

## **Update briefing note for Harberton Parish flood risk management work** **March 2026.**

### **Parties involved and their associated workstreams:**

Devon County council (DCC)

- NFM in Harberton
- Investigatory work associated with potential Engineering interventions in Harberton

Environment Agency (EA)

- NFM in Harbertonford Yeolands Stream
- Investigatory work associated with potential Engineering interventions Harbertonford

### **Summary updates:**

#### **Natural Flood Management (NFM)**

The EA and DCC have been working with Westcountry Rivers Trust (WRT) to develop Natural Flood Management (NFM) options in Harberton and Harbertonford. NFM includes a range of techniques such as soil management, leaky woody dams, ponds and tree planting. These interventions aim to increase resilience to flood events similar to those that have occurred in recent years.

WRT has made initial engagement with landowners across the catchments to gauge interest in NFM, land management, and openness to options within schemes such as Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI), and Countryside Stewardship.

Permissions have been sought and granted for site access to carry out walkovers, followed by correspondence and meetings to discuss identified opportunities. Land management and NFM opportunities have been identified and mapped, noting levels of landowner interest and a land ownership plan. Walkovers have provided project partners with a summary of current land management practices.

Landowners have been really engaged with the process to date and have been supportive of the projects, holding productive conversations with WRT and partners. WRT produced a report for project partners which summarises the current condition and character of the catchments, outlining feasible NFM and land management interventions, and present conclusions with potential next steps. We will not be releasing the full report at this stage, as it shows all possible interventions, which will not all be taken forwards to delivery.

DCC and the EA are now working with WRT to take these recommendations forwards and develop some preferred options for NFM delivery, whilst continuing landowner engagement. We want to develop some final designs and financing options before sharing these interventions with residents.

NFM options will be designed with the aim of increasing flood resilience for both catchments. It is important to note there is no requirement on landowners to implement this work, any options identified would be delivered by the responsible authority subject to gaining the necessary licences and landowner approval.

DCC and the EA are also working to identify potential funding streams to deliver NFM. This funding would need to be applied for, therefore isn't guaranteed and there is no specific timeline. To reiterate, DCC is looking primarily at Harberton, and the EA are focussed on Harbertonford, but we are working in partnership to deliver solutions where possible as both catchments fall under the same parish.

### **Investigatory work associated with potential Engineering interventions in Harberton (DCC)**

In parallel with the NFM work being explored, the DCC Project team has, through our consultant WSP, undertaken an extensive hydraulic modelling exercise of Harberton to identify flood flow paths and identify any civil engineered options that could be beneficial for the community. These options, such as culverts, flood bunds and walls for example would need to be affordable in line with the funding mechanisms open to DCC from DEFRA and the EA.

Our current investigations are indicating that features such as this would be very challenging to financially justify and construct in the rural setting of Harberton, as is often the case for rural communities. As such we are also investigating interventions such as Property Level Flood Resilience measures (flood proof doors, gates etc) as well as small drainage and culvert improvements to the existing infrastructure to aid conveyance at times of high flows.

It is hoped that options such as this, in combination with NFM interventions will increase the resilience of the community.

### **Investigatory work associated with potential Engineering interventions Harbertonford (EA)**

For Harbertonford and the Yeolands stream the EA have been undertaking a feasibility assessment to increase the culvert capacity under Moreleigh Road. The aim of this would be to reduce the flood risk associated with the relatively low capacity of the current culvert system. This work is ongoing and is currently in an outline design phase. There is currently no funding for this scheme in terms of the culvert upgrade and or NFM interventions in the Yeolands catchment. With the information being developed in both

the NFM and culvert improvement we hope to bid for funds in future years or as and when opportunities arise.

**Forward look:**

DCC & the EA will continue to develop these options to determine the most appropriate and affordable solutions for the community. As we gain clarity on proposals we will be in a position to engage with residents and share the proposals in more detail.

It is important to note that there is currently no specified timeline for delivery or established funding. These works are still exploratory and will be subject to gaining the necessary funding and approvals.