

Item 8

Report on the recent flooding in Surrey Heath

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE

8th March 2007

KEY ISSUE:

This report updates on local developments to alleviate the risk of flooding in Surrey Heath and gives guidance as to how local residents can protect themselves and who they should contact in the event of a flood.

SUMMARY:

Surrey County Council has carried out additional maintenance works to ditches and has allocated an additional £1 million to addressing drainage issues in 07/08 across the County. Surrey Heath Borough Council have employed a Land Drainage Engineer. This report also clarifies the role and responsibilities of different agencies in flood protection, warning and emergency action.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Local Committee (Surrey Heath) discusses the report and notes the progress being made.

Contact Details

Report by: Jane Biscombe
01276 800269

Contacts: Ian Haller – Surrey County Council
Peter Sheppard - Surrey County Council
Stephen Child - Surrey County Council
Wayne Purdon – Surrey Heath Borough Council

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. In the Surrey Heath area Chobham, Lightwater, Bisley, Heatherside and Mytchett have been severely affected by recent floods.
2. Local meetings have been held in Lightwater and Windlesham to discuss the recent flooding with representatives from Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, The Environment Agency and Surrey Police. Agencies have taken steps to reduce the risk during future periods of heavy rain and these are detailed in the main body of the report.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

Highways Maintenance

3. Surrey County Council Maintenance Engineers have been successful in a bid to Surrey County Council central funds for ditch works to improve drainage in Surrey Heath. The following table is the programme for these ditching works.

Site	Status	Sections
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Windlesham Rd, Chobham	Completed	Part only
Halebourne Ln , Chobham	Completed	Part only
Chertsey Rd Windlesham (Burma Rd)	Completed	Part only
Staple Hill Rd, Chobham	Completed	Part only
Rye Grove, Lightwater	Completed	Various
A30 London Rd Windlesham	Completed	Part only
Philpot Lane, Chobham	Completed	Various
Ford Rd Chobham	Ongoing	Various
Station Road, Chobham	Ongoing	Near St Nicholas Cottage
Burnt Pollard lane, Lightwater	Ongoing	Part only
A319 Chertsey Rd, Chobham	On going	Various
Pound Lane, Windlesham	Not started	Subject to budget
Hookmill Lane, Lightwater	Not started	Subject to budget

- In addition, Surrey County Council's Executive has agreed £1 million will be spent on drainage in 07/08 across the County. It is anticipated this will be split into £800,000 capital funding which will be spent on drainage schemes to improve drainage in identified areas and £200,000 revenue funding that will be spent on, for example, enhanced cleaning and jetting of gullies when approved by Surrey County Council's Executive.
- For all of the money above, areas have not been identified yet, but a countywide plan will be drawn together from information from Members and officers. The Transportation Management Team will be looking at this issue imminently and a Flooding Task Group is being set up jointly by Surrey County Council's Environment and Transportation Select Committees. This group includes Lavinia Sealy and David Ivison. It is understood that the Task Group will be sending a questionnaire in March / April 2007 to all County Councillors to request information on areas prone to flooding.

Borough Council Land Drainage Responsibility

- Surrey Heath Borough Council have employed a Land Drainage Engineer, Wayne Purdon, who has been in post since early January, to co-ordinate the Borough Council's riparian responsibilities on Borough Council owned land. Surrey Heath Borough Council are currently reviewing their ways of working and clarifying their flood defence role. As such the exact scope of this post is not yet known.
- The Borough Council are the land drainage enforcement authority if land owners are not keeping ditches, gullies, culvert etc clear. This enforcement is done with the support and assistance of the Environment Agency. However, the Environment Agency are the enforcement authority for watercourses that have been classed as "main rivers".

Advice from Government

- A draft guide was published on 19th February 2007 to help planners better understand how planning policy should be used to manage flood risk, as climate change continues to impact on traditional weather patterns. The 'living draft' of a Practice Guide Companion to Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25) will act as a consultation document as well as an interim support document for planners on applying PPS25 policy and seeks to help create consistency in how PPS25 is implemented across the country.

Local contacts in the event of a flood and how local people can protect themselves

9. At its meeting on 19th October 2006, the Local Committee took a report on flooding in Surrey Heath. This included information on who local people should contact in the event of a flood and how local people can find out about the flood risk in the area that they live. This information is included in Annex 1.

CONSULTATION

10. Partners involved in the management of flooding have been consulted on the information in this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. Budget implications as outlined in the report. The financial implications of floods to local people can be huge. Local residents are able to find out from the Environment Agency if they are at risk from flooding, and if they feel it appropriate, sign up to the Floodline early warning scheme, where available.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

12. None

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

13. None

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

14. None

What do I do if I want to know if I am at risk from flooding?

The Environment Agency runs a Floodline service that enables residents to access information about the risk of flooding and also gives guidance on protecting properties from flooding. Flood warnings can be sent out by The Environment Agency to landline phones, mobile phones, pagers and faxes and are also available on their website which is updated every 15 minutes.

To find out more about the Floodline scheme or to register to receive warnings please call The Environment Agency on 0845 988 1188 or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/. Flood Warnings may not be available in all locations. Flood warnings are currently available for The Bourne, Mill Bourne, Windlebrook and the River Blackwater.

