

2024-25

Department for Infrastructure



Rivers Directorate Business Plan 2024-25

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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the Rivers Business Plan for 2024 - 2025. This Plan, again sets out our vision, aims, objectives and business targets which we intend to deliver. Your professionalism and dedication was very much evident during the year that is past, particularly the response to the recent flooding event in October and November 2023 when the Department and our multi-agency partners responded to nearly 1,400 requests for assistance and over 22,000 sandbags were deployed. This response protected properties across a wide geographical area in counties Down and Armagh including Newry, Newcastle and Portadown.

As we enter into this year, we are now settling into the rhythm of the work associated with the return of the Assembly and Ministers. The thoughtful diligence you applied to this reestablished area of our work has ensured that this has been as smooth a transition as could be expected. The strategic planning in Rivers over this past 2 to 3 years has also left us well placed to, not only highlight our essential work, but also the ambitions we have to manage flood risk here to the required standards.

As you may know the current staffing structure of Rivers has been reviewed as part of the 6 Year Strategy implementation in order to provide a sustainable approach to the delivery of flood risk management activities at the required level. As part of this review Rivers Development has realigned some of its functions. A new Mapping and Modelling Unit has been created who will be responsible for further developing and providing map-based information to enable the assessment and communication of flood risk.

Across all business units we continue to strive to strengthen our capacity to undertake the wide range of flood risk management responsibilities we have. Over this past year, new staff from all disciplines have started to work in both Rivers Directorates and we plan to, budget and supply permitting, to further augment our delivery teams. A particular focus this year will be to expand our capacity and capability to invest in the infrastructure we manage and continue to develop our expertise to inform all of our work areas and, if funded, support the development of a Flood Forecasting Centre.

We have also progressed a number of significant capital schemes most notably Belfast Tidal Flood Alleviation Scheme where works have commenced within all five flood cells, with two deemed substantially complete. It is currently intended that the overall completion of this project will be in Autumn 2024. Work is also continuing in relation to the development of the Portadown Flood Alleviation Scheme which is currently at the detailed design stage with construction currently programmed to commence in Autumn 2025.

We are also in the process of continuing to develop a long term Rivers digital strategy and road map, to provide comprehensive detail on the strategic direction of digital transformation within Rivers to enhance our digital capabilities across all areas of our business.

In this time of change, assembly business and potential growth in Rivers our administrative teams continue to provide the support and governance needed to assist in the maintenance of our high standards of public service.

JONATHAN MCKEE
DIRECTOR OF RIVERS DEVELOPMENT

GARY QUINN
DIRECTOR OF RIVERS OPERATIONS

Office Locations



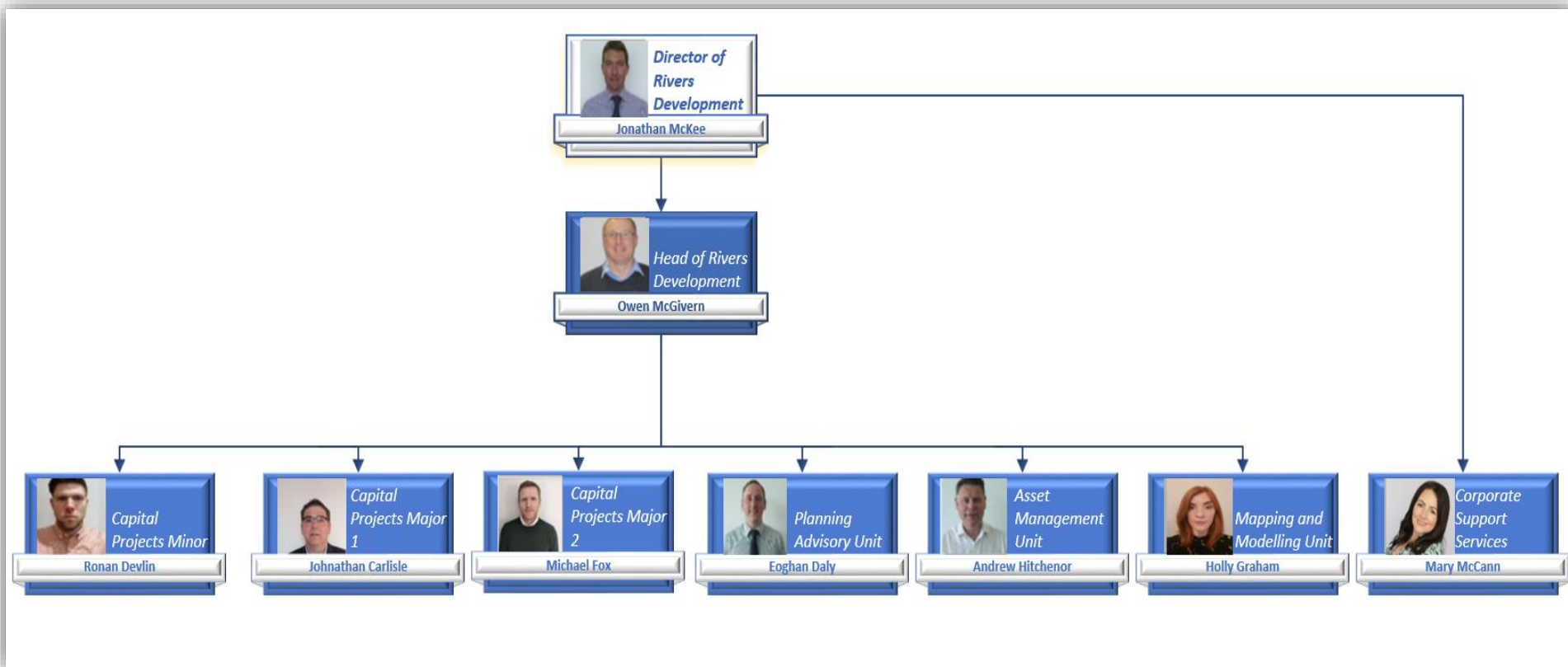
Rivers Headquarters is located at Loughry Campus in Cookstown. Rivers Operations is divided into two regions: Eastern and Western. The main regional offices are located in Lisburn and Omagh for the respective Regions. There are also area offices located in Coleraine, Fermanagh and Craigavon.



