



Natural Flood Management Fund Handbook

2021 scheme



Local Catchment Advisor Little Don Catchment



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Chloe Palmer is an independent farm environment adviser with over 20 years' experience of providing advice to farmers across South Yorkshire and the Peak District. Chloe has extensive experience of preparing and managing agri-environment schemes and writes regularly for the Farmers Guardian. She is also coordinates the Bradfield Farmers group covering the area surrounding Bradfield, Broomhead, Strines, Loxley and Stannington.

In May 2021 Chloe will be handing the role of local Catchment Advisor on to the Don Catchment Rivers Trust. After May 2021 please contact Ed Shaw at the Trust.

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Phone Number: 07990 027703

Local Catchment Advisor Irwell and Etherow Catchments



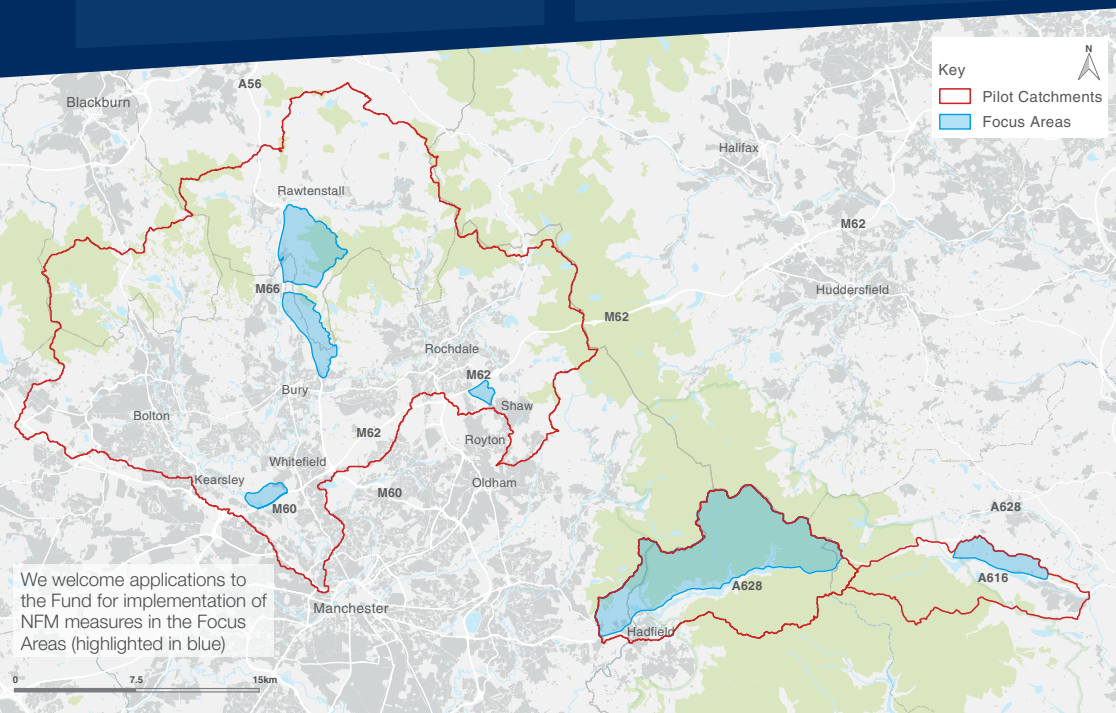
Name: Mike Duddy

Email address: info@merseyrivers.org

Phone Number: 07985 733969

Alternative contact – John Sanders:
07821 117396

Mike is a Natural Flood Management (NFM) specialist with extensive knowledge of the Irwell and Etherow rivers and their catchments. He has delivered a range of Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes across many river catchments within Greater Manchester. Mike will be supported by the wider Mersey Rivers Trust team to provide a comprehensive advice service. The Mersey Rivers Trust is the local rivers trust covering all the rivers that form the Mersey Basin, including the Etherow and Irwell.



Welcome

Welcome to the Natural Flood Management (NFM) Fund.

This scheme has been set up by Highways England to support farmers and landowners in the implementation of measures that work with natural processes to reduce flood risk to A Roads and Motorways (the strategic road network).

This handbook sets out how to use the Fund to implement NFM measures on your land.

