

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY)****DATE: 25 SEPTEMBER 2015****LEAD OFFICER: DOUG HILL, STRATEGIC NETWORK RESILIENCE MANAGER
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****SUBJECT: PROMOTING RESILIENCE TO FLOODING****DIVISION: ALL****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

Over the winter of 2013/14 the county of Surrey was hit by extreme weather conditions that resulted in a prolonged spell of flooding and affected several districts and boroughs. There were approximately 120 incidents of property flooding and power cuts across the Borough during this event.

In particular, Godalming was badly affected with internal flooding to properties and businesses.

Partners including Surrey County Council (SCC), Waverley Borough Council, the Environment Agency and Thames Water have been working together and with the community to prepare for future flooding.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to note and comment on the work achieved to date by Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council and the Environment Agency in promoting flood resilience in the borough.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To keep the Waverley Local Committee informed of work around flood resilience in the borough.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Over the winter of 2013/14 the county of Surrey was hit by extreme weather conditions that resulted in a prolonged spell of flooding. Waverley was badly affected with a number of properties and businesses in Godalming in particular suffering internal flooding and road closures.

Since then agencies have been working in partnership to improve our preparedness as well as communities' resilience to future flooding, such as through the Waverley Infrastructure Resilience Group, a multi agency group supported by Jeremy Hunt MP. This is in addition to developing flood alleviation schemes, including the Godalming Flood Alleviation Scheme (FAS), as well as maintenance of existing assets and watercourses.

This paper provides an update on the work being carried out by the different organisations as well as the multi-agency work currently underway.

Specifically, it details changes to SCC's Strategic Network Resilience Team that enable it to better manage and respond to flood risk management issues, community resilience activities, and progress towards the development of flood alleviation schemes for the borough.

2. Surrey County Council – managing flood risk

Surrey County Council is designated as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Surrey and has the 'lead' role in managing flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses across the county. This involves close working with partners involved in flood and water management, known as Risk Management Authorities.

Over the last 9 months SCC has strengthened its role by creating the Strategic Network Resilience team to lead manage local flood risk. The new team will focus on three key work-streams: The first will be the development of a capital improvement programme, the second to improve our flood risk management strategy and partnership working and the third to ensure major developments have appropriate surface water management strategies through our role as Statutory Consultee.

More information about the council's role can be found on their website:
<http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/flooding-advice>

Alfold FAS – Initial Assessment

SCC is carrying out an Initial Assessment of possible options to reduce the risk of flooding in Alfold. This work is being carried out in partnership with Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

SCC has also been working closely with the Environment Agency and other partners in developing a number of schemes in Waverley (see section 3 below).

3. Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for managing flood risk on main rivers as well as having a strategic overview of all sources of flooding. In particular, the EA is the lead agency responsible for delivering capital projects and schemes to reduce the risk of flooding from main rivers.

Godalming FAS

The EA is working with partners to look at the various options for the Godalming Flood Alleviation Scheme and to develop updated hydrology and more accurate hydraulic models for the catchment to test these. The options could include: bypass channels, channel improvements, flood walls and banks, temporary defences, property-level protection, flood storage areas and catchment management. The scheme will be built to protect as many properties as possible but only if viable and fully funded.

How much will the scheme cost?

This is a partnership funded scheme. The costs are estimated to be between £2 million and £5 million for localised flood defences along Meadow. Under the partnership funding approach it is likely that at least £2 million of contributions will be required.

Key partners have already pledged significant partnership funding. These include the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), Surrey County Council, Waverley Borough Council, Godalming Town Council and private business. A Memorandum of Understanding is being developed for this which will be progressed as costs become more certain.

Current stage

The EA is progressing with the appraisal stage of the scheme. This involves a study into a wide range of options we have identified and we are currently short-listing these for the most viable options for reducing flood risk. The appraisal will result in a business case for a preferred option with potentially multiple components if viable. Funding availability will influence this.

A sponsor group meeting is being held in October with Jeremy Hunt MP and partners to discuss the costs and benefits for the potential flood alleviation options.