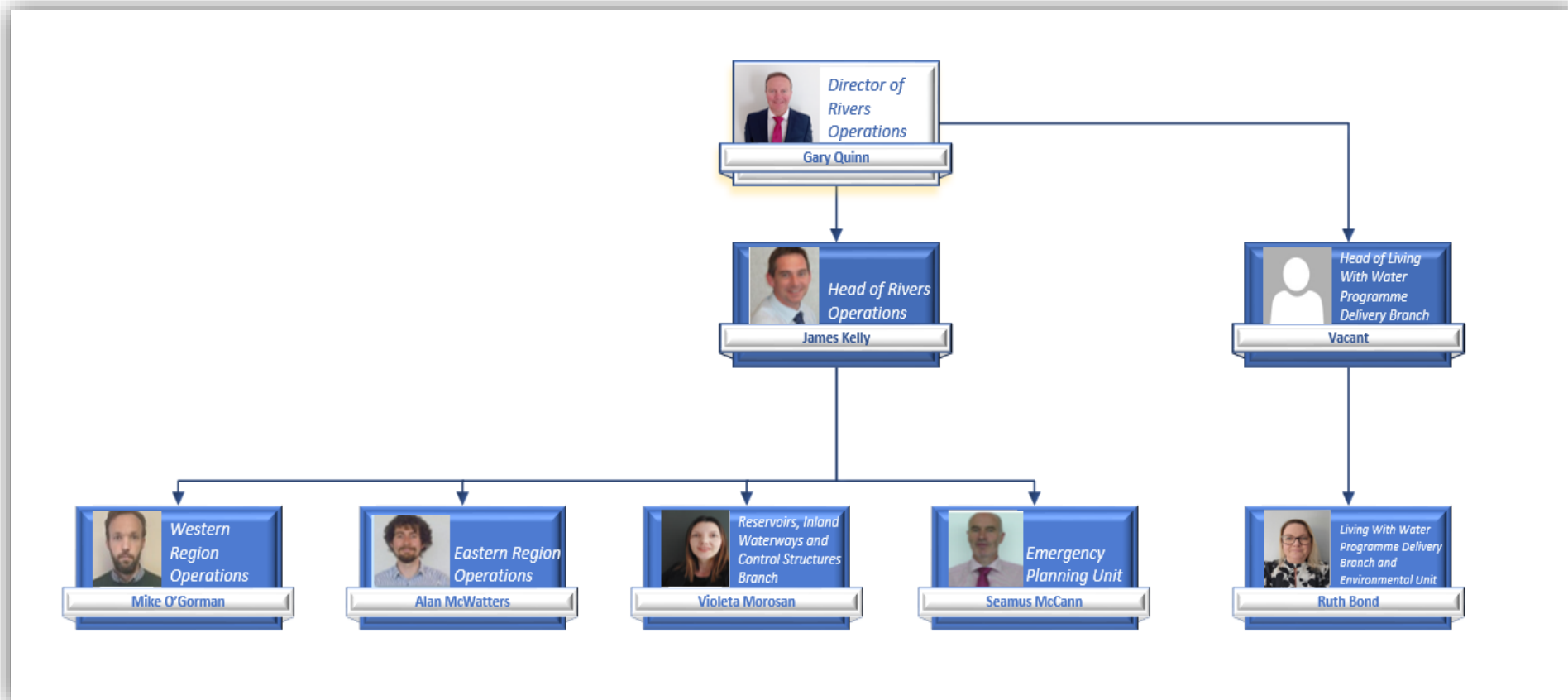
Rivers Headquarters, Loughry

Senior Staff Structure

Rivers Development



Rivers Operations





Newry Flood Alleviation Scheme (Phase 1)

Department for Infrastructure

‘The Department for Infrastructure every day connects people safely, supports opportunities and creates sustainable living places’.

The Department for Infrastructure (DfI) is one of nine Northern Ireland Departments. The main responsibilities of the Department are:

- regional strategic planning and development policy;
- transport strategy and sustainable transport policy;
- public transport policy and performance;
- road safety and vehicle regulation policy, including strategies to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads;
- driver and operator licensing and driver and vehicle testing;
- provision and maintenance of all public roads;
- certain policy and support work for air and sea ports;
- river and sea defence maintenance and the construction of flood alleviation schemes;
- provision of flood maps and risk information; and
- policy on water and sewerage services and management of the Department’s shareholder interest in Northern Ireland Water.

Strategic Framework

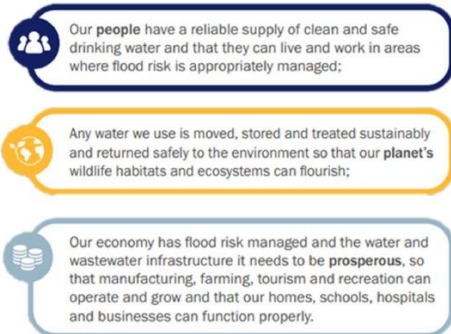
The Department has recently launched a Strategic Framework. It reinforces how the Department is responsible for the maintenance and development of critical infrastructure in Northern Ireland. Through its focus on water, transport and planning public services, the Department is seeking to manage and protect £32 bn of public assets that improve **people's** quality of life, reduce our impact on the **planet** by living sustainability and decarbonising key services, and building **prosperity** by driving inclusive productivity.

