

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY (DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES)

TO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT		
DATE:	26 March 2015	AGENDA ITEM:	8
TITLE:	Oxford Flood Relief Schemes - Western Conveyance Channel		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING & TRANSPORT
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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the proposed flood alleviation Schemes upstream of Reading in the Oxford area.
- 1.2 The 2 schemes are the Abingdon Flood alleviation scheme and Oxford Flood alleviation scheme.
- 1.3 The Oxford Flood alleviation scheme is similar in principle to the Jubilee River in Windsor, but it will be based in Oxford and called the Western Conveyance Channel. The Abingdon scheme comprises 3 parts including a proposed flood storage area for the river Ock and will require hydraulic modelling from Sandford to South of Mapledurham.
- 1.4 At present, neither scheme has been approved or designed.
- 1.5 Downstream impacts will need to be factored into the design of the scheme such that floodwater is not displaced downstream thus increasing the risk of flooding elsewhere.
- 1.6 The local planning authority will need to demonstrate, through a detailed Flood Risk Assessment, that it does not increase risk to other communities in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 1.7 The scheme has already been allocated £42 million in Flood Defence Grant in Aid funding.
- 1.8 The earliest that approval will be given for a scheme to go ahead will be spring 2018.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Committee note this report and presentation by the Environment Agency and that the authority considers making a response to the Planning Applications once applications have been made.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** The River Thames flows through Reading and there are approximately 5500 properties in the fluvial floodplain within the Reading Borough Council boundary.
- 3.2** The 2 proposed flood schemes detailed in section 1 above are upstream of Reading on the River Thames in the Oxford area.
- 3.3** Whilst Reading does not immediately border Oxford at the 2 flood schemes closest point in Mapledurham, there is only a short stretch of river between Mapledurham/Purley and Reading and thus knowledge of this upstream scheme may be of interest to Reading residents.
- 3.4** The Environment Agency have been invited along to provide an overview presentation to this meeting and to answer any questions.

4. CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1** At present the Western Conveyance Channel scheme has not yet been approved or designed and a planning process will need to be followed before either scheme can be implemented.
- 4.2** Appendix A and B show the proposed location of both schemes.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

- 5.1** The strategic aims are:
- To Develop Reading as a Green City with a sustainable environment and economy at the heart of the Thames Valley
 - To establish Reading as a learning City and a stimulating and rewarding place to live and visit
 - To promote equality, social inclusion and a safe and healthy environment for all

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 6.1** The community will be able to comment on either scheme via the planning application process once an application is made. The Local Planning Authority is likely to be Oxfordshire County Council.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;

- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not relevant to the decisions required within this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/381859/Top_40_Annex_FINAL.pdf

http://kateprendergast.typepad.com/files/sfp_briefing_aug_14_v3.pdf

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-26687408>