

Agenda Item 25.

TITLE	Flood Risk Management End of Year Update
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee
WARD	All
STRATEGIC DIRECTOR	Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment
LEAD MEMBER	Angus Ross, 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 2015.

RECOMMENDATION

The committee is asked to comment on the issues highlighted in the report, specifically progress in implementing the Flood and Water Management Act.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

Flood and water 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 related services. This report provides an update to Members of the progress made during 2015. The next 12 months will see further progress following the appointment of a Flood Risk Manager, a Principal Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer, and a Strategic Development Location (SDL) Flood Risk Advisor in late 2015.

Flood and Water Management – End of Year Update

1. Flood and Water Management Act - Progress

During 2015, the Flooding and Drainage team made progress with fulfilling Wokingham Borough Council's (WBC) statutory obligations as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010. It is expected that progress leading into 2016 and beyond will improve even further following the appointment of a Flood Risk Manager towards the end of 2015, who has been tasked with helping the Authority to fulfill its role as LLFA. In addition, the Planning team has appointed a Principal Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer and a Strategic Development Location (SDL) Flood Risk Advisor to focus on WBC's new responsibilities as a statutory consultee for all major planning applications with regards to surface water drainage implications.

Key elements that have been addressed by WBC over the last 12 months have included:

- Recruitment of a Flood Risk Manager, a Principal Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer and a SDL Flood Risk Advisor
- Completion of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS)
- Production of Section 19 Flood Investigation Reports following the 2013/2014 floods
- Progression with the development of the Flood Asset Register under Section 21 of the FWMA
- Progression with the implementation of Land Drainage Byelaws
- Development of the Wokingham Borough specific Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) Technical Guidance for developers
- Engagement with community groups and increasing awareness of flood risk in the borough.
- Drainage and flood management work

2. Recruitment

Francesca Hobson was appointed as Flood Risk Manager in November 2015. Boniface Ngu was appointed as a Principal Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer and Julia Greene was appointed as SDL Flood Risk Advisor.

3. Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Action Plan

The FWMA requires LLFA's 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 2014, the strategy was still in a very early form.

A first draft of the strategy was completed in the summer of 2014 and was published for public consultation from 1 September until 31 October 2014. This provided individuals, communities, businesses and other organisations with the opportunity to influence the LFRMS. The consultation documents were available to read and download on Wokingham Borough Council's website and comments were submitted via an online questionnaire, emailed and sent via post to the Council.

The final Strategy was published on the council's website in March 2015. The associated action

plan provides actions to be completed and the time frame that these need to be completed in. Following appointment of the new recruits, progress is being made to achieve some of the shorter term actions such as the development of a flood asset register, publication of flood investigations, implementation of land drainage byelaws, development of flood action groups and recruitment of flood wardens. A Task and Finish Group has also been set up consisting of officers and members to ensure that progress is being made with the action plan. So far this group has met twice and the next meeting is scheduled for 16th February 2016.

4. Section 19 Flood Investigation Reports

On becoming aware of a flood in its area, 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 February 2013, WBC's Flood Investigations Policy was initially agreed via an Individual Executive Member Decision (IEMD) which set the threshold at which a formal investigation of a flooding incident is undertaken by WBC. Following the 2013/2014 winter floods in Wokingham, WBC in house consultants, WSP, conducted parish based flood investigations for Arborfield, Charvil, Hurst, Shinfield, Swallowfield and Wargrave. The reports made various recommendations for RMA's and all RMA's have been notified of these recommendations and given the opportunity to comment on the final reports.

These reports will be placed on the WBC website, under the 'Flooding and Drainage' section, following the agreement of a further IEMD due to minor changes made to the Flood Investigations Policy document. It is anticipated that the reports will be available online towards the end of February 2016.

5. 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, linked to the register, of information regarding the ownership and state of repair of each feature or structure. The register and record will help WBC 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 WBC 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. It was decided at the monthly Flood Liaison Group that the register and record should be populated with all WBC owned assets such as drains, gullies, manholes, ditches, culverts, bridges and surface water pumping stations first. Once this has taken place, any other assets considered to affect flood risk will be added gradually, as more information is collected. A meeting between key stakeholders was held on 7 January 2016 to decide the best way to collate all the information WBC currently has available.

6. Land Drainage Byelaws

As a LLFA WBC are able to make byelaws to ensure the effective operation of our land drainage across the Borough. Currently, WBC has powers under the Land Drainage Act but these only relate to works within a watercourse or ditch. Wokingham specific Byelaws could give us control over a wider area outside of the ditch line and extending up to 9m 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.

Officers have amended model drainage byelaws by Defra to make them Wokingham specific. The draft byelaws have been sent to Defra for informal review and following this, the draft byelaws shall go through a consultation process whereby a copy of the draft byelaws will be placed in at least 2 local newspapers, on the WBC's website, and also a written copy available for viewing at the council offices for comments from the public. Following public consultation, the byelaws will go to Council for approval. The final version of the byelaws will then be sent to Defra for final approval. WBC will then be able to enforce the byelaws, helping WBC to mitigate any activities that could impact flood risk.

7. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Government consulted on the implementation of Schedule 3 of the FWMA between December 2012 and March 2013. Prior to the consultation, WBC was expecting to become a SuDS Approving Body (SAB) which would have placed responsibility on the Council for approval, adoption, and maintenance of SuDS on new developments. However, as a result of the consultation, in September 2014 Government proposed making better use of the planning system to secure SuDS in new development. It was confirmed in December 2014 that this approach would be taken forward and this was implemented as of 6th April 2015. It was also proposed that to support local planning authorities (LPAs) in assessing the provision of SuDS in new development, LLFAs would be made statutory consultees on all major planning applications with surface water drainage implications.

To deliver this enhanced planning system, planning guidance has been strengthened to give increased weight to the provision and maintenance of SuDS in the determination of planning applications. Non statutory technical standards for sustainable drainage systems have been published by DEFRA and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) – Flood Risk and Coastal Change has been updated to provide further clarification on managing flood risk and securing the use of SuDS.

The Planning Drainage Officers have developed a standard Pre-Application Drainage Advice Note which sets out the requirements in terms of SUDS to support the various types of Planning Application. This is being issued to developers to inform them of our requirements at the Pre-Application stage. WBC has had a long standing commitment to consider adopting SuDS within the Borough and a draft Wokingham specific SuDS Technical Guide has been developed to ensure the SUDS are designed appropriately. This document aims to set out our local requirements for sustainable drainage in Wokingham Borough and provide guidance on the suitability of the various SUDS options in different areas of the Borough. The document, intended for use by developers and their consultants, is currently being reviewed internally.

8. Community Engagement

The Borough has a duty to engage with the public and representative bodies and share information with them.

Quarterly meetings were held with the Loddon Valley Residents Association. These meetings are used by local residents groups to voice their concerns. Thames Water, National Flood Forum and Environment Agency also attend these meetings. Officers also regularly attend the meetings of the Swallowfield Flood Action Group and are engaging with students and lecturers at the University of Reading to develop flood related research projects that aim to improve information sharing and knowledge of flooding within the borough.

Progress is being made with the setting up of Flood Action Groups and the recruitment of flood wardens in parishes at flood risk. Officers will be speaking at various events to raise awareness of the benefits of Flood Action Groups and flood wardens. Information about this will also be shared through social media, the WBC website, and borough and parish newsletters. Following

the setting up of Flood Action Groups, it is hoped that WBC will be able to recruit at least 2 flood wardens per parish.

Officers are currently in the process of investigating the potential for a WBC flooding microsite. This would be linked to the main WBC website but will provide a hub for all information relating to flood risk to be held for the community to access. It will be similar in layout and structure to the Northamptonshire Flood Toolkit, which has been a huge success and has helped residents living in flood risk areas of Northamptonshire. The microsite would provide a place for the Asset Register, Land Drainage Byelaws, Flood Investigation Reports, LFRMS and action plan, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and all other relevant flood information to be stored and viewed by the public. Discussions are currently being held with the IT team to establish the cost and timings of the microsite production. It is anticipated that the microsite will be complete by late 2016.

9. Proposed Flood Alleviation Works

WBC has allocated £4 million, to be spent over the next 3 years, for improvements to the strategic network and other roads that have flooded previously during major weather events. WBC is currently in the process of investigating potential schemes for various sites in Wokingham including the A327 (between Shinfield and Arborfield) and Loddon Bridge Roundabout (junction between B3270 and A329). WBC was planning to investigate improvement works to the A327 first because it is thought that by alleviating the flooding problems on the A327, there might be beneficial effects downstream at the other sites that WBC intends to improve. However, progress has been delayed due to the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road works which involved raising part of the A327 and installing large culverts under the road. These changes to the drainage around the A327 mean that WBC will need to conduct further modelling following the completion of the Shinfield Eastern Relief Road works.

10. Drainage and Flood Management Works 2015/2016

Capital Works

The Borough had a capital budget of £200,000 for drainage and flood prevention works in 2015/16. These consisted of improvements to existing assets and infrastructure:

- A new deep bore hole soakaway was constructed on Culham Lane, Wargrave
- New drainage infrastructure was installed in Eastheath Gardens Wokingham
- The verges of the A33, Swallowfield were regraded to allow water to flow from the carriageway easier
- White Horse Lane, Finchampstead had additional gullies installed to alleviate flooding
- Wellingtonia Roundabout, Wokingham Without is to have its drainage upgraded this financial year.

Revenue Works

Throughout the year numerous reactive works are carried out to repair the drainage infrastructure. The cost of these works total approximately £512,570 over the year which included £ 150,000 for gully emptying.

Gully Emptying

31,002 gullies emptied – 9100 cleared twice

Land Drainage

A budget of £33,210 is used to maintain and clear Council owned ditches and maintain grilles

11. Flooding Incidents

In 2015 there were no reports of flooding to properties. Following the heavy rain over the Christmas period the River Loddon burst its banks at 3 locations in early 2016 resulting in the road closures of Whistley Mill Lane in Twyford, Sandford Lane in Woodley, and Mill Lane in Earley. No properties were flooded during this heavy rainfall period.

List of Background Papers
The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 Northamptonshire Flood Toolkit http://www.floodtoolkit.com/

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