What should I do if a flood starts?

If water is rising and likely to flood into your home please refer to the contact numbers below and to the information from the Environment Agency website in Annex 1 of this report. Unfortunately the responsibility for drainage and flooding problems can be complicated, and the following is not definitive, but should, in most cases, direct you to the correct agency.

If your enquiry relates to a **main river** you should contact the Environment Agency:

General enquiry line: 08708 506506- To be put through to the local office
Emergency hotline: 0800 807060 - To report emergencies
Floodline: 0845 988 1188 - For information on flooding
Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

If your enquiry involves **land drainage, 'non-main river', private sewer, private land or a private road** then it is the responsibility of the property/land owner. To find out who owns an area of land or property, contact the Local Land Registry Office for Surrey Heath which is Durham on 0191 301 2345 website: <http://www.landreg.gov.uk/> or in an emergency contact the Environment Agency's Incident Hotline on 0800 807060

If your enquiry relates to a **public sewer** please contact Thames Water via their 24hr hotline - 0845 9200 800

If your enquiry involves **highway drainage**, including road gullies and highway culverts (large pipes running under a road as part of a water course) then please contact Surrey County Council telephone 08456 009 009 or you can report an emergency on 0870 126 6060.

A summary of contacts can be found in Annex 2.

What should I do if I need sandbags?

Surrey Heath Borough Council has used its discretionary powers to strategically place green containers containing a limited supply of sandbags and associated equipment within the Borough. The containers are located in areas that are susceptible to flooding in severe weather conditions for residents on a self collect basis and are unlocked in the event of a flooding emergency. Sandbag containers are located at:

Lightwater Country Park (Car Park immediately left through entrance)
Chobham (Fire Station Car Park)

Windlesham (High Street entrance to public footpath opposite 'The Sun' public house)
Bisley (Shaftsbury Road Car Park)

In the circumstance of extreme flooding the Council's contractor may be called upon to deliver sandbags at the Council's discretion – **Note: there may be a charge to the homeowner for this service - 01276 707100**

Who cleans up after a flood?

Responsibility for cleaning up after a flood lies with the landowner. This includes ditches that cross or adjoin their land. Roads and pavements are dealt with by the Borough Council as part of its street sweeping responsibilities although some accumulations of rubbish are the responsibility of the Highway Authority, particularly where they block highway drains. Surrey County Council is responsible for clearing road drains of debris after a flood.

If your house is flooded then it is your responsibility, or your landlords, to clear up. Please contact your insurance company as soon as possible for advice and information. If properties are not cleaned up and start to cause a nuisance to others then Environmental Health may serve a notice on the property to ensure it is cleaned up. Large objects (carpets, furniture etc) can be disposed of at a local civic amenity site (Wilton Road, Camberley or Swift Lane, Bagshot) or by contacting the Borough Council on 01276 707303 (There is a charge for the Borough Council to remove bulky items).

What can local residents do to protect themselves?

The following is taken from the Environment Agency website:

What to do When you Hear a Flood Warning

- Listen out for warnings on radio and TV and phone Floodline on 0845 988 1188 for more information.
- Move pets, vehicles, valuables and other items to safety.
- Alert your neighbours, particularly the elderly.
- Put sandbags or flood boards in place - but make sure your property is ventilated. Plug sinks/baths and put a sandbag in the toilet bowl to prevent backflow.
- Be ready to turn off gas and electricity (get help if needed). Unplug electrical items and move them upstairs if possible.
- Co-operate with emergency services and local authorities - you may be evacuated to a rest centre.
- Do as much as you can in daylight. Doing anything in the dark will be a lot harder, especially if the electricity fails.

Stay Safe in a Flood

- Floods can kill. Don't try to walk or drive through floodwater - six inches of fast flowing water can knock you over and two feet of water will float your car. Manhole covers may have come off and there may be other hazards you can't see.
- Never try to swim through fast flowing water - you may get swept away or be struck by an object in the water.
- Don't walk on sea defences, riverbanks or cross river bridges if possible - they may collapse in extreme situations or you may be swept off by large waves. Beware of stones and pebbles being thrown up by waves.
- Avoid contact with floodwater - it may be contaminated with sewage.

Who to call in the event of a flood.

	Working Hours (Mon – Fri: 9 – 5pm)	Out of Hours (Including weekends & Public Holidays)
Highway Drainage	Surrey County Council 08456 009 009	Surrey County Council 0870 126 6060
Main River	Environment Agency General Enquiry Line 08708 506506 Floodline 0845 988 1188	Environment Agency 0800 807060
Land Drainage, Non-Main River, Private Sewer, Private Land or a Private Road	Land Registry Office 0191 301 2345	Environment Agency 0800 807060
Public Sewer	Thames Water 0845 9200 800	Thames Water 0845 9200 800
Flood Warnings / Flooding Information	Environment Agency Floodline 0845 988 1188 Surrey Heath Borough Council 01276 707100	Environment Agency 0800 807060 Surrey Heath Borough Council Environmental Health Duty Officer
Sandbags	Surrey Heath Borough Council 01276 707100	Surrey Heath Borough Council Environmental Health Duty Officer