The Fund is hosted on behalf of Highways England by your local Rivers Trust. Your first point of contact is a Rivers Trust local Catchment Advisor who is available to support you with all aspects of the Fund, from application to implementation and maintenance of measures. An introduction to the advisor for your catchment can be found on page two.

The Fund is being financed by Highways England, as part of £936M of designated funding made available over the next five years to deliver lasting benefits to the environment and communities. It is a pilot to explore how Highways England can work with farmers and landowners to reduce flood risk on sections of A Roads and Motorways known to be particularly vulnerable to flooding.

What is Natural Flood Management (NFM)?

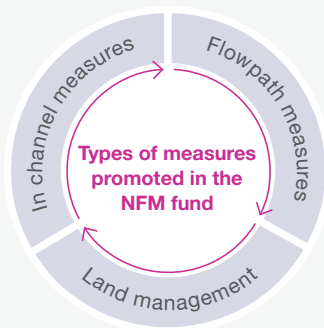
NFM measures emulate or enhance natural processes to store water in, or reduce flow through, the landscape. Typical measures include managing land to encourage infiltration of rainfall into the ground and slowing or storing runoff, either as it flows across the ground or in watercourses.

The measures specifically being promoted by the Fund are set out in the NFM Measures Booklet. The booklet can be found on the [NFM Fund website](#).

The benefits of NFM

Reducing flood risk to A Roads and Motorways makes driving safer and can save lives. It also improves connectivity between communities during times of flood. However, there are other reasons for implementing NFM on your land, including:

- reduced flood risk to land and properties
- reduced soil erosion and nutrient loss to rivers
- improved soil fertility
- increased storage of carbon
- improved animal welfare
- better resilience to drought with more moisture retained in soils and aquifers
- improved river water quality
- improved habitat for wildlife



Geographical coverage of the Fund

We welcome applications to the Fund for implementation of NFM measures in all areas highlighted blue on the map on page 2.

Using the Fund

We have tried to make using the Fund straightforward. If you need assistance at any stage, your local Catchment Advisor can help.

Initial consultations

Your local Catchment Advisor would welcome the opportunity to meet with you in person to explore how and where measures could be implemented on your land. During periods of restrictions, we will follow government guidance on COVID-19 during visits - and ask that you do the same. There is no obligation to proceed with an application following this initial visit or visits.

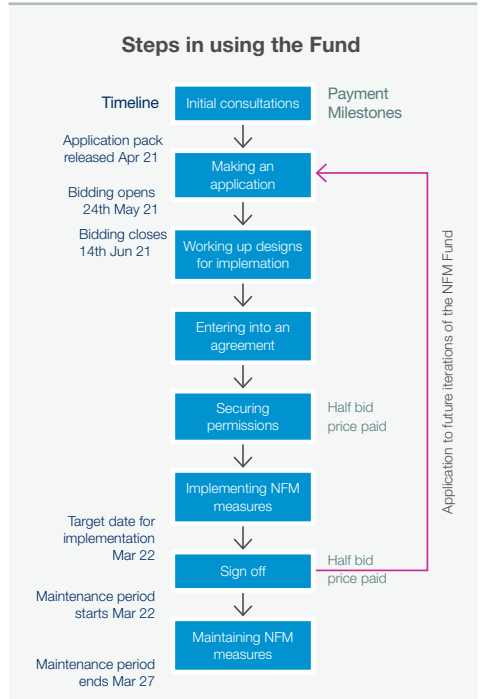
If you need further support developing ideas for implementing NFM on your land, again, your local Catchment Advisor can help.

Making an application

Should you decide to make an application to the NFM Fund, we prefer that you do this using the application page on the [NFM Fund website](#). You can bid for as many or as few measures as you like. You can bid as an individual or in consortium with neighbouring landowners or farmers.

Bids are made for individual measures, although you can 'bundle' measures that are designed to operate as a group. The application concept is very simple: you bid a price per cubic metre of water stored by each measure. The application page provides guide prices. But, at the end of the day, the price you bid for each measure is wholly up to you. Your bid will need to be high enough to cover your costs, but low enough to be competitive with the bids of others participating in the application process. The application page shows how your bid compares with others.

Comprehensive guidance on how to bid is set out in the "Step by Step Guide" found on the [NFM Fund website](#). In particular this includes advice on how to determine the volume of water stored by each measure type.



