
To: Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

Date: 19th September 2019

Subject: Flood Risk Management and Drainage Update

1 Purpose of the Note.

- 1.1 To update the Scrutiny Board on the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) Statutory Consultee (provision of drainage advice) role on planning applications.
- 1.2 To inform the Scrutiny Board of the role and work of the FRCC (Regional and Coastal Flood Committee)
- 1.3 To update the Scrutiny Board on the flooding events and improvements at Butt Lane, Allesley and Broad Lane, Upper Eastern Green.
- 1.4 To update Scrutiny Board on the activities undertaken during delivery of the annual Drainage Capital Programme.
- 1.5 To update the Scrutiny Board on other key flood risk management activities since the last report.

2 Recommendations.

- 2.1 The Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4) are recommended to:
 - 1) Note the progress of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in drainage and flood risk matters.
 - 2) Support the circulation of the note relating to the activities of the RFCC to all Members.

3 Lead Local Flood Authority Statutory Consultee on Planning Applications.

- 3.1 As previously reported, in April 2015, Coventry City Council had its role as LLFA extended to become Statutory Consultee for all major planning applications.
- 3.2 The team review all planning applications where there is a consultation from the Council's planning service to determine if there is a flood risk to the proposed development or to the local community.
- 3.3 Enforceable planning conditions are recommended for new development and redevelopment sites to ensure this is sustainable for Coventry and future flood risk is

managed. Where deliverable, improvements to existing flood risk are sought in line with the national planning policies, the Local Plan and Coventry City Area Action Plan.

- 3.4 All planning applications are tracked against the 21 day response timescale to focus resourcing. Collaboration on priorities with the planning service occurs when necessary.
- 3.5 We received a total of 247 planning consultations during the past financial year (2018-19), which was a 15% increase compared with 2017-18. Following the adoption of the Local Plan in December 2017, we are expected a gradual increase in consultations, including an increase for larger sites which require significant Officer review time. This Year to date the number of consultations has fallen by 16 % over the last 5 months compared with 2018-19 to a total to date of 84 consultations.

4 Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)

- 4.1 RFCC's were set up under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The committees have a chair appointed by the Minister, members from Lead Local Flood Authorities (allowing for local democratic input) and independent members recruited by the Environment Agency who have specialist skills or backgrounds.
- 4.2 The RFCC's are bodies through which the Environment Agency carries out its work on flood risk management to meet the challenge of climate change.
- 4.3 Within this region, the committee is English Severn and Wye RFCC and the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has appointed Chair is Shirel Stedman. The Council representative on the committee is Councillor Hetherton.
- 4.4 The role of RFCC members is to:-
 - Ensure there are coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood risks across catchments;
 - Promote efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that optimises value for money and benefits for local communities; and
 - Provide a link between the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authorities and other relevant bodies to develop mutual understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area.
- 4.5 The RFCC committee is responsible for preparing an annual programme of flood defence maintenance and improvement works, determining the necessary funding and obtaining DEFRA approval. Much of the work of the RFCC is around the monitoring of both capital works and revenue maintenance costs of the EA's operations in the region
- 4.6 The Council pays a £90k "levy" into this fund each year and membership of the RFCC is essential to ensure that the authority gets value for money from that contribution. Flood Alleviation projects are ranked against national priorities and Coventry has benefited from this source of funding.
- 4.7 As part of the work undertaken by the RFCC it promotes and endorses projects to reduce the impact of climate change and has a target for the reduction of flood risk to 300,000 homes nationally over the 6 year programme. The committee supports both the

Environment Agency and Lead Local Authorities in their efforts to plan for the impact of climate change and deliver risk reduction mitigation measures.

- 4.8 All projects are ranked against national priorities for funding using measurable outcomes including the number of homes with reduced risk of flooding (Outcome Measure 2), water quality improvements and also water dependent habitat created or improved (Outcome Measure 4). Examples of water quality improvement and water habitat improvements the committee endorses is Natural Flood Management which includes projects being delivered in Coventry.

