BRIEFING NOTE

St Levan Park Flood Relief Scheme

Following the approval of the Capital Business Case Change Request by the Capital Programme Officer Group and the Capital Programme Board, it is now recommended that the Leader:

- Approves the Capital Business Case Change Request for the St Levan Park Flood Relief Scheme Capital Business Case
- Approves the allocation of an additional £88,780.89 into the Capital Programme for the St Levan Park Flood Relief Scheme, funded by Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding

The total value of the capital project currently within the approved capital programme is £130,433.11. These costs are fully funded by the Environment Agency (Flood Defence Grant in Aid) and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The additional £88,780.89 to be brought into the Capital Programme is also fully funded by Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid.

SCHEME SUMMARY

The St Levan Park Flood Relief Scheme (the Scheme) is a flood risk management project in the St Levan area, designed to provide storage for surface water during storm events, reduce flood risk and storm overflow spills, and create environmental enhancement.

Once construction of the Scheme completes, it is anticipated that 113 properties will be better protected from surface water flooding during a 1 in 100 year storm event. The Scheme and further phases of work should avoid properties within the St Levan area becoming unviable and, therefore, abandoned, with the associated blight on the wider area's economic activity.

The Scheme and combined works will also:

- reduce the frequent disruption of the movement of traffic along St Levan Road between Devonport Dockyard and Milehouse, including one bus route
- reduce the ongoing disruption to the education of 603 children attending College Road Primary School, Ford Primary School, and Morice Town Primary School
- reduce the risk of Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) spills, with associated bathing water quality improvement in the River Tamar
- provide habitat improvement, including a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%
- provide significant amenity improvements, including improved walking provision
- provide additional capacity in the combined drainage and sewage network for new development

As far as impact upon the climate is concerned, most of the outputs of the Scheme have been assessed as positive with long-term benefits. Where there is no or neutral impact, there is mitigation.

The key identified risks are:

- St Levan is a historical landfill site, with potential for contamination; there is believed to be a historic underground bomb shelter under one end of the park
- Unexploded UXO
- Presence of underground utilities
- Proximity of park users to the works

STRATEGIC CASE

Which Corporate Plan priorities does this project deliver?

- Keeping children, young people and families safe
- Green investment, jobs, skills, and better education
- Spending money wisely
- Focussing on prevention and early intervention

How does the project deliver or support delivery of the Plymouth Plan / Joint Local Plan Policies?

Plymouth Plan

- Plymouth as a healthy city:
    - Assisting good health and wellbeing within the St Levan area, where people feel safe in their homes
    - The wellbeing of children, young people and their families is protected and promoted
    - Everyone has a decent home that suits their needs
    - Good access to high quality open space
    - Improved local environment, leading to improved public health and wellbeing
    - Built natural environment to support health and wellbeing
- Plymouth as a growing city:
    - Infrastructure project delivered to enable economic growth within the St Levan area
    - St Levan area is more resilient to the social, economic and environmental impacts of climate change
- Plymouth as an international city:
    - Seasonal wetland basins and SuDS scheme support Plymouth as a leading sustainable clean, green city, addressing its climate emergency

Joint Local Plan

- SO12 (Delivering infrastructure and investment):
    - Assessing infrastructure and investment needs to enable growth, remove barriers to investment and deliver sustainable communities
    - Creating supportive conditions that enable and encourage private, public and community sector investment in new jobs and infrastructure
- SPT1 (Delivering sustainable development):
    - Opportunities for business growth
    - Accessible green space that meets the needs of local people