The Framework outlines the main aspects of the Department's work and the challenges it faces in delivering its essential public services. By focusing on water, transport and planning we are clear on what we need to do, why we need to do it and how we will prioritise the use of increasingly precious public money.

A key focus of this document is the work we do in Rivers and this is encapsulated under the 'water' theme. It reinforces the how that Infrastructure investment can help mitigate the effects of climate change and manage flood risk.

Water Responsibilities

- Northern Ireland Water
- Water Drainage Policy Division
- DfI Rivers
- Waterways Ireland



Programme for Government

The draft Programme for Government (PfG) 2024-27 'Our Plan: Doing What Matters Most' was launched for an eightweek public consultation on 9 September 2024. The PfG outlines the priorities for the Executive to make a real difference to the lives of people here. The PfG proposes nine high level immediate priorities. Four of these priorities relate to DfI including: Grow a Globally Competitive and Sustainable Economy; Provide More Social, Affordable and Sustainable Housing; Protecting Lough Neagh and the Environment; and Reform and Transformation of Public Services. The PfG will be finalised following the public consultation exercise and will help shape future programmes and business planning within departments for the remainder of the Assembly mandate.

Rivers Directorate

Vision

To manage flood risk, both now and into the future, to maintain and create sustainable living places and support economic development.

Aims

To support the vision Rivers aims:

- to reduce the risk to life and the damage to property from flooding from rivers and the sea; and
- to undertake our work in a sustainable manner.

Objectives

In support of these aims Rivers' objectives are to:

- implement and inform sustainable flood risk management policies to meet society's social, environmental, and economic needs, whilst taking account of climate change;
- implement the requirements of the Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulation (Northern Ireland) 2009 for the assessment and management of flood risks;
- inform new development decisions from a flood risk perspective;
- reduce the number of properties currently at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea;
- sustainably maintain flood defences, drainage infrastructure and the designated watercourse network;
- discharge lead Department responsibilities for the emergency response to flooding;
- communicate flood risk through flood mapping and community engagement;
- deliver the Rivers element of the Living with Water Programme;
- prepare for the further commencement of the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015;

- support and develop all staff to achieve our objectives; and
- deliver quality services for our customers and stakeholders in a fair and equitable way.

Approximately 45,000 properties (equivalent to 5.2% of Northern Ireland's properties) are identified as being at flood risk from rivers, the sea or surface water.

Managing this risk is a key priority for Rivers. We do this in a variety of ways including providing expert flood risk advice to local planning authorities, undertaking sustainable watercourse maintenance, controlling (as far as weather conditions permit) Lough Neagh and Lough Erne water levels, constructing new flood defences, maintaining existing defences and along with other activities, fulfilling a key role in the emergency response to flooding incidents.

Rivers Business Units

Rivers is headed by 2 Directors and supported by four Business Areas:

1. Operations;
2. Development;
3. Living With Water Programme Delivery and Environmental Section; and
4. Corporate Support Services.

A. Operations

HEAD OF OPERATIONS – JAMES KELLY

There are four business units within Operations:

1. Eastern Region;
2. Western Region;
3. Emergency Planning and Hydrometrics: and
4. Reservoirs, Inland Waterways & Control Structures

Regional Area Offices

Business Unit Managers - Alan McWatters - Eastern Region
 Mike O’Gorman - Western Region

Eastern Region maintains and protects the river drainage network across Armagh, Lisburn and Greater Belfast Areas. Western Region maintains and protects the river drainage network across Omagh, Fermanagh and Coleraine Areas.

The regional teams are responsible for the following key functions:

- inspection and maintenance of a network of free-flowing designated watercourses to provide adequate outlets for urban storm and land drainage;
- maintenance of the Department’s river and sea defences;
- identifying flood risks and undertaking minor works to repair and construct urban flood defences, culverts and provide drainage infrastructure;
- administering advisory, approval and enforcement procedures to protect the drainage function of all rivers;
- responding to complaints and enquiries;
- utilising available resources to maintain the effectiveness of the Department’s assets during periods of adverse weather;
- responding where possible to requests for assistance from the public whose property has suffered or is threatened by flooding.
- Flood preparedness and liaising with other statutory and public bodies to also provide an effective multi agency response to flooding;

- Emergency Planning & Chair of the **Southern** Severe Weather Working Group - Eastern Region;
- Emergency Planning & Chair of the **Belfast** Severe Weather Working Group - Eastern Region; and
- Emergency Planning & Chair of the **Northern** Severe Weather Working Group - Western Region.
- Act as Reservoir Manager for six controlled reservoirs – Eastern Region
- Management of Control Structures used to control the flow of rivers when required.
- Regulation of Water Levels on Lough Neagh and Lough Erne – Western Region

Emergency Planning Unit

Business Unit Manager – Seamus McCann

Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) carry out the emergency planning co-ordination duties within Rivers Directorate. Key areas of responsibility include:

- discharging of Lead Government Department (LGD) responsibilities and supporting the multi-agency response to flooding and wider civil contingencies arrangements;
- administering the implementation of the Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme to protect residential properties;
- the development of new, and ongoing support to over 40 established Community Resilience groups;
- representing Rivers on the Emergency Preparedness Groups (EPGs) for civil contingencies in Northern Ireland to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi-agency response to emergencies which have a significant impact on the local community; and

EPU also includes the Hydrometrics team who are responsible for:

- managing, maintaining, and enhancing the Northern Ireland Surface Water Network currently consisting of over 135 river level monitoring stations (gauging stations);
- provision of watercourse flow and level information to ultimately inform the UK “National Archive” that underpins the national understanding and estimation of flood return periods and consequently Northern Ireland flood models, flood maps, and data that is used by Rivers Directorate to target capital investment and to help inform development control.
- providing near to real-time river level information to inform Rivers and other multi-agency partners’, in the preparation and response to flooding; and
- monitoring the coastal water level network to identify problematic storm surges which can raise sea levels and cause flooding.

