

DEFRA Government Grants to Local Authorities for Household Level Flood Risk Mitigation

Introduction

The Government's *Making Space for Water* strategy and Sir Michael Pitt's review of the floods in the summer of 2007 recognised the need to use a portfolio of measures to manage flood risk and to include in this portfolio the use of property-level mitigation measures.

Local authorities have been offered the opportunity to vary many aspects of the scheme to fit it with local circumstances and with the characteristics of particular communities.

The scheme aims to create examples of the collective application of property-level measures in order that these might demonstrate the strengths of this way of managing flood risk. It also aims to encourage the supply of expert, independent flood risk mitigation surveys and to stimulate the market for flood protection and resilience products. It should also prove a useful way of engaging with local at-risk communities and helping them understand their risk and the ways to mitigate it.

Overview of the aims of the scheme

The objective of the scheme is to promote the use of household-level flood protection and resilience measures in cases where flooding occurs frequently and other flood management solutions are not economically, environmentally or technically viable. The scheme aims to protect groups of homes so that they demonstrate the benefits of protection and to encourage other communities and individuals also to protect their homes. It also aims to help local communities engage with and understand their flood risk.

With initial funding of £5 million over two years, the scheme seeks to stimulate the supply of independent, professional and property-specific flood risk mitigation surveys and to encourage the development of new and innovative protection and resilience measures.

Timetable and Funding

Local authorities have been invited to apply for funding in two rounds. £2m in funding was available for the first round, with applications due by 17 March 2009. A further £3m was made available for applications received by a second deadline in the autumn of 2009.

Eligibility and selection

Local authorities can apply for funding for any area that they believe would benefit from flood protection and that meet the eligibility criteria.

The following criteria should be satisfied for all areas that are to be included in the scheme:

A. Property types

- The main use of the properties in question must be residential
- except in the case of properties whose protection would be integral to the successful protection of attached residential properties.

B. Type and frequency of flooding

1. Fluvial and coastal flooding

- Floodwater must have entered buildings above ground floor level at least once since the beginning of 1998; and
- The area in which the properties are located must have an annual chance of flooding of at least 1 in 20 (i.e. 5%).

2. Sewer flooding

- Sewer flooding is the responsibility of the water companies. It is therefore not the aim of this scheme to protect against this form of flooding.

3. Surface water flooding and groundwater flooding

- Floodwater must have entered buildings above ground floor level at least once since the beginning of 1998; and
- Buildings must have been flooded at least twice since the start of 1988.

C. Prospect of a Community Scheme

There must be little or no prospect of the area concerned benefiting from a community scheme within the foreseeable future. When selecting areas for participation in the grant scheme, preference will be given to those locations that cannot be defended with a community scheme rather than those that anticipate having a viable scheme funded in the future.

The principle criterion listed above is that areas should have been flooded frequently, for the idea of household flood protection tends to be received more enthusiastically in communities with experience of regular flooding.

Eligibility and selection

Local authorities can apply for funding for any area that they believe would benefit from flood protection and that meets the eligibility criteria described below. Given that the primary criterion is that areas will have been flooded one or more times in recent years, it is probable that such areas will already be known to local authorities.

Wiltshire Applications

Stage One Allocations

The Environment Secretary announced the results of the 'pathfinder' round for the scheme with 166 applications asking for £22 million. Defra allocated £2.5 million to a total of 562 homes countrywide.

Kennet District Council had applied for grants to cover schemes in Easterton and Urchfont. Both applications were unsuccessful.

Stage Two Allocations

Information is being compiled on a flooding database and some information was used to formulate the bids made in the 2nd tranche of applications.

Applications for funding from round two were submitted by Wiltshire Council in December 2009 as set out in the table below:

COMMUNITY	PROPERTIES AFFECTED	AMOUNT REQUESTED	FLOODING RECORD
Dauntsey	46 Residential	£345,000	Twice in 10 years
Easterton	10 Residential + 1	£82,500	Three times in 12 years
Ham	6 Residential	£45,000	Twice in 6 years
Purton	41 Residential	£307,500	Last flooded 2007
Shalbourne	22 Residential	£165,000	Twice in 5 years
Warminster	2 Residential	£15,000	Twice in 8 years
Crudwell	22 residential	£157,500	Four times in 6 years
Cricklade	9 residential	£67,500	Twice in 07 and 08

We are awaiting notification of the success of any of these bids.