Property-level flood protection grant scheme

Next steps workshops feedback

August 2009
Property-level Flood Protection Grant Scheme Round 1

Feedback from the ‘Next Steps’ Workshops, August 2009

This document captures the presentations given during the feedback workshops and provides answers to the questions asked at the workshops and through prior correspondence. The information will be used to update the scheme guidance document revised in February 2009.

Until the final guidance document has been issued, this document should be used, in conjunction with the February 2009 revision of the scheme guidance, as the reference document for delivering the Round 1 grant schemes, along with the commissioning letter from the Environment Agency.

The format of this document follows the agenda of the workshops using the presentations as a basis. Each presentation page will be provided followed by clarification of the bullet points where needed and subsequent Q&A arising from the subjects under discussion within the section.

This document captures the feedback from all three ‘Next Steps’ workshops into one document as if the workshops were held concurrently.
1. Introduction and Overview

Slide 1

Property-level flood protection grant scheme Round 1

‘Next Steps’ workshop

Introduction and Overview for the day

John Goudie, Defra

Slide 2

Purpose of the workshop:

- Respond to requests for clarity raised during the application and feedback process
- Help progress implementation as quickly, effectively and efficiently as possible
- Develop consistency of approach for the ‘fixed’ elements

After the workshop:

- You will deliver your schemes!

‘Fixed’ elements are those aspects constrained by the grant conditions and/or the scheme guidance. See also slide 5 in this section.
Format for the day – a mix of presentation and Q&A

- Community engagement – covered by Session 1.
- Surveys and solutions – covered by Session 2
- Funding, procurement and reporting – covered by Session 3
- Anything missed from the above – covered by Session 4

The arrangement of the sessions reflected the logical approach to carrying out the work: engage with the community as without their involvement there is no scheme; find out what needs to be done through survey; agree with the property owners what will be done and deliver the work. Session 4 was to capture missed items and outstanding questions.

Scheme Aims:
- To create demonstration areas that will promote the benefits of property-level flood risk mitigation, encouraging further take-up
- To stimulate the supply of independent high quality flood risk mitigation surveys, by competent and independent surveyors
- To encourage the development of new and innovative flood protection measures

Achieved by:
- Providing funding for surveys to inform understanding of the extent of the flood problem at the property and how to mitigate it
- Providing funding for the implementation of qualifying property-level flood risk mitigation measures

In addition, the scheme aims to help individuals through community engagement and to demonstrate mitigation activity to the insurance industry through the Association of British Insurers (ABI).
Underpinning messages

- Constraints:
  - *Must be legal*
  - *As set out in the grant approval process*

- Opportunities:
  - *Flexibility to make the best use of the funding*
  - *Flexibility with respect to distribution processes*
  - *Empowers people to help themselves*

The ‘grant approval process’ refers to the commissioning letter from the Environment Agency and the final guidance document (see also page 1) which set out the terms of reference for the use of the grant. Grants are approved by the Environment Agency. Defra has tried to minimise the constraints to allow the flexibility to deliver solutions appropriate to local need.
2. Session 1 – Community Engagement

Heather Shepherd gave the National flood forum (NFF) presentation at the Leeds workshop.

Slide 2

Content of the session:
• Underpinning research and feedback from the pilot schemes
• National Flood Forum experiences and support available
Underpinning research and feedback from the pilot schemes

This presentation draws on work by Dr Tim Harries when he worked at Defra

Dr Tim Harries is now working at Kings College London.

Community participation

Residents should be actively involved in planning and in decisions around the selection of protection and resilience products and should be kept informed of the progress of the scheme.

This was a key message from the research and the pilot projects. Without the engagement of the community both as a community and at the property level the likelihood of scheme success is significantly lowered.
Community participation
Why involve residents?

- Learn about residents’ needs
- Help ensure measures properly used / maintained
- Overcome barriers to take-up

This slide provides key feedback from the research questionnaires and interviews and reflects some of the barriers to take-up.

The 'not my responsibility' response was particularly prevalent where there had been flooding relatively locally where a community solution had been implemented subsequently at no cost to the beneficiaries.

At the time of the research and the pilot projects, the ‘worry about property values’ response was informed by the perception that estate agents downgraded values
where properties had been fitted with flood mitigation measures as this advertised that there was a risk of flooding sufficiently great to need action. Also there was worry about the possible withdrawal of flood insurance. Since then, it appears that estate agents recognise that knowledge about flood risk is increasing leading to a more realistic valuation of properties in flood risk areas, so fitted flood risk mitigation measures are now more widely seen as enhancing property values. Also, the ABI line on insurance is clearer and member companies appear to be following ABI guidance more closely.

