

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee		
DATE:	16 <sup>th</sup> JULY 2014	AGENDA ITEM:	11
TITLE:	FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 - POST 2013/14 WINTER FLOODING UPDATE, SECTION 19 FLOOD REPORT & APPROVAL TO SPEND SEVERE WEATHER RECOVERY SCHEME GRANT.		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To update the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee on the progress to the Council's response to flooding.
- 1.2 To provide the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee with Reading Borough Council's Section 19 Flood Investigation report as required by the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA).
- 1.3 To seek Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee approval to spend the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme & the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Tranche 2 Grant Allocations on flood reduction measures in Reading identified in the Section 19 Flood Investigation report, 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.
- 1.4 To advise the Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee of further investigation works underway.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the progress made following the flooding event.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes the Section 19 report Flood Investigation report.
- 2.3 That the Committee approves the Capital spend proposals of the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme & the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Tranche 2 Grant Allocation.
- 2.4 That the Committee notes the additional flood investigation work.

### **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 Record levels of rainfall fell in January 2014, (wettest in 100 years), wet weather continued into February 2014 and any rain falling on already saturated ground ran off quickly causing rapid rises in river levels. Flooding was experienced on the Thames, the Kennet and the Foudry Brook in Reading for an extended duration, starting with the dissemination of the first flood alert on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2013 through to late March 2014.
- 4.2 Reading Borough Council has identified sites that flooded within the Borough during this flooding event and prioritised investigation works, (refer Appendix A)
- 4.3 Reading Borough Council has prepared the FWMA Section 19 Flood Investigation report, (refer Appendix B).
- 4.4 Reading Borough Council has been awarded Severe Weather Recovery Scheme & the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Tranche 2 Grant funding towards recovery and flood risk reduction schemes to be used on those sites directly affected by the December 2013 to March 2014 flood event.

### **5. PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 5.1 The Reading Recovery Coordination Group was set up on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2014 with members of RBC Emergency Planning, Housing, Highways, Streetcare, Communications, Finance, Policy and Parks Departments, as well as Thames Valley Police, the Environment Agency, Canal & River Trust, Thames Water, Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue, 7 Rifles Army Corp and RE3 Waste.
- 5.2 An action log, (refer Appendix C), was established and weekly meetings took place with regular updates recorded. A wide range of actions were addressed including communication, sandbag recovery, contamination, financial assistance to householders and businesses affected by flooding, clean up after flooding subsided, funding opportunities, psychological support signposting, future flood prevention and business continuity. The vast majority of these recovery actions are now completed, with only the longer term restoration of banks remaining outstanding, and action plans for these issues are addressed elsewhere within this report.

5.3 Work by the Councils Flood Recovery Group has been undertaken to ensure that flood grant eligibility letters for households and Businesses (for the Repair and Renew Grant and the Business Support Scheme grants respectively) have been disseminated to the 39 internally flooded households and business premises within Reading borough. These letters were sent on the 9/5/14 and follow up letters were sent on 19/6/14.

5.4 To date no applications for either the Repair and Renew Grant or Business Support Scheme have been received, and 2 businesses have confirmed that they won't be making an application

## **6 PROPOSAL**

6.1 This report seeks **Strategic Environment, Planning & Transport Committee** approval to spend the Severe Weather Recovery Scheme & Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Tranche 2 Grant Allocation for fluvial and surface water flood reduction measures in Reading on the approved schemes as follows:

### **6.2 Circuit Lane - Holybrook Breech Scheme**

Properties at the bottom of Circuit Lane and Sylvan Walk bordering the Holybrook flood plain suffered flooding during the flood event. Floodwater breached sections of the river embankments, which The Council are responsible for. Survey works have been commissioned to establish the reinstatement levels necessary to control river flow and to reduce the impact of floodwater discharging into the northern flood plain earlier than it should. A scheme will be brought forward to repair the embankments and to strengthen flood resilience.

6.3 Proposals are also being developed for potential flood alleviation works including channel improvements, improvements to surface water drainage outfalls into Holybrook tributary, floodplain remodelling and property defences,

### **6.4 Island Road Flood Reduction Scheme**

During the December 2013 to March 2014 flood event Island Road had to be closed to general vehicle traffic on 5 occasions lasting over 28 days, resulting in closure of the Recycling Plant to the public. Record river levels restricted the flow of surface water along Island Road surface water ditches into the Foudry Brook with water collecting at the low point adjacent Thames Water's Sewer Treatment Works. Topographical surveys have been commissioned to establish the critical outfall levels and a scheme to regrade the open surface water ditches will be brought forward.