Reservoirs, Inland Waterways and Control Structures Branch

Business Unit Manager – Violeta Morosan

Reservoirs Team

The Reservoirs, Inland Waterways and Control Structures Branch will primarily be responsible for overseeing the administration associated with the full commencement of the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (the 2015 Act). In the absence of a fully commenced 2015 Act, the Reservoirs Team will develop a suite of processes and procedures required to administer the 2015 Act by a future Reservoirs Authority. Rivers will continue with the administration of the Responsible Reservoir Manager Scheme, where relevant.

The current 'Rivers Reservoirs Team' will ultimately form part of the 'Reservoirs Authority' and will administer the key provisions of the 2015 Act if they are taken forward and commenced by the Northern Ireland Assembly. In the interim period, **the Reservoirs Team** will:

- establish the location of, and the reservoir manager for each controlled reservoir in Northern Ireland; and

Engage with the reservoir managers to:

- inform them of their common law responsibilities; and
- encourage, where possible, the reservoir manager to progress any reservoir safety related works that are identified to prevent an uncontrolled release of water from their reservoir.

The Reservoirs team will also:

- share information on Controlled Reservoirs with the Rivers Planning Advisory Unit where a planning consultation request is received concerning a proposal to develop lands within the inundation area of a controlled reservoir;
- encourage eligible reservoir managers, who voluntarily comply with the 2015 Act, to apply for 'Responsible Reservoir Manager Status' for their reservoirs and monitor the operation of this status;
- manage the Department's own stock of controlled reservoirs (6 reservoirs) where it has a management or part management role, in accordance with the provisions of the 2015 Act; and
- prepare the necessary processes and procedures for the further commencement and implementation of the 2015 Act.

Inland Waterways Team

The Inland Waterways Team will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Lagan Towpath (from Stranmillis to Aghalee, including Broadwater Reservoir). A Departmental owned asset, which includes the towpath, car parks (Lockview Road,

Stranmillis, Drumbridge and Soldierstown) and abandoned canal. Under the Lough Neagh and Lower Bann Drainage and Navigation Act (Northern Ireland) 1955, the Department has a statutory duty to maintain navigation of the Sixmilewater River where it enters Lough Neagh and to maintain 2 navigational markers in that locality. As a courtesy, a further 46 navigational markers are maintained by the Department. Works are currently ongoing to upgrade the navigational markers at Lough Neagh and are estimated to be completed by Summer 2024.

Control Structures Team

The Control Structures team will be responsible for managing the inspection and maintenance programme of the 11 control structures in the Department's ownership.

B. Development

HEAD OF DEVELOPMENT – OWEN MCGIVERN

There are five business units within Development:

1. Capital Projects Major 1
2. Capital Projects Major 2
3. Capital Projects Minor
4. Asset Management Unit (AMU)
5. Planning Advisory Unit (PAU)
6. Mapping and Modelling Unit (MMU)

Capital Projects Units

Projects Major 1 - Business Unit Manager: Johnathan Carlisle

Projects Major 2 - Business Unit Manager: Michael Fox

Projects Minor - Business Unit Manager: Ronan Devlin

These units identify and deliver cost viable flood alleviation schemes to minimise identified flood risks. They are based at Loughry and consist of the 'Capital Projects Major' units and the 'Minor Works and Design Section'.

Whilst these units carry out the majority of their functions in conjunction with a Partner Consultant, the Design Section also undertakes design and site supervision of some schemes via an in-house team of staff. A prioritised programme of schemes is delivered under the following headings:

- Flood Alleviation Schemes – generally new culverts, walls, embankments, flood storage, open watercourse upgrade; and
- Drainage infrastructure Schemes – generally repair and construction of culverts, weirs, screens and control structures.

Major schemes typically cost more than £5m and have been identified through the Flood Risk Management Plan for Northern Ireland.

Major Schemes 2024-25

- Belfast Tidal Flood Alleviation Scheme - Design and Build Contract is on-going. Construction works commenced late Spring 2022 with completion currently anticipated for late 2024;
- Drumahoe Flood Alleviation Schemes is at the Outline Design stage;
- Londonderry feasibility study is currently expected to progress to the Design stage in 2024/25 subject to business case approval;
- Portadown Flood Alleviation Scheme is at the Detailed Design stage;
- Newry Phase 1 works are complete, with future phases 2 and 3 at the outline design stage.

Asset Management Unit (AMU)

Business Unit Manager – Andrew Hitchenor

Asset Management Unit

Asset Management is responsible for the inspection, grading and valuation of drainage and flood defence infrastructure. The Unit is based at Loughry and delivers the following:

- establishment and monitoring of Asset Management Plans for flood defences;
- Implement the recommendations in the Asset Management Plan;
- maintain databases of physical 'above and below ground' assets;
- condition grading of assets and valuation at year end;
- inspection of the fluvial and coastal flood defences through a programme of risk based inspections;
- generate repair and defects list; and
- PSRA management.