An aim of the grant scheme is to foster innovation and new products that should address the concerns of the other two pie charts – attractiveness and ‘invisibility’. An element of these aspects is whether they can be easily deployed by the occupants of a property, such as the elderly or infirm, so appropriate solutions should allay worries.

Slide 7

This slide provides key feedback from the research questionnaires and interviews and reflects key positive messages that can be used to promote take-up. Those interviewed agreed that there were gains to be had from installing and deploying measures.
Community participation

- First phase
  - Listen – understand the local issues
  - Defuse anger – emotions may be volatile
  - Build relationships
  - Inform ... about causes of the floods
    - ... about low likelihood of community-level defence
    - ... about protection / resilience

Tim Harries identified two key phases to community participation. The first phase was essentially about getting the community into ‘listening mode’, whereas the focus of the second phase was about agreeing how to deal with the problem of protecting the property against flooding both individually and as a community.

Where communities are angry following flooding, it may be necessary to use an intermediary to defuse the anger. Those flooded typically look for someone to blame and this is often the Environment Agency or the local authority. In a hostile environment it is difficult to get into the listening phase before the anger has been defused.

Similarly, it may be useful to bring in one or more specialists to address the ‘Inform’ process. Care should be taken to avoid specialists who have a vested interest in the implementation of particular solutions.
In this second phase, it is the community that needs to learn (assuming that the authority is already well-briefed).

The choice of protection at each property will be informed by the property-level surveys. However, it is possible to discuss typical solutions that will be generally applicable taking into account the general characteristics of the area (flood type/depth/frequency) and any special considerations such as conservation status and ability of residents to deploy measures. The discussion of choice is also pertinent in the context of community participation in the deployment of measures as too much variety will undermine co-operation (“I don’t know how to fit the type they have next door.”).

Consideration needs to be given to community coherence – do there need to be formal agreements to co-operate, such as signing up to a community ‘code of conduct’? How do communities wish to deal with defaulters, for example?

Support for the ongoing use of measures might include an annual deployment exercise attended by a local authority representative, and perhaps including observers from neighbouring communities at flood risk. Ways of incentivising performance and participation could be explored, perhaps in parallel with other emergency response initiatives.

Q: Some pilots used legal agreements or memoranda – can these be made available?
A: We intend to make the pro forma agreements used in the pilots available via the website along with any comment arising from experience of their use.
The key consideration when engaging with the community is to avoid conflicting messages. The best way to ensure this is to have one spokesperson from the authority side dealing with one spokesperson representing the community. It needs to be recognised that this may be too great a burden for one community representative, so alternative approaches may need to be considered.

The authority representative(s) will need to have strong people skills, especially where there is anger towards an authority over the management of flood risk.

Public meetings can be a useful way of communicating, but this will need to be judged against the size of the community and the business to be achieved. Public meetings may be a necessity during the early stages of engagement, especially where no community flood groups exist.

Flood Protection Exhibitions (the NFF has moved away from the ‘Flood fair’ terminology) are useful for letting people know about what can be done about flood risk at the property level. They do, however, need to be carefully managed to achieve the best outcomes – see the contribution from the NFF.

Facilitation (or chairing) of meetings can be performed by anyone competent to do so, but they should be non-partisan.
Community participation

• Seek the commitment of the community
  • do you need formal agreements with the community?
  • can they be made to work?
• Seek the commitment of individuals within the community
  • agreements to deploy measures
  • agreements to maintain measures
  • agreements to cooperate with attached neighbours

Consideration needs to be given to the level of commitment needed from the community to make the project work over both the short and long terms. Some sort of formal agreement may be needed both between property owners and the authority, and between members of the community. This will need to be discussed during the community engagement stage before contracting for the purchase of measures, as the outcome of discussions may impact on the choice of solutions. Also, the community needs to agree the level of legal process needed to keep them acting as a community, which is an indicator of trust within the community – authorities will need to make parallel judgments of whether they agree the community’s assessment of trust within the community.

