

# Proposal for Natural Flood Management schemes within Maidstone Borough Council Catchments

28<sup>th</sup> June 2024

The South East Rivers Trust (SERT) are seeking funding to undertake feasibility studies to develop Natural Flood Management (NFM) solutions throughout the catchment. Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) are looking to fund the development of NFM schemes through scoping, feasibility studies and design of schemes within their area, as this has been recognised as a bottleneck for NFM implementation. MBC have secured £100k funding for this development work over the next few years, which will combined with 1:1 match funding to maximise the development and delivery of potential opportunities. The Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board (IDB) have already identified some potential NFM intervention measures within the Sherway Catchment, and are able fund the capital costs of installing some of these intervention measures.

This document sets out how SERT is proposing to combine funding from MBC and other funding to support the identification and delivery of NFM measures, and achieve a desired ~1:1 ratio of MBC funding to match funding. Scoping and development work using MBC development funding may need to be ‘front loaded’ in order to have schemes ‘shovel ready’ for match funding application, match funding will be used for subsequent delivery. NFM match funding for ‘shovel ready’ developed schemes is available from regular Environment Agency NFM funding schemes, Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCC), Kent County Council (KCC), Landfill Tax grants, charities etc. and SERT have been successful in gaining funding from these sources previously and aim to continue securing such funding to bring benefits to our rivers in line with our charitable objectives.

SERT have secured £72k from the IDB and wish to use this to release £57k of the £100k from MBC for development work up to March ‘25. When further match funding has been secured we aim to use this to secure the remaining £43k MBC development funding, see *Table 1*.

*Table 1. An overview of the proposed structure and use of MBC and match funding:*

	<b>MBC Funding sought</b>	<b>IDB Funding secured (confirmed 26<sup>th</sup> June '24)</b>	<b>Match Funding to be sought</b>
<b>September '24 – December '24</b>	<b>Included in costing:</b> Scoping & Feasibility Sherway, shortlist of options		
<b>December '24 – March '25</b>	<b>Included in costing:</b> Design Sherway NFM measures (IDB shortlist focus) Scoping of catchment 2	<b>Not included as cost:</b> (In Kind) Leaky Woody Dam low-risk delivery in Sherway	
<b>March '25 – September '27</b>	<b>Not included in costing – TBC with MBC:</b> Shortlist of options catchment 2 Scoping & shortlist of options catchment 3	<b>Included in costing:</b> Capital delivery of Sherway NFM measures (IDB shortlist) over 3 years	
<b>Total funding sought:</b>	<b>£57,053</b> (September '24 – March '25)	<b>£72,000</b> (December '25 – September '27)	
<b>Further funding to be sought:</b>	<b>£42,947 (April '25 – September '27)</b>	<b>£28,000+ (April '25 – September '27)</b>	

We propose to initially undertake scoping work within the Sherway catchment within year 1, followed by the preparation of a shortlist of options complimentary to those already identified by the IDB, and to further progress the options already identified by the IDB. This will allow for a meaningful understanding of the catchment and the selection of the most suitable and beneficial intervention measures across the catchment, that can provide a benefit to downstream communities in the MBC area. We will further carry out scoping walkovers in a second catchment agreed with MBC to further progress the identification of opportunities for NFM across the wider MBC area.

#### **Focus of funding sought from Maidstone Borough Council**

We are primarily seeking to use NFM funding from MBC to undertake scoping, feasibility and optioneering, see *Table. 2*. In order to attract match funding we will also use a proportion of this money to design and prepare a scheme for delivery.

For the scoping, feasibility and optioneering part of this process we will engage with local landowners, expanding from a number of engaged landowners already known to SERT within the catchment. By undertaking walkovers of the stream and headwaters, we will prepare a long list of options complementary to those already identified by the IDB in lower reaches of the Sherway, including suitable intervention measures, feasibility, indicative costs and consents required. We will further assess the sites which the IDB have already identified as part of this process. We will discuss options with the landowners, seeking initial agreement about which options could be taken forward.

As part of the feasibility stage, we intend to estimate the benefits of the Nature Based Solutions (NbS) intervention measures being put forward. A report will be prepared for relevant holdings detailing shortlisted options, potential funding routes, impact, feasibility, consents. We have assumed approximately 10 holdings during this phase.

We are also proposing to use part of the funding to look at other catchments within the MBC area, to identify and build relationships with landowners to inform future feasibility and NFM solutions.

