

TITLE	Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on 26 March 2015
WARD	None specific
DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Angus Ross, Executive Member for Environment

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Increased public awareness of flood risk and reduced risk of flooding across the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Executive adopt the amended Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

As a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) WBC has a statutory duty to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for the Borough. The draft Strategy was issued for consultation from 1st September to the 31st October 2014.

The consultation was publicised through local media and Briefing sessions were held for the Parish Clerks and Members.

Amendments have been made to the Strategy following the consultation and these are shown as track changes within the attached document with comments describing the actions taken.

Some responses received from the public were related to specific flooding issues within the Borough. As developing a prioritised Action Plan is one of the Objectives of the Strategy, we do not believe that the Strategy should be amended to incorporate a list of schemes at this stage.

BACKGROUND

What is the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy?

Wokingham Borough Council's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is an important new tool to help authorities, individuals, communities and businesses within the Borough understand and manage local flood risk. The Strategy focuses on flood risk from surface water, groundwater and streams and ditches, as well as how these local sources interact with each other and river flooding.

What are Wokingham Borough Council's Responsibilities?

Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) Wokingham Borough Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), with new powers and responsibilities for coordinating local flood risk management within the Borough.

In order to ensure the Council is best placed to manage local flooding, it is required to 'develop, maintain, apply and monitor a Strategy for local flood risk management' in Wokingham Borough. The Strategy will provide a single consistent reference point for flood risk management in the Borough.

What is local flooding?

Wokingham Borough Council's responsibility, and the focus of this Strategy, is the management of local flooding. Local flooding is defined as flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, which are typically streams and ditches. Increases in development and changes in the climate mean these types of flooding are becoming increasingly common.

In Wokingham Borough the most severe flooding is often caused when different sources of flooding combine. The Strategy therefore considers the impacts of river and sewer flooding, along with the impacts of local flood sources.

What are the objectives of the Strategy?

The Wokingham Local Flood Risk Management Strategy aims to set out how flood risk will be reduced and managed in the Borough. In order to achieve this aim, six objectives have been developed. In order to achieve each of the Objectives, the Strategy contains a number of measures. The table below sets out the Strategy objectives and Table 2 in the LFRMS the measures that Wokingham Borough Council will implement to achieve each of these. Some of these measures are already being delivered by the Council, others are currently planned and some are new commitments.

Ref no	Objective
O1	Improve knowledge and understanding of current and future local sources of flood risk within Wokingham.
O2	Work collaboratively and develop effective partnerships with other Flood Risk Management Authorities and local communities to deliver a sustainable, cost effective approach to flood risk management that reduces flood risk and provides wider environmental and social economic benefits where possible.
O3	Ensure that planning and decisions take full account of flood risk, avoiding development in inappropriate locations, preventing an increase in flood risk and minimising existing flood risk wherever possible.

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| O4 | Maintain and, where necessary, improve local flood risk management infrastructure and features, as well as privately owned flood defence assets and Ordinary watercourses, to reduce risk. |
| O5 | Ensure that emergency plans and responses to flood incidents are effective and that communities are prepared and resilient to local flood risk. |
| O6 | Identify national, regional and local funding mechanisms to deliver flood risk management solutions and schemes. |
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An action plan for implementation is set out in section 1.3 of the strategy.

What is the timescale for the Strategy?

The Strategy has a 15 year timeframe, anticipated to cover from January 2015 to autumn 2030. This timescale has been chosen to ensure that the Strategy takes a short, medium and long term view of flood risk management in Wokingham Borough.

How will the Strategy be reviewed and developed?

Local flood risk management must be responsive to change. This strategy will therefore be continually monitored, reviewed and developed to ensure the information contained within it is the best available and most up to date and the document continues to be effective in allowing risk management authorities within Wokingham Borough to manage flood risk.

The first comprehensive review of the Strategy will take place in 2017, following the review of the National Strategy in 2016 and to coincide with the review of the Wokingham Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment.

Consultation

The draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was issued for consultation from 1st September to the 31st October 2014. The comments received are included in Annex A. A tracked copy of the original document is attached so as it is easy to see where changes have been made. If agreed then the document will be reformatted to a standard Wokingham Borough Council standard before being published.

2013/14 Winter – Compensation and Repair

Following the very wet winter of 2013/14 the government set up a number of funds to support affected home and business owners. In addition a specific set of grants were awarded to the authority to repair some of the damage caused by the inclement weather. In total £395k was awarded to the authority for winter damage repair and the bulk of this has been spent on repairing damage to roads. The Council has awarded compensation to 5 businesses and is processing 18 claims for repair and renewal grant funding. In addition the Council has awarded £89k in business rates compensation and £18k in Council tax compensation.

In addition the Council put an extra £500,000 in to flood and road repair budget for this financial year. The money has been used primarily to accelerate repairs to roads damaged by the winter weather and to provide some additional protection to areas affected by road flooding.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	15,000	Yes	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	10,000	Yes	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	10,000	Yes	

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

Costs above relate to study work to identify and design flood alleviation schemes. As projects are identified then bids to fund these will be made through the Council's budget setting process and as government funding becomes available.

Cross-Council Implications

N/A

List of Background Papers

Detailed analysis of consultation response. – Available on request

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Date 17 March 2015	Version No. 1