‘Attached neighbours’ can mean end-of-terrace, mid-terrace, or semi-detached. There was experience from the pilots of attached neighbours who vehemently did not wish to participate in the scheme (the Leeds pilot is a good example). You are not able to force them to participate, but should nevertheless try to find a way of persuading them to cooperate. Where non-participation occurs, the survey should try to identify the work needed at the attached participating properties to minimise the negative impact of neighbourly non-participation.
National Flood Forum experiences and support available

Mary Dhonau
National Flood Forum

The NFF is a charity set up after the floods in 2000, run by flood victims, for flood victims. They aim to put their expertise to good use in whatever way is appropriate for any flood-affected community. They understand the issues from both the victims’ and the Environment Agency/Local Authority’s view and can use this knowledge to bring all parties together, often by helping to form a local Flood Action Group (FAG). They were involved with all the pilot schemes and are happy to share their impressions of what worked and what didn’t. They host the ‘Blue Pages’ listing of flood mitigation products/suppliers and can organise a Flood Protection Exhibition (formerly known as a Flood Fair) to present issues and solutions in a user-friendly and community-focused way.

Flood Action Groups
• NFF can help approach local people and build partnerships
• FAGs should affiliate with NFF, Parish Councils and Local Authorities
• Can be a source of information and misinformation alike
• Be aware that members will probably have experienced extreme trauma
• Need to endure beyond the life of the installation project to ensure and facilitate participation going forward
• NFF facilitation fees are an eligible administration cost that can be charged to the grant scheme

Flood Protection Exhibition
• Can ‘bring together’ flooded communities and those that manage flood risk
• Flood defence systems are a niche market – getting to grips with available products can be intimidating
• NFF has much empathy with flood victims and can help them understand the options
• Some manufacturers can use intimidating sales tactics, but NFF can protect individuals from these
• NFF can act as an independent broker, being fair but tough if needed
• Be aware that product manufacturer surveys may not provide a balanced and independent view of options
• There are always options when one measure is deemed unsuitable
• NFF facilitation fees will be an eligible cost within the admin section of the grant scheme

General points and advice
• Remember that flooding is a very emotional issue
• Remember that community engagement can be very time-consuming and local meetings can often occur in the evening
• The victims will often have details about the flood and will certainly have opinions
• Think about performing 'dry-run' flood measure deployment exercises, as this can help build a community approach to deployment, and strengthen the partnership with the Local Authority
• Consider open-days where areas that have successfully implemented property-level measures invite other at-risk communities to examine existing schemes
• When building partnerships NFF can act as a facilitator
• Some people are starting to help themselves, so use the grant scheme to improve or maintain momentum
• Feel free to lobby the NFF – they are happy to carry forward your issues
3. Session 2 – Surveys and Solutions

Slide 1

Property-level flood protection grant scheme Round 1

‘Next Steps’ workshop

Session 2 – Surveys and Solutions
John Goudie, Defra

Slide 2

Surveys (assessments)

Any use of the Defra funding to mitigate flood risk in individual properties must be preceded by surveys of those properties by professionals with the requisite skills and experience.

It is important to have an assessment of flood risk and potential solutions for each property by someone who will deliver an independent and professional service. This will ensure that all measures needed are identified and avoid the waste of scarce funding on inappropriate or ineffective measures.

Benefits of this approach include:
• Facilitating discussions and agreement with the property owners
• Facilitating discussions with other interests such as heritage bodies
• Clarifying the detail of what needs to be delivered and its specification
• Facilitating discussions about deployment, storage and maintenance

Slide 3

**Surveys**

Objectives:
• Provide independent, expert advice
• Deliver best value for money
• Build confidence in property-level protection / resilience

Independent means ‘not associated with the suppliers or providers of solutions’, as opposed to ‘not associated with the local authority or the Environment Agency’.

It is assumed that economies of scale will be obtained by the authority commissioning the surveys from one provider.

By seeing a professional report about the nature of flood hazard at the property and the options available to mitigate the hazard, it is assumed that property owners will see the benefits from the scheme and feel confident that the proposed solutions will work.
What is being assessed:

Initially:
- nature of the flood risk including depth and frequency
- points of potential water entry
- appropriate measures for reducing the risk, accounting for individual residents’ capabilities
- required performance standards (e.g. leakage rate) of mitigation measures

On completion:
- check compliance of completed works

The compliance check will include confirmation that installed products are supported by test evidence that they will deliver the performance required by the specification.

Surveys

- Two main threads to the surveys:
  - Assessment of source of flooding and depth/frequency characteristics. Also whether the floodwater is likely to be polluted.
  - Assessment of how the water will enter the building and recommendations for appropriate mitigating measures taking into account the depth/frequency characteristics and the structural characteristics of the building.
- A survey pro forma will be provided setting out the information that needs to be reported upon.