5 Flood Alleviation Projects.

- 5.1 No major flooding has taken place in the City in the last year, but we continue to work on mitigating flooding from hotspots recorded around the City in previous flood events, particularly in 2016.
- 5.2 The Council has worked with partners to secure funding for Flood Alleviation projects. Highlights are - £634k Flood Defence Grant in Aid from DEFRA, £800k Local Levy from the RFCC, £135k Private Developer contributions and £780k from the Council's own Highways Capital Improvements budget, totalling £2.350m across the City
- 5.3 Washbrook Lane / Browns Lane / Butt Lane / Windmill Hill, Allesley.
- 5.4 There is a long record of historic flooding in Allesley including in, 2007, 2008, 2012 and 2016. The most recent flooding inundated properties on Butt Lane and Washbrook Lane.
- 5.5 The Allesley Flood Risk Management Scheme seeks to address the high level of flood risk to 34 residential properties located in Allesley village. The most vulnerable 14 properties in this area have a 1 in 5 (20%) chance of flooding each year. These properties are at risk of flooding from the River Sherbourne and there is also risk of surface water flooding.
- 5.6 The Environment Agency developed an Outline Business Case for a storage pond located upstream in the agricultural land adjacent to Washbrook Lane, supplemented with natural flood management solutions. This business case was approved in August 2017 and the project was then developed further in preparation for project viability to be determined. A monthly project Governance Board commenced in February 2018 comprised of Council officers, including the Head of Highways and Environment Agency officers. Project team updates occur every two weeks.
- 5.7 Following site surveys, hydraulic modelling and construction cost estimation, a project viability assessment for the flood storage part of the project was completed in November 2018. The outcome was that the estimated project costs had risen from £1.7M to £8.5M to protect the 34 properties and the scheme has been determined to be unviable by the all partners involved.
- 5.8 However, a scheme of Natural Flood Management solutions to slow flow and hold back water within the upstream catchment is being taken forward. To date 10 Natural Flood Management interventions have been installed and a further 100 are planned. In addition to this, resilience measures to individual properties are being considered. The feasibility is also being consideration to the adjustment of road surface level at the junction of Browns Lane with Butt Lane to direct extreme rainfall event flood flows away from homes towards the River Sherbourne. The business case is being reworked to determine funding sources and outcomes. All measures will be subject to a viability assessment prior to construction.

- 5.9 Residents and ward members have been regularly kept up to date with progress. A Community Event was held on 8th February 2019 to further update residents on the work that had been done and the options going forward. More information will be shared with residents as the preparation and delivery of the natural flood management occurs and as a property flood resilience scheme is being developed.
- 5.10 In parallel to the proposed measures, the Council has been addressing other localised drainage issues at Washbrook Lane / Browns Lane / The Windmill Hill over the last two financial years. Drainage improvements and repairs have been carried out totalling a sum of £160k. Following the intensive rainfall during this summer, no flooding of properties has been reported at this location.
- 5.11 The Council has also embarked upon a course of enforcement relating to flooding to gardens of properties on The Windmill Hill. In September 2018 we issued a reminder to property owners of their riparian responsibilities, and have commenced further visits to inspect the watercourse and determine next steps. The majority of residents with frontage to the watercourse have been visited, advised of their responsibilities and to date this appears to have been well received by residents. Following confirmation that the watercourse is clear, a further intercepting ditch course will be formed upstream to further reduce flood risk to the residents of The Windmill Hill.
- 5.12 Broad Lane / Banner Lane, Upper Eastern Green.
- 5.13 The Upper Brookstray Flood Risk Management Scheme seeks to reduce flood risk to 45 properties from the Brookstray (tributary of the River Sherbourne) and from surface water. The proposal for a cross boundary storage pond has been determined not to be viable by the Environment Agency because following hydraulic modelling, only 25 properties would have benefited from reduced flood risk. Additionally, the total estimated project cost was determined to be £1.6m. However, currently partnership funding does not meet this level.
- 5.14 Options now being considered going forward include Natural Flood Management in the upstream catchment in Solihull and Property Flood Resilience measures within Upper Eastern Green. Discussions are also ongoing with Severn Trent Water to see if improvements to their drains can help to keep more water in the system.
- 5.15 In view of the coordination needed with both Coventry and Solihull Council, the Environment Agency have been leading on this project.
- 5.16 As part of the new roundabout works associated with the development at Bannerbrook, drainage improvements were completed in an effort to address the localised surface water flooding issue, although successful however, further main river flood mitigation work is required.