Mapping and Modelling Unit (MMU)

Business Unit Manager – Holly Graham

The Mapping and Modelling Unit is responsible for developing and providing map-based information, to enable the assessment and communication of flood risk, and the progression and management of feasibility studies to identify viable flood alleviation schemes. It is based in Craigavon and Loughry and delivers the following:

Key areas of responsibility include:

- management of the corporate Geographical Information Systems (GIS) (internal & external facing) specific to Rivers business;
- provision of GI support to Water and Drainage Policy Division with respect to various initiatives including the Living With Water Programme;
- development and maintenance of Flood Hazard and Flood Risk Mapping for all sources of flooding (fluvial, coastal and pluvial), in support of the requirements of Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009;
- development and maintenance of Reservoir Flood Mapping for Emergency Planning and for Development Planning;
- liaison with our Strategic Business Partner, Land and Property Services (LPS) to have access to their expert staff and on the management of jointly branded flood mapping products (including online map services to customers); and
- development and management of IT apps to assist the management of data relating to Rivers assets.

Flood Modelling

- provision of expert technical advice regarding Flood Mapping & Modelling products; and
- management and updating the Rivers library of 'infoWorks ICM' hydraulic models to inform the production of Flood mapping.

Planning Advisory Unit (PAU)

Business Unit Manager – Eoghan Daly

PAU is based in Craigavon and provides advice to Planning Authorities on the drainage/flood risk aspects of the forthcoming Local Development Plans (LDP's) and Planning consultations with a view to preventing inappropriate and unsustainable development.

The unit's key functions are:

- advising planning authorities in relation to inappropriate development on floodplains, or elsewhere, that may increase risk to life and damage to property through flooding in line with policy provisions set out in the Strategic Planning Policy Statement and either Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning and Flood Risk or Council Local Development Plan Strategies for those areas where the plan have been adopted;
- assessing flood risk assessments submitted by developers as part of planning applications;
- advising planning authorities on other river drainage aspects that may be impacted as a result of planning applications;

- acting as key contact with the planning authorities in relation to matters concerning flood risk and land use planning;
- inputting to the Storm Water Management Group to assist with the development of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) policy for Northern Ireland; and
- liaising with planning authorities to ensure that development and flood risk policies in Local Development Plans are robust and consolidate the principles that underpin the SPPS and PPS15.

C. Rivers Living with Water Programme Delivery Team

HEAD OF RIVERS LIVING WITH WATER PROGRAMME – VACANT

There is one business unit within the Living with Water Programme Delivery and Environmental Unit.

Rivers Living with Water Programme Delivery and Environmental Unit

Business Unit Manager - Ruth Bond

The Rivers Living with Water Programme Delivery (LWWPD) team are responsible for working alongside the Department's core LWWP team, DfI Roads, NI Water and Belfast City Council (BCC), to deliver the Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan (SDIP) for Greater Belfast. This Plan facilitates the delivery of integrated sustainable solutions to:

- protect against flooding by managing the flow of water through the catchment from source to sea;
- enhance the environment through effective wastewater management and the provision of enhanced blue/green spaces to benefit local communities; and
- grow the economy by helping to provide the necessary capacity in drainage and wastewater management systems to facilitate new development projects including house building.

Similar to Belfast, work is also ongoing by the integrated LWWP team to develop a draft SDIP for Derry/Londonderry. This plan includes completing appropriate modelling, design, and assessment work to support the development of a wider strategic review of drainage and wastewater infrastructure across the greater Derry area. It is anticipated that the draft SDIP will be published for consultation during 2024.

Projects 2024-25

Eglinton Flood Alleviation Scheme – Development of flood alleviation proposals to be progressed to determine if there is an economically viable collaborative solution to the fluvial and pluvial flooding in Eglinton.

Loop and Knock Rivers Catchment Study – contribute to a wider catchment feasibility study to identify integrated solutions to the complex flooding mechanisms within the catchment.

The business unit is also responsible for the Environment Section, who:

- carry out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping studies on all new capital works;
- screening, stakeholder engagement and advertisement of the annual watercourse maintenance programme;
- provide advice on the timing, methodology and potential impact of maintenance works;
- provide technical guidance and training to staff on appropriate operational methods;
- liaise with relevant conservation authorities and other interested groups;
- provide advice on compliance with relevant Environmental legislation, including Habitats Regulations Assessments for Schedule 6 applications;
- develop and review methodologies and techniques that will enable Rivers to enhance biodiversity;
- sit on the advisory board to the Rivers Restoration Centre, to support the understanding and delivery of best practice in relation to river management and restoration; and
- provide support and participate as required within the NI Drainage Council.

D. Corporate Support Services

Business Unit Manager - Mary McCann

Business Support Unit

The Business Support team is based in the Rivers Headquarters, Loughry and is responsible for:

- providing an accurate and timely response to correspondence and enquiries, including ministerial correspondence, Assembly Questions and Press queries. This includes the commissioning of background information from Professional and Technical staff, drafting responses and ensuring clearance before issue within set timescales;
- keeping an accurate record of all correspondence handled within Business Support Unit, including service requests and following up on any necessary action required, ensuring deadlines are met;
- submission and co-ordination of Director's assurance statements, risk register returns and other governance related returns;

-
- co-ordination of Rivers' budget management through meetings with Budget Holders and presentation of finance information to the Senior Management Team;
 - liaising with the DfI Training Centre and providing training and development support for Rivers industrial and non-Industrial staff;
 - Human Resource Management support including updating staff changes and preparing internal staff structure charts, providing staffing information to Senior Management and checking payroll reports on a monthly basis for incorrect pay cost centres, grades, etc;
 - providing administrative and secretariat support to the Senior Management Team and other business areas as required. This includes secretariat support for various meetings, such as the Drainage Council. Arranging and coordinating meetings for senior management and taking minutes of meetings when required;
 - investigation support and co-ordination; and
 - management of FoI and EIR requests.

