
To: Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

Date: 9 March 2016

Subject: Flood Risk Management and Drainage Update

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (SB4) to note actions from the Board held on 25th March 2015. The actions are attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To provide SB4 with a brief summary of the roles and responsibilities of Coventry City Council for flooding and the management of surface water.
- 1.3 To inform SB4 on the progress of the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS).
- 1.4 To update the SB4 on the flooding event that occurred within Coventry on 6th February 2016.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) note the progress of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) as Statutory Consultee on planning applications. The Scrutiny Board are invited to make any comments or recommendations on the proposed approach.
- 2.2 That the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) note the progress of the Surface Water Management Plan and the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy . The Scrutiny Board are invited to make any comments or recommendations on the proposed approach moving forward.
- 2.3 That the Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) note the outcome of the flooding event that occurred within Coventry on 6th February 2016.

3 What does a Lead Local Flood Authority do?

- 3.1 A wide range of responsibility placed on us by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, but can be summarised as:
 - Responsible for monitoring rivers and streams, but not main rivers
 - Main rivers are shown on OS maps and are monitored and maintained by the Environment Agency (EA).

- Responsible for ensuring that people who have ownership of rivers and streams keep them maintained and do not alter them without permission.
- Responsible for recording flooding events and investigating their causes. This involves working with key stakeholders such as the EA and Severn Trent Water Ltd. (STW).
- Responsible for keeping records of floods and also all drainage assets like gullies, ponds and culverts
- Responsible for working with those affected by flooding
- Responsible for delivering improvement schemes where budgets allow.
- Responsible for advising on future drainage proposals from developers like de-culverting at the Burges, for example.

4 Lead Local Flood Authority Statutory Consultee on Planning Applications

- 4.1 In April 2015, Coventry City Council had its role as LLFA extended. The LLFA is now a Statutory Consultee on planning applications.
- 4.2 In April 2015 statutory responsibilities for planning applications consultations was split between the Environment Agency (EA) and the LLFA. The EA retained responsibility for consultation responses relating to main river and overarching role for consultation on the environmental impact of development. The LLFA had transferred to it responsibility for planning consultation responses for all surface water, groundwater and a shared responsibility for water quality.
- 4.3 The Flood Risk Management & Drainage team now responds to an average of 190 planning applications a month imposing enforceable planning conditions for all new development to ensure this is sustainable in Coventry and flood risk is managed down. Where deliverable, improvements to flood risk are sought in line with the national planning policies of England.

5 Update on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) and the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP)

- 5.1 The LFRMS is the strategic document which defines how the LLFA role will be implemented by the Council. It sign posts other documents to highlight which responsibilities are being undertaken by which organisation.
- 5.2 Following a peer review the public consultation concluded in June 2015, the LFRMS was approved by Cabinet Member for Public Services in December 2015 and is now published on the City Council's website.
- 5.3 As part of the Council's responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Council has to produce a plan for reducing the impact of surface water flooding. The SWMP examines the knowledge of risk throughout the city and identifies options to improve this knowledge to enable schemes to be identified. This document supports the LFRMS.
- 5.4 The SWMP was put out to public consultation on the 3rd December for 12 weeks. A verbal update on the outcome of this consultation will be delivered at the Board Meeting.

6 Coventry City Flooding Event 6th February 2016

- 6.1 During Saturday 6th February 2016 there was prolonged, very heavy, rainfall throughout Coventry causing flooding at a number of locations. The majority of issues reported to the

City Council were highway and garden flooding but there were reports of internal flooding at 8 properties.

6.2 Broad Lane / Banner Lane / Goldthorn Close

The heavy rain caused the Brookstray that flows beside Broad Lane at Eastern Green to burst its banks. Residents living nearby stated that flood water started flowing onto the Broad Lane at the junction of Banner Lane where the river passes through a trash screen into the culvert under the road. As the rainfall continued into the early evening, the river level continued to rise to eventually overtop the side of the road and began to flood the Caravan Sales premises at the junction with Banner Lane. As the evening went on the flood water continued to rise and passed through the rear of the Caravan Sales site and rear gardens of the houses at Broad Lane and eventually flooded 4 houses at Goldthorn Close.