6 Annual Drainage Capital Programme – Update

- 6.1 The annual Drainage Capital Programme sits within the overall Transportation and Highway Maintenance Capital Programme. The programme predominantly consists of drainage improvements and localised repair schemes. A list of drainage schemes is approved by Cabinet Member for City Services for delivery annually. In addition to this planned works, the programme includes a portion of the budget for unplanned works in response to flooding issues that arise during the current year.
- 6.2 All flooding events are recorded and investigated resulting in either intervention cleansing or if drainage defects are identified, these are ranked against city-wide priorities for

consideration for future capital works programmes. 16 schemes are within the capital programme this financial year.

- 6.3 The drainage capital programme also funds partnership contributions to larger externally funded projects delivered in collaboration with the Environment Agency, in the main, funded by Defra and the RFCC. This year, £250K has been allocated to the Allesley Flood Alleviation Scheme from the total £450k budget.

7 Other Key Activities

7.1 Screen Asset Management Project

7.2 Screens are installed on the ends of culverts to :

- reduce the amount of trash and debris entering the culvert (where it could cause a blockage), known as trash screens; and / or
- to prevent unauthorised access to the culvert, known as security screens.

7.3 Using historic asset records, screens across Coventry have been inspected to determine the asset condition and were priority ranked using a range of assessment criteria. 39 screens were identified overall with the Council having responsibility of 27 screens.

7.4 The project has resulted in a more intelligent approach to the management of these important flood risk assets, and enabled the Council to attract external funding for screen replacement where needed. For example, we received Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding of £25,335 for the replacement of a screen on Bowness Close in Holbrooks. This was installed in November 2018, reducing flood risk to 34 properties.

7.5 £50K Grant in Aid funding has also been allocated for screen replacement and culvert improvements at Canberra Road, also to be delivered this financial year and works will commence on site in the coming months.

7.6 Bennetts Road, Keresley

7.7 Following a national review of schemes put forward for DEFRA funding in September 2018, £150K Flood Defence Grant in Aid was allocated for a flood alleviation scheme at Bennetts Road to reduce surface water flood risk to 14 properties; for delivery in 2019/20. We are now working with planning colleagues and Severn Trent Water to ensure the scheme is developed to be consistent with the Keresley Sustainable Urban Extension. Discussions are ongoing with a local developer relating to potentially accommodating flood alleviation measures as part of the development.

7.8 Catchment Coordination

7.9 The Governments 25 Year Environment Plan called for improved management of river catchments. There is significant development planned within the Sherbourne catchment and multiple organisations are aspiring to deliver improvements such as biodiversity, flood alleviation, and amenity. Therefore, the team has produced integrated catchment mapping for partners, and chaired the first meeting of the Sherbourne Operational Catchment Partnership on 13th December 2018. In addition to helping with the co-ordination of potential projects in the catchment, this is helping focus on possible new development Section 106 contributions towards flood risk improvements. We believe this partnership

approach will help to deliver sustainable gains for the city, and therefore if successful may be extended to other catchments such as the River Sowe.

7.10 Pre-App advice for Planning Applications

7.11 As part of a joined up approach with the our Planning team, Highways offer advice to developers to assist their preparation of the planning applications. This initiative is being developed further to provide a complete and holistic service through the Planning process and is subject of a separate report from planning officers in September.

7.12 The Flood Risk Management has already been commissioned to date to deliver two Flood Risk Assessments, a Drainage Strategy and the detailed design of a surface water drainage scheme.

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