It is anticipated that for fluvial and coastal flood risk, the local Environment Agency office will provide flood risk information. There may be other sources of information, such as flood risk assessments by developers and Local Authorities.

For surface water flood risk it is unlikely that there will be good quality modelling of flood risk available, so it will be necessary for a qualified professional to review the
evidence of flooding and to make an informed assessment of the depth/frequency characteristics of flooding at the property. Similarly for groundwater flood risk.

Sewer flooding is excluded from the scheme.

The assessment of flood risk needs to include consideration of whether the floodwater is likely to be polluted. This may be relevant to the selection of product components (deterioration considerations, for example, and post-flood maintenance) and also to advice with respect to whether a householder should evacuate before a flood after the deployment of measures (safety considerations).

All points of water entry need to be identified and provision made for sealing them during a flood. The surveyor will need to consider safety issues such as temporarily sealing air bricks that are needed for gas appliance ventilation and the possibility that airbrick covers may not be removed by the property owner once installed. The property owner will need to be reminded that airbrick covers should not be installed permanently as airbricks need to be open to ventilate under-floor spaces.

The surveyor should recommend appropriate solutions for the property taking into account all considerations, including the ability of the property owner to deploy the solution and the reliability of the electrical supply during an event if power is needed for the success of the solution. The surveyor should specify the performance required by components (such as an acceptable leakage rate through seals) for the complete solution.

The local authority, in reviewing the quality of the survey report, will need to consider the recommended leakage rates of components in the context of leakage standards adopted by national standards bodies such as BSI. Whilst it is not a requirement that products comply with the BSI PAS 1188 test specification\(^1\) that underpins the BSI Kitemark for flood protection products (or similar international specifications), this is a good standard to aspire to and acceptable products are unlikely to vary significantly from this level of performance. (See also note for Slide 4 with respect to compliance checks).

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\(^1\) [http://www.bsigroup.com/Shop/Publication-Detail/?pid=000000000030180616](http://www.bsigroup.com/Shop/Publication-Detail/?pid=000000000030180616)
Surveys

Outcome expected:

• A report for property owners and LAs setting out the flood risk and the options to mitigate – helps both property owners and LAs to make decisions
• The performance required from any measures that will inform the specification used for procurement
• Recommendations that set out the minimum of work needed as well as extra work that would be beneficial

The survey report is primarily aimed at the property owner to help them understand the flood risk and the options available to mitigate it at the property. The solution agreed by the property owner will form the basis for the specification for procurement of the measures for that property.

Surveys

Who can do the assessment?

• An independent assessor (not linked to any commercial provider of measures) who can demonstrate that they are qualified to do the work and carries appropriate insurance to cover professional indemnity. This could include qualified LA staff underwritten by the LA.

In the absence of recognised accreditation for this specialism, it is suggested that surveyors could be found from either:

• a company on the Environment Agency’s *Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Framework*
• OR a professional member of a chartered institution who has the necessary insurance

It is assumed that a company on the Environment Agency’s Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Framework will have the necessary insurance. It is important that whoever does the work does so to professional standards, has the necessary insurance cover and can demonstrate that they have the experience.
Solutions

All flood risk mitigation measures funded by the grant should be implemented using products of a sufficient standard to provide a balanced overall package of protection and resilience for the homes concerned.

Grant should not be allocated where all of the minimum work identified in the survey is not carried out.

Examples of protection measures:
- Garden landscaping
- Drainage improvements
- Bunds around a property
- Raised thresholds
- Storm porches
- Peripheral walls
- Flood resistant gates
- Outside wall renders and facings
- Non-return valves
- Temporary barriers
- Airbrick covers
  (all within the curtilage of the property)

Examples of resilience measures:
- Water-resistant external doors
- Pump-&-sump systems
- Sealing of floors
- The use of concrete to fill under-floor voids
- Raised electrical sockets
- Flood resilient kitchens
- Raising of white goods, kitchen units etc
- Storage of vulnerable items off the floor or in upstairs locations
- Changes to internal walls
- Flood resilient skirting
- Internal doors that can easily be moved to safety during a flood

Not all of the above examples of protection measures will be suitable for the grant scheme unless they can be implemented within the curtilage of the property. For the purposes of the grant scheme, ‘curtilage’ is defined as ‘being within about 2 metres of the walls of the building being protected’.
4. Session 3 – Funding, Procurement and Reporting