**Significant Works
2024-25**



Rivers Directorate has a range of ongoing schemes at various stages of development, all aimed at minimising identified flood risks. Some of these are due to complete in 2024-25 whilst others are due to commence this year.

Belfast Tidal scheme

The Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) developed in 2015 as part of implementing the EU Floods Directive identified Belfast as being at the highest flood risk of 20 Significant Flood Risk Areas in Northern Ireland. Tidal flood risk is of most concern, with up to 1,500 properties currently at risk from a 1 in 200 year event, which is the Rivers design standard for sea defences. The impact of climate change, causing sea level rise, will increase the number of properties at risk to over 7,300 by 2120.



As a result of the FRMP's, Rivers have developed a scheme of works that will provide a long-term approach to tidal flood risk management for Belfast and the tidal River Lagan.

The proposed scheme will extend from Belfast Lough to Stranmillis Weir and will involve the construction of flood defences along both sides of the river. The defences will extend to 8.5km and will comprise of a mixture of:

- glass flood walls;
- concrete flood walls;
- flood gates;
- temporary barriers
- demountable barriers;
- individual property level protection.

The scheme is currently under construction with works commenced in all five Floodcells. It is currently expected that the scheme will be completed in Autumn 2024.

Newry Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) have also identified Newry as the most significant area of flood risk in Northern Ireland outside of Belfast. It is estimated 1,100 properties are subject to flood risk in the city with the potential to cause approximately £100m of damage.

A Feasibility/Economic Appraisal was previously approved by the Department of Finance (DoF) for this flood protection infrastructure with the estimated cost of the works at that time in the region of £14m. The Feasibility Study recommended flood defences to a number

of tributaries, flood defences in the city centre on the main Newry River/Canal and upstream flood storage. This Feasibility Study is currently being revisited to further assess options to address fluvial flooding and also include consideration of coastal flooding.

Due to a number of complex issues, it has been decided to take forward the scheme in at least two separate phases. The project received Internal Gateway 2 approval on 25 February 2019, which allowed the commencement of the detailed design for Phase 1.

Phase 1 of the project, entitled “Newry River and Tributaries,” was procured at a cost of £2.05m and was substantially completed in March 2023.

Optioneering for Phase 2 and 3 is currently ongoing which includes flood defences through the city centre and potential upstream flood storage. This stage will also consider the risk from coastal flooding and will take into consideration the latest DfI climate change policy and updated flood modelling if viable options are identified it is expected that Phases 2 and 3 could move to the Detailed Design stage in 2024/25 subject to approval of the revised business case.

Portadown Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) have also identified Portadown as a Significant Flood Risk Area. A feasibility/economic appraisal was approved by the Department of Finance (DoF) on 28 September 2018. The scheme has undergone a review to take into account the revised guidance on climate change and subsequently an addendum to the business case is currently being produced. It is now estimated that approximately 385 properties in the Portadown area are subject to flood risk.

The current preferred option includes a series of flood defences on the Annagh, Upper Bann and Ballybay/Corcrain Rivers at 21 separate locations. The estimated costs and benefits of the scheme will be updated as part of the business case addendum.

The detailed design is well advanced, and discussions are ongoing with a range of stakeholders including Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon Council, residents and businesses.

Subject to approval of the updated business case, it is estimated that procurement will commence in 2024/25.

Drumahoe, Eglinton and Londonderry Feasibility Studies

Following the extensive flooding in Drumahoe and Eglinton on 22 August 2017 feasibility studies into the viability of flood defences were completed in 2019. As Drumahoe formed part of the Londonderry Significant Flood Risk Area identified within the 2015 Flood Risk

Management Plans it was decided that the city should be included as part of the commission.

The development of these proposals is complex and has required re-evaluation, including consideration of flooding events in July 2022, to determine if viable solutions can be found.

A viable preferred option has now been identified for Drumahoe and consultants have been instructed to commence the design phase.

Development of potential flood alleviation proposals for Eglinton is currently ongoing. Proposals will determine if there is an economically viable collaborative solution to the fluvial and pluvial flooding in Eglinton. If viable solutions are identified, the Department intends to progress to Detailed Design, subject to business case approval.

The Londonderry Feasibility Report was completed in 2020 and the Economic Appraisal was approved in Oct 2020. Subject to business case approval it is expected that the project will proceed to the design stage in 2024/25.

Other Notable schemes

There are a number of notable schemes these include the:

- Hilden control structure – The refurbishment works planned for the control gates at Hilden and Lambeg will be completed in two phases, with the first phase of works having just commenced on site. This first phase is entitled “Enabling Works” and will focus on all the structural, mechanical and electrical repairs required at each control structure. This will leave the structures ready for phase two which will be the replacement of the gates themselves. It is envisaged that new gates will be constructed off-site and will seamlessly slot into place, with the second phase planned for this coming summer;
- The Cutts, Coleraine control structure – This £1.65m investment aims to refurbish the Cutts Control Structure on the River Bann, Coleraine. The project is programmed to be completed by the end of summer 2025;
- Lurgan Significant Flood Risk Area project which is currently at the detailed design stage;
- Moyola flood study and Downpatrick projects are at the feasibility stage; and
- Broadwater Reservoir, which is currently at detailed design stage.

6-year Rivers Strategy

We are now implementing the second cycle of our Flood Risk Management Plan which covers the period from 2021- 2027. To support the effective delivery of this, we have completed a '6-year Strategy' which encapsulates our strategic priorities over this period.

The Strategy which has been endorsed by our Minister and Permanent Secretary, reflects changes in the understanding and management of flood risk here since the first Flood Risk Management Plans were produced in 2015. These changes include the delivery of key elements of the Living with Water Programme (LWWP), which will develop more integrated and holistic flood risk management approaches, and the need to continue to reflect climate change predictions in the management of flood risk.