Timescales

At this stage the exact timings for construction of the Godalming Flood Alleviation Scheme are provisional. If the scheme is approved and the contributions are secured, then building work could begin in April 2017 and take approximately 1 to 2 years to complete.

Bramley FAS – Initial Assessment

We are currently undertaking an Initial Assessment to investigate the potential for flood alleviation in Bramley. The Initial Assessment will examine the mechanism of flooding, including fluvial and surface water. It will identify and cost potential solutions to reduce the fluvial flood risk and recommend ideas for a collaborative scheme to address both fluvial and surface water flooding.

Watercourse Maintenance

Watercourse maintenance has been planned this year in:

- Hell Ditch, Godalming.
- River Ock, Godalming.
- Cranleigh Waters, Bramley
- Aldebrook Stream, Rowly
- Holdhurst Brook, Cranleigh
- Littlemead Brook, Cranleigh
- Nuthurst Stream, Cranleigh
- Frensham Vale Stream, Frensham
- River Wey, Farnham

4. Community Resilience in Waverley

In response to the 2013/14 flooding the Surrey Community Resilience Partnership working group, a multi-agency partnership, has been set up. It includes the Boroughs and Districts, SCC, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, EA, utility infrastructure providers and other partners. Waverley Borough Council (WBC) is a lead partner in delivery.

The partnership is working with communities in Waverley to help them to develop the skills to be less vulnerable to harm in emergencies e.g. flooding. Strong, connected communities are better able to prepare, respond and recover from adversity.

These skills/resources include:

- A comprehensive web-based resource package, including a complete review of SCC materials to support residents and communities in incidents. This will also include a one-stop web portal, newsletter, and downloadable information and planning templates, with paper copies available on request, plus social media, generic email address and dedicated (non-emergency) number.
- A modular training programme for resilience volunteers and groups, with support around contingency planning, and on correct ways to report for prevention and incident management. This includes developing two-way communication channels with trusted community contacts.
- Better links between residents and communities and services that can benefit them. For example, support provided free of charge to residents fitting a wide eligibility range if there is loss of power, heat or water.

This aims to deliver practical benefits and empower communities to work together and with agencies for prevention and quicker recovery from incidents. We are looking to benefit as many residents as possible through links with the voluntary sector:

- For example for households with flood protection products, neighbours can help each other fit these if there is a flood warning, especially if someone is on holiday or finds this difficult and requires assistance. This might equally apply to snow clearance, or help in a power cut.

- We are working with community groups as well as self identifying flood and resilience groups to raise awareness of the importance of community resilience and to develop and deliver useful plans and training.
- There is a demand for information on how to report incidents or issues efficiently. Effective reporting can prevent escalation, e.g. blocked culverts.
- Raising awareness of rights and responsibilities, e.g. riparian ownership.
- Informing and warning of local risks and steps that can be taken to minimise these, e.g. fire safety checks or property level protection for flooding.
- We are working to expand this engagement through the voluntary, community and faith sector to support and empower as many communities as possible.

SCC and WBC are working to expand engagement around developing strong resilient communities through better two-way links with the voluntary, community and faith sector, who are well placed to assist in supporting and empowering residents to be prepared for and prevent local incidents including flood damage.

The following Flood Forums are currently active in Waverley:

- Alfold
- Farnham River Management Committee
- Godalming
- Webb Road/Gasden Lane, Witley

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Since the flooding last year agencies have continued to work together to improve our preparedness for future flooding. This has built upon the work achieved by the Waverley Infrastructure Resilience Group. A particular focus has been on working with community groups within Waverley to help them become more resilient to flooding and severe weather.

Work is ongoing to take the flood alleviation schemes forward and secure funding for its full implementation and flood risk management agencies continue to carry out maintenance and improvement works in the Waverley area.

Waverley Local Committee is asked to note and comment on the work achieved to date by SCC, WBC and the Environment Agency in promoting flood resilience in the Borough.

Waverley Flooding website:

<http://www.waverley.gov.uk/emergencies>

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Sources/Background Papers: None