
126	Swalcliffe	Priority Action Grant Fund
127	Warborough	Priority Action Grant Fund
128	Waterstock	Priority Action Grant Fund
129	Wendlebury	Priority Action Grant Fund
130	West Hanney	Priority Action Grant Fund
131	Wheatley, works and community leaflet	Priority Action Grant Fund
132	Whitchurch	Priority Action Grant Fund
133	Witney, additional sensors and maintenance	Priority Action Grant Fund
134	Witney, Millers Mews	Priority Action Grant Fund
135	Witney, River Windrush, additional maintenance	Priority Action Grant Fund
136	Wooton Fox Lane, Trashescreen improvements	Priority Action Grant Fund
137	Yarnton	Priority Action Grant Fund
138	Kidlington, Stratfield Brake, ditch maintenance	OCC internal projects/services
139	Aston Tirrold, Spring Lane, Highway drainage and kerb improvements	OCC internal projects/services
140	Cherwell Farmer Cluster, NFM Studio	Priority Action Grant Fund
142	Tackley, Rousham Road, Flood Storage Area improvement - design work	OCC internal projects/services

143	Kidlington, The Moorlands, flood relief channel maintenance	Priority Action Grant Fund
150	Baldons, maintenance and ditch works	Priority Action Grant Fund
151	Fewcott, Fritwell Road, Leaky woody dams	Priority Action Grant Fund
152	Thame Catchment, windrow compost turner	Priority Action Grant Fund

Annex B - Discretionary Grants for Section 19 recommendations

Purpose

To facilitate the implementation of the Section 19 report recommendations when no alternative funding is available or whether a County Council contribution to partnership funding can unlock delivery. The total of grants awarded are to be capped at the budget provided and will be based on a first come first served basis for eligible schemes.

Criteria

Proposals for interventions will be considered based on the following conditions:

1. That there are no clear responsibilities of a landowner or a statutory body or agency and are a recommendation within a formal Section 19 flood investigation.
2. Can be delivered by OCC directly or can be delivered by a suitable accountable body such as a district, city, parish or town council, charity or Community Interest Company
3. That there is a clear accountable body (which may be the County Council) for designing, commissioning and maintaining the intervention.
4. If not directly delivered by OCC, will be subject to a grant agreement between the County Council and the accountable body.
5. There is match funding available from other bodies on at least a 50:50 basis unless exceptional circumstances apply.
6. Has been justified in a business case approved by the Director of Economy and Place that sets out:
 - i. The recommendations of the relevant s19 report
 - ii. The intervention proposed
 - iii. The flood risk benefits expected
 - iv. A recommendation from the appropriate officer that the proposals will deliver the flood risk benefits expected
 - v. The full costs of the scheme and the proposed delivery route

Consideration of the relevance of subsidy control implications will be considered at this stage for any applications.

7. Is affordable within the remaining flood intervention reserve based on the committed projects.