We have also reviewed and modified our senior management structure and as part of this work developed proposals to enhance and maintain flood risk management expertise, information, and processes. In addition, we have identified how we need to significantly increase capital investment in flood risk management, to not only implement the requirements of the Flood Risk Management Plan, but also mitigate the flooding impacts associated with climate change and deliver our new 10-year Asset Management Plan.

Climate Change

The Climate Change Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 received Royal Assent on 6 June 2022 and includes a target for net-zero emissions by 2050 as well as a set of interim targets for 2030 and 2040.

Whilst Rivers Directorate have already developed actions on climate adaption, resilience and mitigation such as considering climate change in flood mapping, scheme design and community resilience activities, it is accepted that this new Bill will place increasing focus on our work.

In order to be more resilient to the threat posed by climate change – in addition to meeting the challenges of achieving net zero – it is vital that we all effectively manage climate change risks.

Rivers Business Targets 2024-25

The Rivers Business targets and are at Annex 1

Additional Key Priorities

In addition to the commitments set out in the targets, Rivers has a number of additional priorities which will support improvement in performance across the organisation. These are:

- **Managing financial resources**
- **Maintain a sound system of internal control** – Ensure that controls are in place throughout Rivers to provide a satisfactory assurance level of governance and control where possible;
- **Learning & Development** – Continue to take forward essential training and support staff to enable them to carry out their duties effectively to deliver Rivers objectives and achieve their potential;
- **Health & Safety** – We shall continue to demonstrate our commitment to maintaining high levels of Health & Safety across the Department by:
 - continuing to roll out our Health & Safety training programme;
 - Utilising Activity Safety Controls and carrying out risk assessments as appropriate;
 - implementing measures from infrastructure assessments in a prioritised manner;
 - implementing recommendations from Health and Safety audits and Health & Safety bulletins; and
 - aiming to reduce the number of accidents resulting in lost time off work.

Annual Draft Financial Allocation 2024-25

The total opening capital allocation equates to £21.5m. Table 1 below shows the split of the £21.5m across budget lines. Also included within the £21.5m is £1.5m for the capitalisation of salaries and wages.

Table 1. Rivers Directorate Capital Plan 2024-25

Capital	£000's
Flood Risk Management	9,695
Capital PV & M	1,125
Flood Defences – Belfast Tidal	9,000
Capitalisation of Wages & Salaries	1,500
Homeowner Flood Protection Grant	175
Capital Total	21,495

Table 1. Rivers Directorate Resource Budget 2024-25

Description	Total £m
Total Payroll	Part of Grade 3 Budget
Non-Payroll Costs:	
Rivers Current	4,058
Rivers GAE	1,154
Employer Liability	354
Income	(174)
Total Non-Pay	5,392

Drainage Council for Northern Ireland

The Drainage Council ('the Council') for Northern Ireland is a non-Departmental Public Body constituted under the Drainage (NI) Order 1973. The Council has a general scrutiny role in relation to the Department's drainage functions and has a statutory duty to ensure uniformity of treatment of drainage throughout Northern Ireland.

Functions

The Drainage Council for Northern Ireland is responsible for ensuring the impartial and uniform application of Rivers' drainage and flood defence programme throughout Northern Ireland.

Designation/De-designation of watercourses

It is the Council's responsibility to decide which watercourses and sea defences should be maintained by Rivers at public expense. The Council 'designates' such watercourses and sea defences. Over 6,900km of watercourses and 26km of sea defences have been designated since the Council was established in 1947. The Council may also decide to de-designate a watercourse or sea defence if circumstances change and its maintenance at public expense is no longer justified.

Consideration of Drainage/Flood Defence Schemes

The Drainage Council is charged with considering all works/schemes that Rivers proposes to undertake at public expense to ensure impartiality and value for money.

The Drainage Council considers:

- Rivers plans for drainage and flood defence schemes which satisfy cost benefit criteria;
- details of any emergency works carried out;
- Information presented in the Environment Statement and reaches a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of a drainage scheme on the environment; and
- Makes a determination that that the drainage scheme should be approved or should not be approved and provides the Department with this determination.

Consultee role

As determined by the Drainage (Northern Ireland) Order 1973 Part II, Rivers must consult with the Drainage Council on a number of environmental aspects of any proposed drainage/flood defence works or schemes.

Rivers must consult with the Drainage Council on:

- drainage/flood defence works or schemes which are considered likely to have a significant impact on the environment;

- drainage/flood defence works or schemes which are considered not likely to have a significant impact on the environment;
- environmental statements relating to all drainage/flood defence schemes; and
- notices regarding environmental aspects of drainage/flood defence works and schemes.

Current Membership of the Drainage Council

Name	Date of First Appointment	Expiry of Appointment	Interest Represented
Members			
Chair Prof Alan Strong	2015	2025	Drainage Specialist
Vice Chair Cllr Cadogan Enright	2021	2024	Newry Mourne and Down District Council
Mr Bill Keery	2021	2024	Ards and North Down District Council
Cllr Sean McPeake	2021	2024	Mid-Ulster District Council
Cllr Kyle Savage	2021	2024	Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council
Mrs Wendy Joanne Elliott	2021	2025	Tourism
Mr Peter Mervyn Archdale	2021	2025	Conservation
Dr Cathal Gallagher	2021	2025	Fisheries
Mrs Maureen Brunt	2021	2025	Agriculture
Mr Gary Quinn	2022	--	Rivers Ex Officio
Mrs Mary McCann	2024	--	Rivers Ex Officio
Mr Alistair Beggs	2023	--	Planning Ex Officio