Slide 1

Property grants scheme – funding, procurement & reporting

Oliver Grant – policy advisor
August 2009

Slide 2

**Funding – how much?**

- Admin <700 GBP per property
  - consultation events
  - tendering surveys
  - consultants
- Average 5000 GBP per property including survey
- Survey ca. 500 GBP per property
- Protection measures average ≤4500 GBP and maximum 7000 GBP per property
  - primarily protection
  - must meet specification

The cap of £700 per property for admin can also cover identifiable costs of engagement such as meetings, newsletters, NFF facilitation fees and audit fees. Where a consultant has been employed to manage all, or part, of the scheme, this cost is also eligible. In-house staff time is only eligible provided that their previous duties have been back-filled.
The eligible survey cost can be over £500 per property, but any amount above this level will be taken from the average funds available for the implementation of measures. The individual property maximum for measures of £7000 excludes the survey cost. There is no lower limit for a grant for measures. As a minimum, all properties deemed to have participated in the scheme will have had a survey carried out, but it may be that not all will wish to take up measures.

There is no scope within the scheme to cover over-spend. Additional funding will need to be found from other sources. In some cases it may be appropriate to consider a local-levy or even to ask property owners to contribute themselves, as happened in some of the pilot schemes.

Where the survey has been carried out by Local Authority staff, and their fees are a separate and direct cost to the scheme, this will be an eligible expense, providing the claim complies with the audit and grant memorandum.

Q: Where, for example, 20 properties are surveyed but only 17 decide to take up measures, is the average grant per property based on 20 properties or 17?
A: The administration allocation of £700 per property is based on 20 properties. The survey costs are spread over 20 properties. The average grant for measures (£4,500 per property) is based on 17 properties. However, if the average survey cost over the 20 properties is £600, for example, then the average grant available for the measures for the 17 properties becomes:

\[ £5,000 - £600 = £4,400 \]

Slide 3

**Funding – how?**

- Contributions
  - increase benefits
  - improve ownership
- Claim funds from EA
  - grant memoranda online
  - maximum two claims
  - survey & admin and protection measures & admin
- Surplus funds
  - 10% on additional properties

Seeking contributions from property owners/residents to ‘top-up’ the grant available may enable more properties suffering significant flood-risk to be included in the scheme. Funding in this way may also encourage owners/residents to take greater care of the installed product(s), (as the issue of ownership is clearer) and engage more fully with the community and any flood response plan.
To offer flexibility, each scheme’s grant can be claimed in up to two tranches. This can be useful for making timely payment for the surveys, whilst the measures themselves are being installed, and admin costs assessed.

Up to 10% of the original grant sum can be used to benefit additional households in the community if allocations are not fully used on the target number of houses. Further flexibility may be allowed on a case by case basis, but this will be restricted to high priority properties for which an application was made in Round 1. Such ‘special case’ applications must recognise that a survey is required at all properties and that the bulk of funding from whatever source must be used to implement flood protection measures. The Environment Agency must be involved in all decisions on flexibility. Surplus funds after use of any flexibility must be given up for redistribution to high priority properties.

Q: Where the survey has been carried out by in-house personnel, can different internal staff sign off the measures installation?
A: Yes, subject to confirmation by the Environment Agency. An underlying principle is that they are competent to do so and will carry out the check in a professional manner.

Slide 4

**Procurement – services & measures**

- Your procurement rules
  - competitive tender
  - audit trail
- Your programme
  - consultation – survey – measures
  - Autumn open applications Round 2
  - September 2010 target Round 1 complete
  - March 20 11 must be complete / money claimed

The surveys and measures should be procured according to the Local Authority rules, which could include using an existing preferred supplier as well as a competitive tender process. Whichever is used, an audit trail will be required, and if the scheme cost is over £100k the audit will have to be carried out by the Audit Commission. Below this amount the normal Local Authority audit provider can be used.
One important consideration is that the minimum measures (as identified in the survey) must be installed, even if the cumulative cost is higher than the grant available.

All grant claims from both Rounds must be made by the end of March 2011.

Your programme should include a long-term plan for ongoing engagement with the community and monitoring of performance during floods. It should include monitoring of maintenance of measures and periodic practice exercises (dry runs).

Round 1 schemes should aim to complete by September 2010. This is for two reasons: any later will be into the next flood season, which would not be considered acceptable by beneficiaries; we wish Round 2 to benefit from the work in Round 1, so work on Round 1 must be well advanced by the time Round 2 starts their work in the spring of 2010.