Once you have decided on your measures, the application process itself is very straightforward. A bid for an individual measure should take no more than 5 minutes to complete.

If you are not comfortable bidding through the application page on the NFM Fund website, you can make a bid using a paper form and "Step by Step Guide" that can be requested via the helpline. However, you will be bidding blind to applications made by other web participants, so may be less successful in securing funding.

Landowner innovation

You are not restricted to just bidding to implement the measures listed in the NFM Measures Booklet. We welcome costed proposals for alternative NFM measures. You can submit these alternative innovations as part of your bid.

All applications will be assessed by a review board comprising specialists in agriculture, flood risk, natural flood management and nature-based engineering. The focus of the assessment will be value for money (i.e. cost to Highways England per cubic metre of water stored). However, additional benefits such as habitat improvement or promotion of NFM in the catchment as well as feasibility of monitoring will also be considered. Further detail on the assessment criteria can be found on the **NFM Fund website**. The decision of the review board will be final.

Entering into an agreement

To participate in the NFM Fund you must enter into a signed agreement that commits you to adhering to the rules of the Scheme. The agreement will be with your local Rivers Trust who are acting on behalf of Highways England.

The terms and conditions governing this agreement can be found on the **NFM Fund website**. These detail what Highways England expect from landowners and farmers participating in the Scheme. They also set out what you can expect from Highways England in return.

Working up designs for implementation

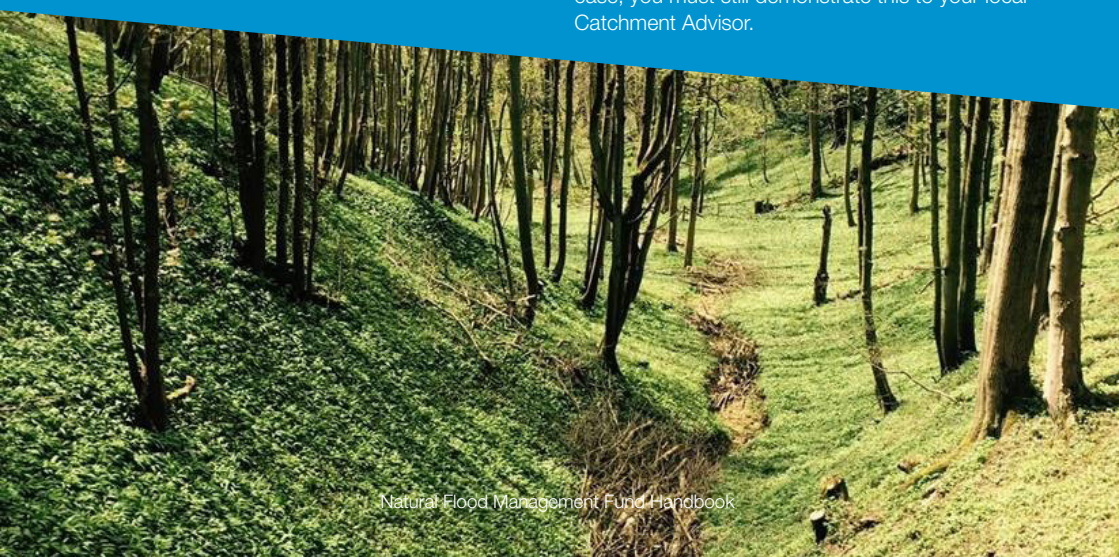
Before implementing measures on your land, you will need to develop your ideas further. Designs will be needed to set out how measures will be implemented on the ground. They will also be required to support applications to regulators for permission to construct. Your local Catchment Advisor can advise on development of measures but will not be able to help you with the details of design. Instead they can recommend specialists who can help you in the design of NFM measures, particularly if proposed measures are complex. You should include both your costs and the cost of using specialists to prepare designs and obtain necessary permissions in your bid price, under the heading of 'planning' for implementation.

Securing permissions

You must secure all permissions required by regulators to implement measures on your land. These could include planning permission and consents for working within or near water features. Further advice on permissions is in the NFM Measures Booklet that can be found on the **NFM Fund website**. Note that sometimes the requirements of regulators can be onerous, so you should allow adequate funds in your bid price to diligently secure all necessary permissions.

