

Meeting date: 22nd APRIL 2021
Report to: CABINET MEMBER FOR
ENVIRONMENT AND HIGHWAYS
**Subject/report
title:** FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT – ANNUAL UPDATE
Report from: HEAD OF HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE
**Report
author/lead
contact officer:** EDWARD BRADFORD
ebradford@solihull.gov.uk



Wards affected:

All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

**Public/private
report:** Public

**Exempt by virtue
of paragraph:** N/A

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide the Cabinet Member with an annual update on Flood Risk Management related activities that have been undertaken since adoption of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in November 2015.

2. Decision(s) recommended

2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to:

- a) Note the contents of the report relating to work carried out during 2020/21
- b) Approve the proposed work plan for the service area to March 2022, as set out in Appendix A
- c) Approve the set of draft measures that are proposed to be included in the Flood Risk Management Plan for the Birmingham Flood Risk Area under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, as set out in Appendix B
- d) Agree to receive a further update in April 2022

3. Matters for Consideration

What are our roles and responsibilities relating to Flood Risk Management?

- 3.1 In 2010, the Council became a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), a role that has been undertaken by the Drainage and Flood Risk Management team with Highway Infrastructure.
- 3.2 As the LLFA, the Council is required to:
- prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management within the Borough, coordinating views and activity with other local bodies and communities through public consultation, scrutiny and delivery planning
 - maintain a register of assets that have a significant effect on flooding within the area
 - investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish results
 - issue consents for altering, removing or replacing certain structures or features on ordinary watercourses
 - play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event
- 3.3 In April 2015 the Drainage and Flood Risk Management team took on responsibility as a statutory consultee in relation to surface water when considering planning applications. This is to ensure new development is located away from areas that are considered to be at high risk of flooding and that such new development does not cause additional risk to those living downstream or upstream of a site.
- 3.4 In addition, the Drainage and Flood Risk Management team are responsible for the repair and renewal of the Borough's highway drainage system and carrying out duties under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

What flood events have we experienced since January 2020?

- 3.5 Since January 2020, higher than normal rainfall events were experienced in June and August 2020.
- 3.6 Flash flooding was reported across the Borough on June 23rd. Whilst not on the scale of May 2018, when Solihull experienced 86mm of rainfall in less than 2 hours, 15 reports of water ingress to properties were received, but no residents were required to evacuate. A further 46 properties reported flooding of areas such as back gardens or driveways and 40 locations on the highway network required attendance by tanker services. Officers contacted property owners to check on their health and wellbeing and have since undertaken works where necessary to help mitigate the impact of any future flooding.
- 3.7 Further events were experienced on 16th and 17th August, affecting properties and highways. The highest rainfall was recorded over Hockley Heath, where 111mm of rainfall led to highway flooding on the Stratford Road. Officers received reports of water ingress to properties on Park Avenue, but this required no evacuation. Again, Officers spoke to property owners to check on their health and wellbeing and have since undertaken work to try and better protect properties from future flooding.

What Flood Risk Management activities and projects have we undertaken since January 2020?

Knowing where and when it will flood

- 3.8 Improving our knowledge of where and when it will flood has continued to be an important focus in 2020/21.
- 3.9 Detailed modelling work has been undertaken for Park Avenue, St Alphege and for Stratford Road, Hockley Heath. This work has been funded by £33k grant from the Environment Agency. To help support on-going work at Griffin Lane, Dickens Heath, the Council has installed a data logger to record flows in and around the existing attenuation feature.
- 3.10 Work has also been undertaken associated with the Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment required as part of the Local Plan process, funded in part by a £50k grant from the Environment Agency.

Reducing the risk of flooding and its impact

(a) Delivery of Property Flood Resilience Projects

- 3.11 2020 saw successful business cases for a total of £1,331,500 of Flood Defence Grant in Aid and Local Levy funding for Property Flood Resilience Projects to help better protect 202 properties across the Blythe, Shirley West and St Alphege wards

(b) Development Control

- 3.12 As stated in paragraph 3.3, the Flood Risk Management Team is a statutory consultee to the development control and planning process. Since January 2020, the team have responded to over 2,100 consultation requests. In addition, the team has supported colleagues on master planning for the Kingshurst Village Centre, along with Local Plan sites.

(c) Ordinary watercourse consenting, maintenance and enforcement

- 3.13 The ordinary watercourse network, particularly in rural areas, continues to play an important role in the safe disposal of surface water and contributes towards reducing flood risk.
- 3.14 During 2020, the team have undertaken formal inspections of approximately 5km of watercourses, liaising with landowners to remind them of their roles and responsibilities for maintenance and flow of water under the Land Drainage Act 1991.