    - Resilient community and development, able to accommodate the impacts of climate change without causing detrimental impacts to other communities and developments, e.g. by increasing flood risk
    - Gain in biodiversity
    - Minimisation of pollution and adverse environmental impacts
    - Local distinctiveness and sense of place is respected, maintained and strengthened through high design standards
- SPT2 (Sustainable linked neighbourhoods and sustainable rural communities):
    - Promote resilience to future change
    - Well served by walking and cycling opportunities
    - Safe, accessible, healthy and wildlife-rich local environment, with well-designed public and natural space that is family friendly and welcoming to all
    - Provide a positive sense of place and identity
- SPT10 (Balanced transport strategy for growth and healthy and sustainable communities):
    - Improved walking and cycling provision through St Levan Park
- SPT12 (Strategic approach to the natural environment):
    - Enhancing green space that meets the needs of communities and wildlife
    - Improved cycling provision
- SPT13 (Strategic infrastructure measures to deliver the spatial strategy):
    - Strategic green infrastructure site
    - Strategic drainage and flood defence
- DEV1 (Protecting health and amenity):
    - Ensuring public space is designed to be accessible to all people, including people with disabilities or for those whose mobility is impaired by other circumstances
- DEV2 (Air, water, soil, noise, land and light):
    - Avoid harmful environmental impacts and health risks arising from soil, water or land pollution
    - Protect, enhance and restore water quality in the watercourse within St Levan Park and the River Tamar
- DEV20 (Place shaping and the quality of the built environment):
    - Using resilient materials and design solutions
    - Achieving a good quality sense of place and character
    - Delivering locally distinctive design
    - Delivering landscape design that is appropriate to the location, with full consideration given to its future management and maintenance and the need for landscape measures that are resilient
    - Ensuring that the design layout adequately contributes towards high standards of community safety
    - Repairing a damaged environment
- DEV23 (Landscape character):
    - Designed to respect scenic quality and maintain the area's distinctive sense of place and reinforce local distinctiveness
    - Conserve and enhance the characteristics and views of the area along with valued attributes and existing site features such as trees, hedgerows and watercourses that contribute to the character and quality of the area
    - High quality landscape design appropriate to its landscape context
    - Restore positive landscape characteristics and features that reinforce local landscape quality and distinctiveness
- DEV26 (Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation):
    - BNG of at least 10%
    - Long term management of biodiversity features retained and enhanced within the site

- DEV27 (Green and play spaces):
    - Improving quality of accessible green space
- DEV32 (Delivering low carbon development):
    - Design includes climate change allowance
- DEV 35 (Managing flood risk and water quality impacts):
    - SuDS project that will reduce the risk of flooding in the St Levan area
    - Development within the City's Critical Drainage Area to reduce the risk of surface water flooding

How does the project support other strategies and plans?

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy – Dockyard catchment

- Key issue: Surface water flooding in the St Levan area
- Objectives:
    - Reduce risk of surface water flooding along the St Levan Road corridor
    - Remove pollution discharge into the River Tamar
- Delivery: St Levan Park Flood Relief Scheme, including surface water capacity improvements for College Road

PCC's Green Minds Model

The scheme aligns with the objectives of PCC's Green Minds model, which seeks to re-wild urban parks, gardens and verges, introduce a new system of working with partners and crucially, encourage more people from all walks of life to enjoy the health benefits that green spaces provide.

SWW's Plans

The separation of surface water drainage from the combined network aligns with SWW's "Downstream Thinking" initiative and SWW's AMP7 ODI drive to reduce the number of properties with internal flooding. It assists with lowering loading on the combined network helping to reduce CSO spill volumes and frees capacity for development.

OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS	
Financial outcomes and benefits:	**Non-financial outcomes and benefits:**

