

Meeting date: Monday 24th April 2023

Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Subject/report title: Flood Risk Management – Annual Update

Report from: Mark O’Connell – Head of Highway Infrastructure

Report author/lead contact officer: Dean Ward – Principal Engineer

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
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Public/private report: Public

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 To provide the Cabinet Member with the annual update on Flood Risk Management related activities that have been undertaken since the 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 2022/23
 - b) Approve the proposed work plan for the service area to March 2024, as set out in Appendix A
 - c) Approve the “Guide to Sustainable Drainage” document and the policies therein, including the continued use of sustainable methods of flood risk reduction and drainage, contained in Appendix B
 - d) Agree to receive a further update in April 2024.

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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 is undertaken by the Drainage and Flood Risk Management team within Highways 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 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 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 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 April 2022?

- 3.5 Since the last Cabinet update in April 2022, the Borough has not reported any higher than normal rainfall events or significant flood events.

What Flood Risk Management activities and projects have we undertaken since April 2022?

Knowing where and when it will flood

- 3.6 Improving knowledge of where and when it will flood has continued to be an important focus in 2022/23.
- 3.7 Significant investment and calibration has been undertaken in a flood warning system which should give all residents the ability to respond to potential incidents before they occur.

Reducing the risk of flooding and its impact

3.8 Delivery of Property Flood Resilience Projects

- 3.8.1 Following the successful funding and installation of property flood resilience measures across previously flooded properties within the Blythe, Shirley West and St Alphege wards, officers were successful in securing funding of over £1.5m from the Environment Agency to provide measures to those affected by the June 2021 flood event.
- 3.8.2 This project remains ongoing and residents continue to have measures installed which will provide resilience should a similar incident occur in the future.

3.9 Development Control

- 3.9.1 As stated in paragraph 3.3, the Flood Risk Management Team is a statutory consultee to the development control and planning process. Since January 2021, the team have responded to over 1,700 consultation requests, including a significant number of HS2 related applications. In addition, the team has supported colleagues with the master planning for sites within the Borough.
- 3.9.2 The team have produced a “Guide to Sustainable Drainage” document which provides guidance on the requirements of planning, design and implementation of sustainable urban drainage solutions (SuDS) in Solihull in accordance with national and local policy and guidance.
- 3.9.3 The guide, contained in Appendix B, notes local policy requirements and provides specific engineering details where the requirements in Solihull differ from national standards.
- 3.9.4 This guide is to be used by all involved in the planning, design, construction, implementation, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of SuDS in Solihull and is intended to be used for all types of development, including residential, commercial, industrial and recreational.

3.10 Ordinary watercourse consenting, maintenance and enforcement.

- 3.10.1 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.
- 3.10.2 During 2022/23, 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.
- 3.10.3 Additional cameras have been installed for our critical watercourse structures and residents and officers can now monitor these in real time.

3.11 Tanker Services

3.11.1 Coupled with the planning and technical aspects noted above, tanker operatives have been at the forefront of the customer service experience. The teams have responded to 846 requests for assistance, whilst at the same time inspecting 90% of our overall highway drainage assets.

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

3.12 Notwithstanding the need to respond to any flood events, Appendix A sets out the proposed work plan for the next 12 months.

3.13 The primary focus of this work plan is to successfully deliver the current pipeline of flood mitigation schemes whilst targeting new areas for flood risk reduction in a proactive manner.

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

4.1 The alternative “do nothing” scenario would reduce control on new developments as they come forward by not providing a set of minimum requirements that are expected of all SuDS across the borough.

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 and the continued push for high quality SuDS 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. Deliver UK Central (UKC) and maximise the opportunities of HS2. 3. Increase the supply, quality and energy efficiency 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 and physical 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 assessing the impacts of</p>

Priority:	Contribution:
	<p>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 and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities. 8. Enable communities to thrive. 9. Sustainable, quality care and support 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 flooding from rivers.</p>
10.Promote employee wellbeing	N/A

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 None

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 2023/24 revenue budget for the Flood Risk Management service is £258,960.

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. The approved Highways Services 2023/24 capital programme budgeted allocation for Flood Risk Management is £1.054million which will fund the on-going delivery of the current programme for agreed Flood mitigation projects.

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

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), the Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System (ICS):

- 6.7.1 None

7. List of appendices referred to

- 7.1 Appendix A – Proposed Service Area Work Plan to March 2024
- 7.2 Appendix B - A Guide to Sustainable Drainage in Solihull

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.