Better advice and help for people to protect their families and homes

(a) Community self-help facilities

- 3.15 The team have continued to provide self-help sandbins for the residents of Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath and Nethercote Gardens in the event of a flood and in 2020 provided an additional sandbin for Corley Close, Shirley West.

(b) Monitoring and warning systems

- 3.16 In July 2020, the team purchased a licence to use the Hydromaster system, which provides information for dealing with floods via flood warnings for events up to 5 days in advance.

What will our Flood Risk Management priorities be for the next 12 months?

- 3.17 Notwithstanding the need to respond to any flood events, Appendix A sets out the proposed work plan for the Flood Risk Management Team over the next 12 months.

Flood Risk Management Plans

Background

- 3.18 Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) describe the current and future risk of flooding, including specific actions to manage risk. The EA and LLFA's are reviewing and updating the first plans that were published in 2016 to set out the proposed measures to manage flood risk from 2021-2027.
- 3.19 Whilst the EA is responsible for producing plans for Flood Risk Areas that cover main rivers, the sea, and reservoirs, LLFAs are responsible for producing plans that cover local sources of flooding in their area.

What this means for Solihull

- 3.20 Solihull is required to contribute to the flood risk planning process for the 2021 to 2027 period, as part of the Borough falls within the area covered by the Birmingham FRA, for which a FRMP is required.
- 3.21 As part of the process, Officers have worked with colleagues from the EA and other local authorities across the region to draft appropriate measures for inclusion in the FRMP. Although measures in the FRMP do not all have secured funding, they represent what aims to be done.
- 3.22 As part of the governance process required by the EA, Solihull has been asked to provide its approval to the draft measures that are proposed to be included for the FRMP for the Birmingham FRA, ahead of public consultation later in the year. A copy of the draft measures are set out in Appendix B.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 Under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009, the Council is required to contribute to the flood risk planning process for the 2021 to 2027 period.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the likelihood and impact of flooding in Solihull will be reduced because of the proposed Work Plan, as set out in Appendix A. It is further anticipated that the likelihood and impact will be reduced further because of the draft measures in the Flood Risk Management Plan for the Birmingham Flood Risk Area, as set out in Appendix B.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>Economy:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revitalising our towns and local centres. 2. UK Central (UKC) and maximising the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and social housing. 	<p>The Flood Risk Management Team is a statutory consultee to the development control and planning process. Responding to planning enquiries and supporting work around the Local Plan development sites and major projects, such as HS2, will remain a key priority for the team over the next 12 months.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Enhance Solihull's natural environment. 5. Improve Solihull's air quality. 6. Reduce Solihull's net carbon emissions. 	<p>The Council must comply with the Water Framework Directive, 2000, which is a European Directive to manage, protect and improve the water environment and which was transposed into UK law in 2003.</p> <p>Flood risk management takes into account climate change. In making an assessment of the impacts of climate change on flooding from the land, rivers and sea as part of a flood risk assessment, national guidance gives various sensitivity ranges to provide an appropriate precautionary response to the uncertainty about climate change impacts on rainfall intensities, river flow, wave height and wind speed. Typically, developments in Solihull are asked to provide 40% allowance for climate change with regard to peak rainfall intensity (mm per hour).</p>
<p>People and Communities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Take action to improve life chances in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 9. Sustainable, quality, affordable provision for adults & children with complex needs. 	<p>The Flood Risk Management Team is working to help protect communities at risk from flooding.</p> <p>There are approximately 1,553 properties across the Borough considered to be within a 1 in 30 year surface water flood outline (3.3% annual chance) and 4,512 properties within the 1 in 100 year surface water flood outline (1% annual chance).</p> <p>5-10% of the Borough is considered to be within a floodplain and 1,955 properties are considered to be at risk of fluvial flooding.</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 The Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board received a briefing note at the November 2019 meeting on work undertaken by Officers following the May 2018 flooding.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 The day to day running of the Flood Risk Management team and the undertaking of its statutory duties as set out in this report are primarily funded through Council core revenue funding. The 2021/22 revenue budget for the Flood Risk Management service is £237,440.

6.3.2 The delivery of flood mitigation projects is funded primarily through Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA), which is administered by the Environment Agency on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and through Local Levy funding held by the Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 places a duty on Local Authorities to prepare and put in place strategies for managing flood risk from groundwater, surface water and ordinary watercourses in their areas.

6.5 Risk implications:

6.5.1 None.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 A Fair Treatment Assessment was undertaken of the service in May 2016. A number of actions were identified as a result of the assessment and which are monitored through the Economy and Infrastructure Directorate Fair Treatment Action List.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix A – Proposed Service Area Work Plan to January 2022.

7.2 Appendix B – Birmingham FRA Draft Measures.

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None.

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 Solihull Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, 2015.