

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Flood Risk Management Update</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Corporate and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 June 2017
<b>WARD</b>	All
<b>STRATEGIC DIRECTOR</b>	Josie Wragg
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Norman Jorgensen, Executive Member for Environment

## **OUTCOME**

To inform Members of the progress made with the Lead Local Flood Authority's (LLFA) duties under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 during 2016/17.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The committee is asked to comment on the issues highlighted in the report, specifically progress in implementing Wokingham Borough Council's responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

Flood risk management is a key responsibility of Wokingham Borough Council in its role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) following the introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) in 2010. The LLFA has been gradually progressing with the implementation of its new responsibilities whilst continuing to deliver existing drainage services. This report provides an update to Members on the progress made during 2016/17. The next 12 months will also see further progress which will be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny committee next year.

## **Background**

During the financial year 2016/17, the Flooding and Drainage team made significant progress in fulfilling Wokingham Borough Council's statutory obligations as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010. The primary responsibility as an LLFA is to manage the coordination of surface water and groundwater flood risk in order to protect residents from flooding. In order to progress with this responsibility, a number of elements have been addressed over the past 12 months including:

- Production of numerous Section 19 Flood Investigation reports
- Progression with the development of a Flood Asset Register under Section 21 of the FWMA 2010
- Confirmation of the Wokingham specific Land Drainage Byelaws
- Development of a flood warden group
- Progression of the Highways Flood Alleviation programme
- Collaboration with the University of Reading on flood risk studies
- Development of the Shinfield Surface Water Management Plan

- Adoption and implementation of the SuDS Strategy
- Capital Drainage Projects and revenue works
- Designation of flood risk structures
- Completion of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy action plan

### **1. Section 19 Flood Investigation Reports**

On becoming aware of a “flooding incident” defined by the council as “causing internal property flooding or the closure of a road”, Section 19 of the FWMA requires LLFA’s to investigate which Risk Management Authorities (RMA’s) have relevant flood risk management functions, and whether each of these RMA’s has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to a flood. The results of these investigations should be published and the relevant RMA’s notified.

In 2016/17 the council conducted four flood investigation reports for three locations in Winnersh and one for the flooding of Sandford Lane, all of which flooded following a severe weather event on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016. The reports made various recommendations for RMAs including Thames Water, the Parish Councils, Wokingham Borough Council and the residents. The reports are now available to read on the COUNCIL website, under the ‘Flooding and Drainage’ section <http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/emergencies/drainage-and-flooding/>

### **2. Section 21 Asset Register**

Under Section 21 of the FWMA the LLFA has a duty to maintain a register of features or structures within the borough that, in the opinion of the Authority, could affect flood risk. The LLFA must also maintain a record, aligned to the register, of information regarding the ownership and state of repair of each feature or structure. The register and record will help the council develop more informed maintenance regimes which can take account of assets important for managing flood risk. It will also help to establish where the borough’s drainage and watercourse systems are, allowing for quicker identification of the responsible authority in incidences of flooding. Similarly to other LLFA’s, it has been decided that the council will put this information together in the form of a Geographical Information System (GIS) map layer that can be viewed on community maps by staff and residents. This work is on-going.

### **3. Land Drainage Byelaws**

As an LLFA the council are able to make byelaws to ensure the effective operation of land drainage across the Borough. Currently, the council has powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 but these only relate to works within a watercourse or ditch. Wokingham specific Byelaws could give the council control over a wider area outside of the ditch line and extending up to 8m from the top of the bank. Not only would this have clear benefits in terms of protecting the natural floodplain of smaller watercourses and ditches but it would also assist with providing a ‘buffer zone’ for biodiversity.

After an extensive consultation period and an official objection from the National Farmers Union (NFU), Defra confirmed the byelaws for Wokingham at the end of March 2017. Since then, officers have been putting measures in place to ensure that

the land drainage byelaws can be used to ensure the proper running of ordinary watercourses in the borough and the most appropriate development within or near flood plains.