Rivers Contacts

Office	Area Covered	General Office Numbers	Office Address
LOUGHRY HQ	All areas	(028) 86768300	49 Tullywiggan Road Loughry Cookstown BT80 8SG
ARMAGH	Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Dungannon, Mourne & Newry	(028) 38399111	44 Seagoe Industrial Estate Portadown Craigavon BT63 5QD
LISBURN & GREATER BELFAST AREA	Ards, Antrim, Ballymena, Carrickfergus, Belfast, Down, Larne, Lisburn, Lurgan, Newtonabbey & Newcastle	(028) 92606100	Ravarnet House 36 Altona Road Largymore Lisburn BT27 5QB
COLERAINE	Ballymoney, Coleraine, Derry, Newbuildings Limavady, Moyle & Toome	(028) 70342357	37 Castleroe Road Coleraine BT51 3RL
FERMANAGH	Enniskillen, Fivemiletown, Kesh & Newtownbutler	(028) 66388529 (028) 66389221	53 Lettermoney Road Ballinamallard Tullylone BT94 2NA
OMAGH	Castlederg, Cookstown, Magherafelt, Omagh, Strabane & Stewartstown	(028) 82254900	3A St. Julian's Road Omagh BT79 7HQ
PLANNING ADVISORY UNIT	All areas	(028) 38399118	44 Seagoe Industrial Estate Portadown Craigavon BT63 5QD



Rivers Directorate

Business Plan Targets 2024-25 – Annex 1

Business Activity	What we will do and by when	Owner
1. Maintenance of Drainage, Flood Defence, Reservoirs, Control Structures and Inland Waterways Assets in 2024-25	1.1 By 31 March 2025 , maintain drainage and flood defence infrastructure to protect people and property by repairing at least. 1.1(i) 1 km of designated culverts 1.1(ii) 4 km of fluvial defences and 1.1(iii) Complete the inspection of 100% of the culvert manhole chambers (lamping survey) highlighted for survey within the reporting year, as advised by AMMU. (1964)	1.1(i) O McGivern 1.1(ii) O McGivern 1.1(iii) J Kelly
	1.2 Inspect & maintain as required, 98% of all designated urban open watercourses.	1.2 J Kelly
	1.3 Inspect & maintain as required, 98% of all designated culvert inlet grilles.	1.3 J Kelly
	1.4 Maintain a minimum of 378 designated rural open watercourses.	1.4 J Kelly
	1.5 Controlled Reservoirs - Inspect and maintain DfI's own stock of controlled reservoirs (6 No) in accordance with the recommendations given by the Inspecting and Supervising Engineers.	1.5 J Kelly
	1.6 Control Structures -Inspect and maintain Department's 11 No river control structures.	1.6 J Kelly
	1.7 Inland Waterways – carry out statutory obligations to maintain navigation of the Sixmilewater River where it enters Lough Neagh and maintain two navigational markers in that locality (Section 6(3)(ii) of the Lough Neagh and Lower Bann Drainage Act (Northern Ireland) 1955)	1.7 J Kelly

Business Activity	What we will do and by when	Owner
	1.8 Inland Waterways - maintain DfI sites on Lagan Navigation including 24km of towpath, 11 footbridges and 10 locks (from Belfast to Aghalee), to ensure safe and accessible route for walking and cycling, as well as 3 carparks, 5 sets of canoe steps, 5 lifebelts and 2 weirs.	1.8 J Kelly
	1.9 Complete the maintenance of 100% of Lough Neagh quays requested for maintenance.	1.9 J Kelly
2. Flood Alleviation	2.1 Complete the construction and handover of the Belfast Tidal Flood Alleviation Scheme by 31 March 2025.	2.1 O McGivern
	2.2 Ensure 90% of requests to Rivers for assistance are responded to within 3 hours, during flooding events up to a level defined as significant.	2.2 J Kelly
3. Advice to Land Use Planners and the Public	3.1 Respond to 98% of Schedule 6 applications within 3 months of receipt.	3.1 J Kelly
	3.2 Respond to 70% of planning application consultations within 21 calendar days of receipt.	3.2 O McGivern
	3.3 Respond to 100% of all statutory LDP consultations no later than the target date set by DfI Strategic Planning.	3.3 O McGivern
	3.4 Respond to 90% of written enquiries for Hydrometric Data within 15 working days of receipt.	3.4 J Kelly
4. Work constructively with Rivers key stakeholders to support the delivery of services	4.1 Respond to 100% of all non-statutory LDP consultations no later than the target date set by the Council issuing the consultation.	4.1 O McGivern
	4.2 Respond to 90% of all applicants to the Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme. (HFPGS) within 7 days to acknowledge receipt of their application.	4.2 J Kelly

Business Activity	What we will do and by when	Owner
	4.3 Respond to 90% of all HFPGS applicants with 8 weeks of receipt of their application to inform if the application has been successful.	4.3 J Kelly
	4.4 Carry out 500 successful spot gauges across the gauged station network.	4.4 J Kelly
	4.5 Carry out a minimum of 3 visits at 100% of the gauged station network (currently 70 No) to carry out spot gauging.	4.5 J Kelly
	4.6 Develop an outline business case for a flood forecasting system by December 2024.	4.6 J Kelly
5. Ensure Rivers communicate effectively with its customers to promote better understanding of service provision.	5. Respond to 90% of written enquiries from customers within 15 working days of receipt.	5. M McCann
6. Support the WDPD in the progression of the further commencement of the Reservoir Safety Framework as defined within the Reservoirs Act (NI) 2015 by March 2025.	<p>The provision of information and expertise to support the further commencement of the Act and the processes and resources required to administer it.</p> <p>6. Finalise Reservoir Authority process development by March 2025.</p>	6. V Morosan