The City Council's Out of Hours Service response is stated in paragraph 6.4 of this report.

On Monday morning, as a follow up to the flooding on Saturday, the Council's own Flood Risk Management & Drainage team visited the residents of Goldthorn Close and the owner of the Caravan Sales premises to record the sequence of events and the extent of the flooding. The City Council also met with the EA later on Monday morning to share information on the Main River flooding and to investigate a report of a build-up of debris on private land that appears to have reduced holding capacity of the Brookstray at this location.

The EA does have an improvement planned for the Brookstray at Broad Lane and City Council is working with the EA to deliver this as part of a road improvement scheme at the junction of Board Lane / Banner Lane junction that is hoped to be on site later this year.

6.3 Washbrook Lane / Browns Lane / Butt Lane / Windmill Hill

There was flooding to the highway at the junction. This is believed to have been initially caused by surface water flows from farm land adjacent to Washbrook Lane in conjunction with high water levels in the river Sherbourne.

Following arrival at the road junction the flood water left the highway and ran through private properties on Browns Lane to join the Main River. 2 properties on Browns Lane and 1 further property on Butt Lane were flooded by this flow.

Just downstream there was external flooding of 3 bungalows on Butt Lane itself where the river passes through a constriction in the channel beside number 134 Butt Lane.

A meeting was held on the 10th February on site between Flood Risk Management & Drainage team and the EA as part of the post flooding investigation. Some residents approached Council Officers and raised a concern about a proposed traffic calming scheme that they believed would exacerbate the Main River flooding. It had been determined that the traffic calming scheme would not exacerbate the Main River flooding.

6.4 City Council Operational Response

The City Council's Out of Hours service received the first telephone call from a resident at Broad Lane requesting sandbags at 7.39pm owing to the river flood water extending along Broad Lane and continuing to rise. Upon arrival, the Council closed the road at 8.00pm for safety reasons and issued sandbags to residents to protect those homes at immediate risk of flooding. The Police service were in attendance and the Coventry

Solihull Warwickshire Resilience Team (CSWR) were in frequent contact with the Out of Hour service during this time.

The Council delivered around 150 sandbags throughout the city during Saturday evening to help residents defend their homes. By 11pm on Saturday however the river flood water had reduced and the residents began their clean-up operation.

The City Council restocked the sandbag supply in case of further flooding on Sunday but fortunately this exceptional rainfall did not reoccur. During Sunday the Main River level continued to fall further.

6.5 Review of Operational Flood Plan

Prior to the flooding event on 6th February 2016, the Flood Risk Management & Drainage team commenced a review of the City Council's Operational Flood Plan that determines the actions that the Council will take in a "business as usual" flooding incident. The plan details the actions to be taken by City Council officers and operatives in a range of scenarios starting with gully cleansing for minor flooding, the application of the sandbag policy, escalating to road closures and reinforcing the live communication needed with CSWR for their decision on the required emergency procedures in the event of more significant flooding.

The review includes consultation with Highways Operations, Highways Transportation and CSWR. The lessons learnt from the 6th February event will be applied to the review before completion.

Neal Thomas – Flood Risk Manager

Place Directorate

024 7683 4307

Actions from the Scrutiny Board meeting held 25th March 2015

Action No 4.1 - Members discussed the proposals for the Riverside Project on Palmer Lane to the River Sherbourne and requested information relating to the timeframe for consultation.

Response No 4.1 - To date no formal public consultation has occurred however a Cabinet report dated 3rd March 2015 will advise Board Members further on this. There has been great interest expressed in this project by local Members and focus groups since the tentative proposal became known, the latest press article being 2nd February 2016. Work is currently ongoing to prepare a funding bid for the de-culverting works. It is hoped that if successful this will lead to a joint public / private development at this location.

Action No 4.2 - Members discussed flooding issues at the Sowe Basin, Copsewood and Stoke Aldermoor and requested further information on the flooding issues at this site.