#### **Focus of funding secured from Upper Medway IDB**

We have secured funding from the IDB for the capital costs associated with creating washland / scrapes within the Sherway Catchment to complement the funding from MBC to further support NFM in the Sherway. The IDB have previously identified the option of delivering three washland / scrapes within fields to the north of Bedlam Lane and between the River Sherway to the north and a tributary which joins into the Sherway (NGR TQ 87300 44900). These washland / scrapes are identified by the IDB with IDs of 110803 and 110804 on Reaches 3 and 4. If these scrapes are identified as not being deliverable, we will identify a suitable alternative and agree this with the IDB.

We propose to use the match funding from the IDB to deliver the maximum area of washland / scrape features within this area as this funding will allow. It is anticipated that this will be carried out from year 2. We will also look to work with the IDB staff to deliver low risk leaky woody dam and similar measures from Year 1 to provide training and knowledge share opportunities, and create momentum for delivery of further measures in the catchment. As communicated with the IDB, we anticipate this to be an option of in-kind delivery through IDB staff.

## Funding Summary

In line with our costings spreadsheet we are looking for the following funding:

£57,053 from MBC to undertake development and landowner engagement work. This will be matched by the IDB over a three year period. The IDB funding will be used for the capital works, i.e. the creation of the washland / scrapes on the Sherway.

We will seek additional capital funding to install further intervention measures identified during the feasibility study undertaken through the MBC funding which are not covered by the IDB, including from the Environment Agency, KCC, and similar funders as above.

## Outcomes

Overall we are seeking to implement intervention measures within the Sherway Catchment as quickly as possible through the match funding from the IDB. We intend to use the MBC funding to undertake feasibility studies and to prepare for the installation of NFM intervention measures in year 2 for the IDB capital funding.

We are looking to identify and design intervention measures across not only the Sherway Catchment but also within other catchments across the MBC area.

The focus of the studies will be on NFM measures, but other drivers will be considered such as river and ecological conditions.

*Table 2. Year 1 Development work with MBC funding.*

Task	High level description	Outputs	Approx. timeframe
Desk based catchment assessment	Review of publicly available datasets. Undertake reach delineation exercise of Sherway catchment. Liaise with stakeholders Identify other potential NFM priority catchments for year 2 assessment		September - October
Landowner engagement	Engage with landowners already known to SERT and build up a relationship with neighbouring landowners with interest. Identify key landowners along the reaches of the Sherway Catchment to contact, request access and provide information on benefits.		October - December
NbS longlist of options	Walkover of stream and headwaters Determine intervention measures and identify high level feasibility etc.	Reach report including long list of options and high level information on feasibility. To be shared with stakeholders.	December - January
Estimate benefits and NbS and seek to identify additional funding options.	Create a report detailing shortlisted options for all land holdings, potential funding routes, impact, costs, consents & surveys required and feasibility etc.	PDF of shortlist holding detailing design information and benefits.  Shared online map setting out potential options and	February - March

	Work with stakeholders to determine additional sources of funding, identify intervention options which could be supported by stewardship grants or similar. Estimate indicative Replenish volumes and BNG units for high priority options on three sites.	cost/benefits associated for all reaches within Sherway catchment.  Highlight potential tree planting, BNG and land stewardship options	
Scoping of catchment 2	Agree catchment 2 focus with MBC and stakeholders	GIS based report of longlist of options	February - March
<b>Scoping and feasibility study total cost</b>			<b>£42,653</b>
Design and consent work for washland / scrapes as agreed with the IDB.	So long as the washland / scrape options are shown to be feasible we intend to seek relevant agreements and permissions as well as getting the design to a standard where it can be delivered.	Design prepared suitable for construction and agreed with landowner. Applied for any required planning permission /permits.	2 months + permitting time
<b>Design and consent for NFM shortlist agreed with IDB</b>			<b>£14,400</b>
Delivery / (capital works) costs	Delivery works to deliver designed washland / scrapes identified with the IDB.	Delivery of ~950 m <sup>3</sup> earthworks for washland/scrapes	Year 2 – year 4
<b>Delivery capital works</b>			<b>£72,000</b>
<b>Design, consent and capital delivery costs for IDB washland / scrape delivery total</b>			<b>£86,400</b>

## Notes

1. Earthworks have assumed that all material can stay and reused on site. We have assumed total cost of £31.45 / m<sup>3</sup> to deliver. This price assumes 20% will be costs associated with non-capital work (design phase), therefore capital costs are £25.16 /m<sup>3</sup>.
2. Based upon receiving a capital grant by the IDB for £24k (from a £30k request) per year (over three years), this funding would allow for washland scrapes to with an overall volume of 950 m<sup>3</sup> per year.