Slide 5

**Reporting – (final) claim**

- Auditors report
  - internal certification <100k GBP
  - survey report
  - Defra template
  - surveyor signoff
- Project report…
- Post flood
  - local EA
  - performance

The Environment Agency Grant Memorandum requires an audit.
Reporting – what?

- Project report
  - surveyor details & costs
  - procurement process
  - community plan
  - take-up
  - contributions
  - properties benefitting

The Local Authority is required to produce a project report and the survey report (based on a Defra-supplied template) that includes surveyor sign-off at the end of the project. In the future, the Local Authority will provide flood incident feedback. All information gathered from Round 1 will be utilised to inform Round 2.

It is intended to carry out a thorough review of the grant scheme in 2011, to assess any future for it. In addition to the elements listed above, Defra needs information on: the criteria used for allocating funds between properties; any comments or suggestions deemed useful for the future of the scheme.
5. Session 4 – General Discussion

Q: Do we need to resubmit schemes for Round 2 and will there be any feedback from Round 1 to assist the Round 2 application process?
A: All unsuccessful applicants from Round 1 will be given constructive feedback, and all eligible schemes that did not receive grants in Round 1 will be automatically taken forward to Round 2. The process for Round 2 will be very similar to that used in Round 1. If possible, we wish to capture a more comprehensive picture of ‘expressions of interest’ as well as immediate need to inform discussions about the future need for this type of grant. Phase 2 guidance should be available in September ‘09.

Q: Is there any PR activity around the scheme planned?
A: Not currently planned, but possibly in the future. Local Authorities should use their current schemes as exemplars of property-level flood protection.

Q: Is there any requirement for interim reporting?
A: We are considering holding a ‘Round 1 progress workshop’ around the time of the start-up of Round 2 so that Round 2 can benefit from the experiences of Round 1. We will also be seeking updated estimates of grant claims so that we can reallocate any surplus funding to Round 2 before it is too late to spend it. There is a financial reporting element for the Environment Agency claim process, which will be similar to flood defence grants. Details will be provided by the local Environment Agency office.

Q: What will you use future expressions of interest for?
A: The high level of oversubscription for the scheme can be viewed as a useful lobbying tool for more money in the future. We will use the expressions of interest to augment other sources of information to develop a clearer picture of demand for property-level protection, so that any case to extend the scheme can be supported by firm evidence.

Q: Who decides the allocations?
A: Defra decides which applications are successful based on the recommendations of the Environment Agency.

Q: The scheme that was allocated was not our preferred option. We do not know why the Environment Agency recommended the scheme they did. Also, we feel that we can provide benefit to a greater number of properties including capturing our preferred option, given the flexibility to do so. May we target a greater number of properties outside the 10%?
A: We will consider applications for greater flexibility on a case by case basis.

Q: What about storage of the measures?
A: If storage for the measures has to be provided as part of the scheme, then this will be eligible for grant out of the existing allocations. No additional allocation will be provided for storage.
Q: Does the funding cover protecting a community building, for example a building used as an emergency rest centre?
A: The funding is targeted at residential properties that are normally occupied. See also the guidance related to attached properties, which may not fit the ‘normally occupied residential’ category but nevertheless need to be protected to maintain the protection to the qualifying property.

Q: Is there a list of recommended surveyors and installers?
A: No. The NFF maintains their ‘Blue Pages’ which lists those companies that have applied for listing, but NFF does not warrant their quality or competence. The Local Authority must satisfy themselves as to the competence of their contractors.

Q: May Local Authorities work together to increase economies of scale.
A: Yes, but the grant claims will be by each Local Authority separately and with appropriate audit certificates.

Q: Is there specific guidance available on products to be used on listed/historic buildings, in conservation areas, National Parks, etc.?
A: No. Solutions must be agreed locally.

Q: Are maintenance contracts covered by the funding?
A: Not beyond normal guarantee periods.

Q: What flood protection standard are we expected to achieve?
A: The depth of water that can be accommodated structurally by the building.

Comment:

It may be beneficial to engage with environmental health officials who might have useful expertise, perhaps considering the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health when developing accreditation for surveyors. Flooding of properties could become a risk (physical or psychological) that invokes H&S legislation in the 2004 Housing Act.

Definitions:

- The absence of a community scheme in the foreseeable future is defined as ‘not in the Environment Agency Medium Term Plan’, or 10 years.
- Curtailage – the definition in the guidance notes is: ‘small area around a property’ but this is further refined to be ‘being within about 2 metres of the walls of the building being protected’.