Response No 4.2 - Examination of the Council records indicates that there is a history of flooding of the River Sowe at the Copsewood Golf Course dating back to November 2013. The Golf Club is located within the river functional flood plain and the regulator for the river at this location is the EA. They have been working with Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to help the club with their concerns. The Copsewood Golf Club are the joint Riparian land owner with the City Council and therefore responsible for the maintenance of the river is shared between the club and Streetscene and Greenspace. The Golf Club reported issues with the land drainage system within their land and responsibility for this rests with the Golf Club.

No further reports were received relating to flooding in this area from the end of 2013 to the present date. The Flood Risk Management & Drainage team are keen to hear about any flooding issues and will assign responsibility in accordance with the remit of the LLFA.

Action No 4.3 - Members discussed proposals for Charterhouse Fields and requested that officers investigate introducing ceremonial burying of ashes at this location.

Response No 4.3 - The project has not substantially progressed, however in February 2016 the Council became aware that a focus group is to be formed to move this project forward. They will supply details of the interest obtained for the introduction of supplying an area(s) designated for the burial of cremated remains (ashes).

Action No 4.4 - Members discussed the water quality at Swanswell Pond and requested further information of any future plans at the site.

Response No 4.4 - It is understood that Swanswell Pool was first created naturally within the seasonally marshy area of the River Sherbourne Valley dating back to at least the 1500's and would have been a good quality water body. The shape and form of the pool as it is seen today dates back to the 1850's when it was fed by natural springs within the grounds of the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital and was also linked to the Springfield Brook. During the 1950's building work at the Hospital resulted in a new surface water sewer capturing these natural flows to divert these direct to the Springfield Brook which itself was culverted in the 1960's. Today Swanswell Pond is fed from a mains water supply and is not linked to a natural watercourse and being a closed water body, the pond does not benefit from the naturalisation that promotes good water quality.

Streetscene and Greenspace are responsible for the maintenance of the pool and in recent times have carried out dredging to remove large quantities of silt and debris and installed fountains to aerate the water to reduce the risk of fish deaths, however until a sustainable fresh water supply is provided, the risk of future issues with the quality of the water in the pool will remain.

The aspiration is to reconnect the pond to the Springfield Brook to deliver a sustainable natural watercourse that will promote good water quality and improve biodiversity and habitat. The further aspiration to "daylight" the Springfield Brook will further enhance the water environment in this area of the city.

Action No 4.5 - Members discussed communication to Ward Councillors and requested that Councillors be made aware of any future flooding issues/proposals within their ward at an early stage.

Response No 4.5 - All flooding issues are reported to the Cabinet Member for Public Services on a weekly basis. The proposed list of drainage improvement schemes is reported to Cabinet as part of the Transportation and Highway Maintenance Capital Programme annually. Ward Councillors are notified in advance of drainage works due to start in their Wards at the same time as residents are informed.

The Flood Risk Management and Drainage Team communicate regularly with Ward Members when there are significant flooding events. Following the recent flooding event on the 6th February the Ward Members for Bablake and Woodlands Wards were kept informed of the action taken and the progress of investigations. Feedback from the Ward Members was invaluable in furthering the investigations carried out to date. As part of this exercise a holistic report of flooding across the City was delivered to the Cabinet Member for Public Services as part of the Flood Risk Management Group briefing.

Action No 4.6 - The Scrutiny Board requested to promote the fact that a large number of projects are being made available due to European funding.

Response No 4.6 - For the period 2014 - 2020 the Coventry and Warwickshire area has a notional allocation of £116m to deliver against European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) investment priorities.

The following works were part funded by £24m of ERDF from the 2007 – 2013 programme (which was extended to 2015):

Public Realm works including:

- Broadgate Square
- Council House Square
- High St
- Trinity St
- Belgrade Plaza
- Whittle Arch/Fairfax St
- Hill Top
- Gosford Street/Coventry University
- Gosford Gate
- Junction 6/Bridge deck works

The applications for the first round of “Open Calls” through 2014 - 2020 European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) programme are still being appraised, with the Council having submitted circa £18m of bids in response to these Calls, however to date, no Funding Agreements have been issued so it is not possible yet to say how much funding Coventry has received.

For more information the Scrutiny Board can be advised by the corporate projects team.