



Review of the Pilot Flood Protection Grant Scheme in a recently flooded Area

Project Summary: FD2651

Background to the Project

For individual properties or small groups of properties in areas that flood frequently, property-level protection and resilience can be an appropriate and cost-effective means of reducing damage and disruption. *Protection* prevents or slows water ingress, winning time for goods and possessions to be moved to safety and reducing damage to the fabric of buildings. Examples include barriers across gates and doors and measures to increase the water-resistance of walls and floors. The use of *resilience* measures assumes that water will gain ingress and reduces the vulnerability of fittings, fixtures and possessions. Examples include the use of water-resistant wall plaster, the raising of wall sockets and consumer units and the substitution of fitted carpets with ceramic tiles.

Having made a commitment in its Making Space for Water programme to investigate the potential benefits of property-level adaptation measures, in 2007 Defra made £500,000 available for a pilot scheme that explored ways of delivering grants and assessed the likely take-up by property owners. The pilot involved six locations and provided grants for 199 properties, of which 89% were residential and the remainder commercial. Schemes were delivered by local authorities in partnership with local branches of the Environment Agency, with funding of £5,000 being provided by Defra for each property that participated in the scheme.

In November 2009, less than two years after residents and businesses in the town had been provided with grant-funded property-level flood protection measures, the River Eden overtopped its banks and flooded one of the pilot areas – a street in Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria. This research was commissioned to discover what difference the government-funded measures had made to the people of the town, what factors had affected the implementation and effectiveness of the grant scheme and how the experience of the flood had changed attitudes towards this approach to flood risk management.

Results of the Project

The technical report's key findings are detailed in the Executive Summary (see the Technical Report or Research Project Final Report [SID5]) and focused on:

- Context and implementation of the pilot including successful deployment of measures.
- An assessment of the benefits of the pilot both practical and social.
- The advantages of communal action.
- What determines the success of a scheme; acceptance of flood risk and responsibility; existence of suitable social structures and leaders; commitment, skill, adaptability and resource of flood risk agencies and their staff.
- Risks to success and sustainability including the high cost of administration and engagement and the need for maintenance of measures and preparedness.

How are the outputs from the project being used?

The main output from this project, a technical research report, will be used for two main purposes:

- 1/ to inform future government policy on the promotion of property-level flood protection
- 2/ to provide insights into the implementation of flood protection and resilience grant schemes for any national, regional or local body that is considering introducing such a scheme in the future.

Oral presentations of the findings will also be made to Defra and Environment Agency staff and will be offered to officers from the Association of British Insurers and others who are looking at the relationship between insurance and property-level flood risk reduction.

This summary relates to information from project **FD2651**, reported in detail in the following output(s):

Report: FD2651 (Defra Strategy and Policy Development Theme)

Title: Review of Pilot Flood Protection Grant Scheme in a recently flooded area – Technical Report

Published: November 2010

Internal Status: Released to all regions

External Status: Publicly available

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Research Contractor: n/a

This project was commissioned by Defra as part of the joint Environment Agency/Defra Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Research and Development Programme.

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