

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee		
DATE:	20 th November 2013	AGENDA ITEM:	9
TITLE:	FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 -APPROVAL TO SPEND LOCAL LEVY GRANT FOR SURFACE WATER FLOOD REDUCTION SCHEMES IN READING		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To seek Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee approval to spend the Grant Allocation for surface water flood reduction measures in Reading, in order to carry out Reading Borough Council's responsibilities as the Lead Local Flood Authority as set out in the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and Flood Risk Regulations 2009.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the Capital spend proposal of the Local Levy Grant Allocation on the approved Flood Defence Grant in Aid award for schemes at The Cowsey, Lousehill Copse, Merrivale Gardens and Circuit Lane.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.
- 3.2 To prevent loss of life or serious injury, maintain access for emergency services, protect vital facilities within the community and to protect Reading Borough Council property.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) gained Royal Assent on 8th April 2010. This includes statutory provisions for implementation of recommendations in the Pitt Review following the July 2007 exceptional rainfall event. County and Unitary Authorities have been designated as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and given the leadership role for local flood risk management from all sources of flooding, except main rivers and the sea.
- 4.2 Following the extreme rainfall event of July 2007, Reading Borough Council have identified flooding hotspots within the Borough through the preparation of the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) and these areas are prioritised for mitigation works as part of Reading's Local Flood Risk Management duties.
- 4.3 Reading Borough Council has made successful bids for Capital Local Levy Grant funding from the Environment Agency for The Cowsey, Lousehill Copse, Merrivale Gardens and Circuit Lane flood risk reduction schemes.

5. LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY DUTIES

- 5.1 Schedule 2 of the FWMA amends other Acts and under the amended Section 14A of the Land Drainage Act 1991, LLFA's have the power to carry out works to manage flood risk from surface water runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, where the work is desirable having regard to the 'local strategy for flood risk management'.

6 PROPOSAL

- 6.1 This report seeks **Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee** approval to spend the Grant Allocation for surface water flood reduction measures in Reading on the approved schemes as follows:

6.2 The Cowsey Flood Attenuation Scheme

South Reading suffered considerable flooding during the July 2007 extreme rainfall event, notably in the Kingsley Close area. Works to reduce this flooding risk have been carried out since 2007 with the installation of an underground flood storage facility in the Vernon Crescent open green area, ditch and culvert cleaning adjacent to the former Compaq site, extensive watercourse regarding of the A33 Brewery Ditch, as well as property level flood protection measures to properties in Kingsley Close that were worst affected by the flooding.

- 6.3 As a continuation of these flood reduction measures in South Reading it is proposed to install an online attenuation basin and temporary pond in The Cowsey to control the surface water run off, store the flood water during heavy rainfall events and control the flow of water into the sewer system once flood risk has passed.

6.4 The scheme will include some deeper wetland pockets to promote diversity of plant, fauna and wildlife. Run-off from The Cowsey woodland area currently enters a series of land drains and ditches before discharging to the adopted Thames Water sewer. During storms the water entering the drains overtops the banks and runs overland through the John Rabson Recreation Ground. The proposed works will attenuate surface water before it enters the adopted sewer and reduce the potential for overland flow through the recreation ground. The attenuation of the surface water run-off will increase the standard of protection to the adjacent properties and those on the lower side of the recreation area by alleviating the overland flow from the land drains.

6.5 The scheme will afford both flood protection and environmental enhancement.

6.6 **Lousehill Copse Flood reduction Scheme**

Run-off from Lousehill Copse is conveyed via an open channel to a pond within the wooded copse. Due to a lack of maintenance these have become clogged with silt and the plastic pipe overflow from the pond has become blocked. During severe rainfall events the combination of siltation and the blocked overflow cause surface water to overtop the banks, flow down an embankment and flood properties below Tay Road. The proposed works clear the pond and open channel and provide a formal headwall and overflow from the pond significantly increasing the standard of protection to the adjacent properties.