#### **4. Flood Wardens**

Officers have facilitated the development of a group of 30 flood wardens from flood risk areas across the borough. The flood wardens have been feeding information back to the council regarding drainage issues, which assist with resolving matters before the problems cause flooding. The wardens will also feedback information to the council during flood events so that we are better able to coordinate a response.

#### **5. Strategic Development Locations**

Officers are investigating the potential for flood betterment as part of the North and South Wokingham Distributor Roads. In relation to the South Wokingham Distributor Road, early indications suggest that bunds will be the most appropriate form of flood mitigation. The bunds will provide some form of betterment to existing properties near to the Tesco's along the Finchampstead Road, as well as further downstream. Officers have also set up an infrastructure steering group in order to ensure that the most appropriate SuDS features are being installed across the borough.

#### **6. Highways Flood Alleviation Programme**

The council are undertaking a Highways Flood Alleviation Programme which will involve reducing flooding to highways infrastructure across the borough. Following the closure of a number of sections of road during the 2013/14 floods, the council set aside a fund to conduct various schemes to ensure that key highway infrastructure remains open during heavy rain. Officers are currently progressing with schemes for the A327 (between Shinfield and Arborfield) Loddon Bridge Roundabout (junction between B3270 and A329) and a section of the A321 Wargrave Road immediately south of Henley. The works involve large scale drainage maintenance and replacement combined with ditch clearance and road raising (where necessary). It is hoped that by 2018/19, these schemes will have been completed.

#### **7. Collaboration with the University of Reading**

Officers are working with a number of students at the University of Reading on water related studies which will provide the council with more accurate and detailed information about flood risk and water quality across the borough. As part of their third year dissertation module, students are investigating issues such as pollution within the surface water run-off from the M4, public perceptions of flood risk in the borough, and the impact of development on flood risk.

#### **8. Development of a Surface Water Management Plan for Shinfield**

Officers are undertaking a Surface Water Management Plan for Shinfield in order to understand the mechanisms of surface water flooding in the area, the results of which will help the council to develop an application to central government for funding to help fund flood alleviation works in Shinfield.

#### **9. SuDS Strategy**

Following consultation the adoption of the council's SuDS Strategy took place on 27 January 2017, and has introduced a set of local standards/requirements from developers in terms of flood risk and drainage on new development sites, including

the provision of a drainage strategy and a detailed maintenance plan at the outline planning application stage. Officers are ensuring that developers follow the local standards when preparing their flood risk assessments and drainage strategies for new developments.

### **10. Designation of structures**

Over the last 12 months officers have formally designated a number of features/structures within the borough that could have an impact on flood risk if significant changes are made to them. This means that the owner of the feature/structure is unable to do anything to it without the previous consent of the LLFA. Furthermore, the feature/structure will be shown as a designated structure on the local land charges register so that any successive owner is aware of the significance of it in terms of flood risk.

### **11. Capital drainage schemes**

A number of capital drainage schemes have been completed over the past year to reduce surface water flood risk to roads and properties within the borough. For example, drainage improvement works have taken place at Wellingtonia Roundabout and Heath Close in Wokingham and Church Lane in Shinfield.

### **12. Revenue Works**

- 28,688 gullies across the borough were cleared over the last 12 months.
- 6,948 of which were cleared twice a year.

### **13. Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Action Plan**

The FWMA 2010 requires LLFAs to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for dealing with local flood risk management. The last time the Overview and Scrutiny Panel were updated about flooding issues in early 2016, the strategy was still in a very early form. Since then, the strategy was formally adopted by the council following an extensive public consultation. The associated action plan provides actions to be completed in a specific time frame. Actions include development of an asset register, production of surface water management plans, and the development of a flood warden group, to name a few examples. Officers are nearing completion of this action plan and are hoping to get it signed off by the Executive in the summer of 2017.

<b>List of Background Papers</b>
The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 <a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/emergencies/drainage-and-flooding/">http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/community-and-safety/emergencies/drainage-and-flooding/</a>

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<b>Date</b> 21/04/2017	<b>Version No.</b> 1