### **6.5 Investigations and Flood Prevention Schemes**

6.5.1 Work to investigate and propose further flood reduction schemes listed in the flooded sites in Appendix A will be brought back to **Strategic Environment,**

**Planning & Transport Committee** at a future date for consideration and approval.

- 6.5.2 Schemes will be prioritised within available budget and any unfunded schemes will remain on the priority schemes list until further sources of funding is established and secured.

## **7 FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT ACT 2010 - SECTION 19 FLOOD INVESTIGATION REPORT**

- 7.1 The collection of precise details from an actual flood incident is vital in providing an accurate picture of the flood risk across the Boroughs.
- 7.2 The aim of a Section 19 Flood Investigation Report is to bring together all useful information together in one place, providing an understanding of why the incident occurred as it did and outline potential long-term solutions and flood risk management actions. Investigations will involve consultation with the relevant risk management authorities, landowners and private organisations involved.
- 7.3 Reports will provide clear and thorough understanding of flood situations, but the duty to investigate does not guarantee that problems will be resolved. Discussions about the next steps following the incident will be made by the parties involved. The decision whether to investigate a flood or not is ultimately at the discretion of the Boroughs
- 7.4 The Section 19 Report is attached in Appendix B. It should be noted that the December 2013 to March 2014 flooding occurred from Main River which fall under Environment Agency responsibility. The Council will, however, take an active role is seeking suitable solutions and implement cost effective and sustainable schemes to reduce the risk of future flooding.
- 7.5 The Environment Agency (EA) has produced a Section 19 Report for the December 2013 to March 2014 event, as they are the responsible authority for Main Rivers, (link to EA Section 19 Report within RBC Section 19 Report (Appendix B)).

## **8. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

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

## **9. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 9.1 Work on the Severe Weather Recovery Grant Fund to reduce flood risk will be placed in the public domain.

- 9.2 Section 138 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on local authorities to involve local representatives when carrying out "any of its functions" by providing information, consulting or "involving in another way".
- 9.3 The Council provided a significant officer presence in and around the flooded areas, to allow appropriate monitoring of river levels and liaison with the public.
- 9.4 Local residents in some riverside areas at risk were informed of the Council's flood response activities via targeted leafleting & door knocking, such that they were aware of our flood response strategy, and in particular aware of activities associated with the erection of sandbag walls and High Volume Pumps to provide as much support and advice to residents as possible.

## 10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 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 received Severe Weather Recovery Scheme & Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Tranche 2 Grant Funding from Department of Transport (DfT) to carry out flood repair works following the December 2013 to March 2014 flood event.
- 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 financial implications arising from the proposals set out in this report are set out below:-

### Revenue Implications

	2014/15	STATUS
Revenue Programme reference from budget book:	£ 50,000	Approved Existing Revenue Budget

DfT Severe Weather Recovery Scheme (Revenue)	£ 96,187	Awarded Revenue Grant to be Approved by Strategic, Environment, Planning & Transport Committee on 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2014 to spend on Flood Recovery Schemes
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### Capital Implications

	2014/15	STATUS
DfT Severe Weather Recovery Scheme Grant (Capital)	£ 55,947	Awarded Capital Grant to be Approved by Strategic, Environment, Planning & Transport Committee on 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2014 to spend on Flood Recovery Schemes
DfT Severe Weather Recovery Scheme 2 Grant (Capital)	£ 21,171	Awarded Capital Grant to be Approved by Strategic, Environment, Planning & Transport Committee on 16 <sup>th</sup> July 2014 to spend on Flood Recovery Schemes
Total Funding	£ 223,305	

## 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

- SEPT Committee report 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014 on 2013/14 Winter Flooding.
- Flood & Water Management Act 2010.
- Flood Risk Regulations 2009.
- Land Drainage Act 1991.

## 13. APPENDIX

- Appendix A - Flooded properties list
- Appendix B - Section 19 Report
- Appendix C - Reading Recovery Coordination Group Action Log