6.7 The scheme will afford both flood protection and environmental enhancement.

6.8 **Merrivale Gardens Flood Reduction Scheme**

Surface water run-off from woodland and park areas in the upstream catchment enter a series of connecting ditches before discharging into adopted Thames Water sewers in the lower catchment.

6.9 During storms the surface water run-off can exceed the capacity of the sewers in the lower catchment which is exacerbated by overland flows from the upper catchment. As a consequence surface water flows in the lower catchment result in flooding of the properties in Merrivale Gardens and Templeton Gardens, where there is little drainage provision, and no formal channel lines or kerbs preventing run-off from impacting on private properties. The proposals are for highway drainage and mitigation measures to manage and control water on the surface, which will significantly increase the standard of protection to the adjacent properties and reduce the future risk of surface water flooding.

6.10 The scheme will afford flood protection and reduce the risk of future flooding.

6.11 Circuit Lane Flood Reduction Scheme

During the July 2007 extreme rainfall event, surface water run-off affected several properties near to the junction of Circuit Lane and the A4 Bath Road, where residences are situated at a lower level than the adjacent highway and verge.

- 6.12 The proposals are for minor highway drainage and mitigation measures to manage and control water on the surface, which will significantly increase the standard of protection to the adjacent properties and reduce the future risk of surface water flooding.

6.13 The scheme will afford flood protection and reduce the risk of future flooding.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 7.1 To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all.
- 7.2 To develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley.

8. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 8.1 Work on the flood risk reduction schemes at The Cowsey, Lousehill Copse, Merrivale Gardens and Circuit Lane will be placed in the public domain.
- 8.2 Advance information notice boards will be erected at The Cowsey and Lousehill sites detailing the scope of the scheme.
- 8.3 Advance letter drops will be carried out to the residents of Merrivale Gardens and Circuit Lane prior to works commencing.
- 8.2 A presentation of The Cowsey Flood Attenuation scheme was made in conjunction with The Woodlands Strategy on Monday 16th September 2013 at the South Reading Community Centre. There is an opportunity for feedback via the Woodland Strategy Consultation.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires the Borough Council to take the leadership role for ensuring significant risk from all sources of flooding is identified and managed.
- 9.2 Schedule 2 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 amends other Acts and under the amended Section 14A of the Land Drainage Act 1991, LLFA's have the power to carry out works to manage flood risk from surface water runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, where the work is desirable having regard to the 'local strategy for flood risk management'.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Borough Council has successfully bid for Grant Funding from Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) via the Environment Agency (EA) to carry out flood reduction schemes at The Cowsey, Lousehill Copse, Merrivale Gardens and Circuit Lane.
- 10.2 The Borough Council has a dedicated Revenue budget to comply with the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
- 10.3 The Borough Council will continue to bid for funding from (DEFRA) and the EA through the annual Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) funding mechanism.
- 10.4 The financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:-

10.5 Revenue Implications

Revenue Programme reference from budget book: page line	2013/14 £ 50,000	2014/15 £ 50,000 (Subject to Cabinet Approval March 2014)	
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Capital Implications

Capital Programme reference from budget book: page line Bridges & Carriageway Pg 168	2013/14 £2,198,000	2014/15 TBC (Subject to Cabinet Approval March 2014)	
Proposed Capital Expenditure	£50,000	Subject to LTP funding award	
Funded by EA FDGiA Grant	£ 61,000 (FDGiA Awarded by EA)	TBC with future FDGiA bids	
Total Funding	£ 161,000	TBC	

11 Risk Assessment.

Lead Local Flood Authority Councils are required to carry out their designated statutory duties, as described in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Previous reports to Cabinet and CCEA Scrutiny.
- Flood & Water Management Act 2010.
- Flood Risk Regulations 2009.
- Land Drainage Act 1991.
- The Cowsey Flood Attenuation Scheme Drawing
- Lousehill Copse Flood Reduction Scheme Drawing
- Merrivale Gardens Flood Reduction Scheme Drawing
- Circuit Lane Flood Reduction Scheme Drawing