Again, your local Catchment Advisor is available if you need support in securing permissions.

It may be that the measures you propose for your land are exempt from all permissions. If this is the case, you must still demonstrate this to your local Catchment Advisor.



Implementing NFM measures

The time window for implementing NFM measures starts in July 2021. We propose a target completion date of March 2022, so that you can fit implementation of measures around other commitments on your land.

Sign off

Your local Catchment Advisor will need to sign off the measures on your land, once they have been completed. We will ask most participants simply to provide photographs and a map of the implemented measures. However, because this is a pilot, we will visit some participants to see the measures and learn more about the successes and challenges of participating in the NFM Fund.

Maintaining NFM Measures

You will be responsible for maintaining measures implemented on your land so that they operate effectively during flood events for at least 5 years. You should account for the cost of maintaining measures for 5 years when setting your bid price.

Monitoring the effectiveness of measures

We will monitor how effective NFM measures are at reducing flood risk to roads at some sites. If your site is selected for monitoring, we ask that you allow reasonable access for our staff to your land where measures have been implemented so that we can set up and maintain simple small-scale monitoring for a period of up to 5 years. We will always seek permission before entering your land.

Because this is a pilot, payment for implementation of measures is in no way linked to how they perform. Pilots are about understanding measures that don't work as much as those that do.

If the pilot is successful, there could be future rounds of bidding for NFM measures. How well you implement and maintain measures in this 2021 scheme may influence your success in future rounds of bidding. Feedback on the performance of the measures will be used to update future guidance.



Payment

You will be paid your bid price for implementing and maintaining NFM measures on your land in two instalments.

Half of your bid price will be paid when you demonstrate that all permissions required to implement measures have been secured with regulators. Alternatively, if no permissions are required, you will need to demonstrate this to your local Catchment Advisor. Payment will be made within 28 days. You may then construct your measures.

The other half of your bid price will be paid within 28 days of your local Catchment Advisor signing-off the measures as completed.

Please note that this payment includes monies paid up-front to maintain measures for 5 years after sign-off. We expect you to honour this maintenance commitment and may visit to confirm maintenance is being carried out.



Your responsibilities

You must secure all permissions required by regulators to implement measures on your land. NFM measures along a watercourse must be implemented in accordance with riparian responsibilities¹. So, you will be responsible for ensuring measures do not obstruct navigation, reduce flows under normal flow conditions or cause flooding of property or land owned by others. You must also leave in place trees, shrubs or other features that restrict flows because these features may reduce flood risk or enhance the amount of water available to people and land downstream.

Care should be taken to ensure materials used to build NFM measures (e.g. timber and earth) are not swept downstream during floods. Material lost from measures can block structures such as bridges and sluices, exacerbating flood risk and putting people and property at risk. Responsibility for flood damage caused by material lost from NFM measures may lie with those who designed and constructed the measure if it can be demonstrated that good practice was not followed.

We appreciate it can be difficult to strike a balance between these conflicting responsibilities. Support can be provided by your local Catchment Advisor.

The primary responsibility of Highways England and the Catchment Advisor is to fund your works in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the contract. As a landowner, responsibility for the costs and consequences of constructing and maintaining the measures will ultimately rest with you.

¹<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>

Where to apply and how to find out more about the NFM Fund

NFM Fund Website

You can find everything you need to make an application to the NFM Fund on our website



<https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/learn/he-nfm-fund>

In particular, the website hosts links to the following key items:

- NFM Handbook providing a summary of the entire Fund process
- NFM Measures Booklet giving an overview of the measures that can be implemented using the Fund
- Design Specification Catalogue detailing how to design, implement and maintain measures
- Application Page to the Fund:
<https://highwaysengland.naturebid.org.uk>
- Step by step guide to making an application
- Terms and Conditions of the Fund

NFM Fund Helpline

If you need any assistance preparing or making an application to the NFM Fund please contact your local Catchment Advisor. Alternatively you can contact us on:



Telephone: (01332) 225901



Email: NFMadvice@atkinsglobal.com

NFM Fund
Handbook
(how to apply)

NFM Measures Booklet
(measures offered by Fund)

Design Specification Catalogue
(details on design, implementation and
maintenance of measures)