• Direct benefits to PCC:
  ○ Reduced costs for Street Services having to clear flooding
  ○ St Levan Road not regularly being damaged and/or disrupted by flooding
• Reduction in flood damages:
  ○ Homes
  ○ Non-residential properties
  ○ Public services:
  ▪ Clearance of flood debris from public spaces
• Reduction in volume of water entering the combined sewer network:
  ○ Reduced volume treated by SWW, therefore reduced energy and infrastructure required, leading to lower costs
  ○ Freed foul water capacity within the combined drainage network opening opportunities for local development
	• Reduction in flood damages:
	  ○ Homes (intangible, mental health and risk to life)
	  ○ Disruption of road traffic including bus services
	• Improvement of public amenity spaces within St Levan Park (interesting green space, new rain gardens, new seating, and paths)
	• Habitat and biodiversity improvement within St Levan Park
	• Reduction in volume of water entering the combined sewer network:
	  ○ Reduced volume treated by SWW, therefore reduced energy and infrastructure required, leading to less carbon emissions
	  ○ Freed foul water capacity within the combined drainage network
	• Reduction in the volume of water spilled via CSOs to the water environment, therefore improving water quality
	• Reduction of carbon emissions
	  ○ In a flood, higher plant biomass has the potential to increase methane emissions due to increased carbon availability. This project will reduce the risk of flooding and reduce carbon emissions in line with PCC's Carbon Neutral Policy
	  ○ Use of natural flood management, incorporating natural means to store and treat surface water runoff will contribute to the policy
	• Enhanced quality of surface water entering the River Tamar through passive water polishing measures

KEY RISKS

Strategic risks have been identified as:

- Reliance on partner organisations working together, which requires alignment of funding streams and priorities
- Flood event prior to the completion of construction
- Inflation, recession or other economic pressures altering the Partners' priorities or their capacity to deliver projects
- The project being disrupted, delayed or stopped due to:
    - Adverse public opinion
    - Change in local, regional or national priorities with regards to flooding

Main risks/issues and assumptions have been identified as:

- St Levan Park is a historical landfill site, with potential for contamination; there is believed to be a historic underground bomb shelter under one end of the park
- Unexploded UXO
- Presence of underground utilities
- Proximity of park users to the works

MILESTONES AND DATES

- Public consultation concerning outline design – December 2025
- SWW modelling to validate design proposals – by March 2026
- Outline business case to secure full funding for the design and construction of the scheme to be submitted to the Environment Agency – by end March 2026

FUNDING

The total value of the capital project currently within the approved capital programme is £130,433.11. These costs are fully funded by the Environment Agency (Flood Defence Grant in Aid) (£94,219.11) and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (£36,214).

The additional £88,780.89 to be brought onto the Capital Programme is also fully funded by Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid.

The table below sets out the projected Scheme costs up to the end of March 2026:

Capital Cost and Financing:

Breakdown of project costs including fees surveys and contingency	**Prev. Years £**	**25/26 £**	**26/27 £**	**27/28 £**	**28/29 £**	**29/30 £**	**Future Years £**	**Total £**
Original business case capital cost	130,433.11	0						130,433.11
Revised capital costs	130,433.11	88,780.89						219,214.00

Difference		+88,780.89						+88,780.89
Detail on financing change (+£ or -£) to match the difference above								
		25/26 £	**26/27 £**	**27/28 £**	**28/29 £**	**29/30 £**	**Future Years £**	**Total £**
Grant Funding (Ringfenced/ Un-Ringfenced)		+88,780.89						+88,780.89
S106 /CIL								
Corporate / Service Borrowing								
Internal Contribution (RCCO)								
External Contribution								

REVENUE & VAT IMPLICATIONS

Tax and VAT implications:

The project will not directly generate any VAT-exempt income for PCC. Flood risk management works are a statutory, non-business activity of the local authority and so any VAT incurred by PCC on costs relating to this flood defence project will be fully recoverable and there will be no adverse impact on PCC's partial exemption position.

Revenue implications:

Of the £93,780.89 capital grant, £5k will be made available for staff time that has been spent on compiling EA business cases in support of future Environment Agency project funding.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Deputy Leader:

- Approves the Capital Business Case Change Request for the St Levan Park Flood Relief Scheme
- Approves the allocation of an additional £88,780.89 into the Capital Programme for the St Levan Park Flood Relief Scheme, funded by Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding