

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)****DATE:** 4 December 2017**LEAD OFFICER:** Tina Donaldson, Community Resilience Advisor, Environment Agency**SUBJECT:** River Thames Scheme**DIVISION:** Thames-side areas of Elmbridge**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

To give an update about the River Thames Scheme (RTS). The scheme is a partnership project to reduce flood risk for Thames-side communities between Datchet (Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead) and Teddington (London Borough of Richmond upon Thames), including Elmbridge.

RECOMMENDATIONS:**The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked to note:**

- (i) RTS is a partnership project, including Elmbridge Borough Council
- (ii) How the scheme will benefit communities within Elmbridge through current and proposed work until 2024.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The River Thames Scheme, the preferred option from the Lower Thames Strategy, has been ongoing since 2009. An update will be provided.

An update will also be given on our work with Thames-side communities in Elmbridge to develop community flood plans, understand local flood risk and to promote community preparedness for future flooding.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The River Thames between Datchet and Teddington has the largest area of undefended, developed floodplain in England. Over 15,000 homes and businesses within the area are at risk from flooding.
- 1.2 The River Thames Scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses and critical infrastructure (Roads, sewerage network, power supplies) between Datchet and Teddington.
- 1.3 The scheme consists of:
 - Construction of 14km of new flood channel, built in 3 sections between Datchet and Shepperton.
 - Improving the flow capacity of Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington weirs

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- Building community resilience through flood planning, Community Resilience Measures, and improved emergency planning
- Community Resilience Measures (CRM) are being considered for those communities that will remain at a high risk of flooding even once the engineered element of the River Thames Scheme are complete. Types of CRM may include permanent flood defences in the form of flood walls or embankments, temporary flood defences that can be deployed in advance of a flood or property level flood intervention that may include flood doors and barriers.
- Creating over 40 hectares of wildlife habitat and facilitating other recreational amenities such as footpaths and water based activities.

2. ANALYSIS:

- 2.1 Major flooding in this area would cause severe disruption to the local and regional road network. It would suspend several major drinking water abstractions supplying the South East and threaten up to 20 local electricity sub-stations.
- 2.2 The River Thames Scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses and critical infrastructure (Roads, sewerage network, power supplies) between Datchet and Teddington.
- 2.3 The total economic benefit of the River Thames Scheme is estimated to be £2.4 billion. Elmbridge Borough Council is estimated to benefit from 0.7% of this figure.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 Several design options have been considered and a preferred design has been selected following discussions with stakeholders across the scheme area.

4. CONSULTATIONS:

- 4.1 Several discussion workshops took place with stakeholders in 2015 and 2016 to seek feedback on scheme design options. Public events and smaller scale drop-ins have also been held across the scheme area in the last 3 years to share information and seek feedback. The last of these were held in November 2016. Further public events will be held in 2018 to inform the public and stakeholders about the final scheme outline design and enable discussion and questions about local impact. Lastly a Planning Application will be made in 2018 when a public enquiry will be held.
- 4.2 There are four Community Resilience Advisors (CRA) engaging with local riverside communities across the whole scheme area. Their role is to provide updates on the River Thames Scheme, gather local knowledge to feedback to the design team and assist communities with their Community Flood Plan to help increase their resilience to flooding. The CRA for the Thames-side areas of Elmbridge is Tina Donaldson.
- 4.3 As part of the Community Resilience Measures element of the scheme, consultation about potential solutions with those communities being considered will take place in 2018.

- 4.4 There is likely to be a public enquiry as part of the Planning Application process. The Planning process is likely to formally commence in 2018.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The scheme delivery is led by the Environment Agency in partnership with:
- Elmbridge Borough Council
 - Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames
 - London Borough of Richmond upon Thames
 - Runnymede Borough Council
 - Spelthorne Borough Council
 - Surrey County Council
 - Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
 - Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)
 - Thames Water
 - Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)
- 5.2 The scheme is estimated to cost £500 - £600 million. The outline design is being finalised to identify construction and other efficiencies but it is likely that central government funding will be in the region of £230 million. Partnership funding must be secured for the remainder. Approximately £100m is already secured, including local councils contributions to the development of the scheme, leaving a funding gap of approximately £250 million.
- 5.3 Elmbridge Borough Council have been asked to fund a proportion of the funding gap in relation to their economic benefit.
- 5.4 We are exploring multiple avenues to reduce the funding gap including:
- Cost reduction and efficiencies through construction and procurement
 - Increasing the benefits case to increase our Grant in Aid eligibility
 - Contributions from beneficiaries and supporters

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 N/A

7. LOCALISM:

- 7.1 We are currently developing the outline designs for both the weirs and the flood channel to get the approval for a scheme that will bring the most benefit for everyone. As part of this, we are looking at how we manage water flows through the River Thames system. This includes how we control water

volumes and speed; and where we can store water in the system in times of large flood events.

- 7.2 The Community Resilience Advisor is engaging with communities in Molesey, Weybridge, Shepperton and Thames Ditton to assist in the development of flood plans to increase resilience and local self-reliance.
- 7.3 Community Resilience Measures are being considered for communities, including Elmbridge. Once we have completed initial assessments, and in conjunction with partner councils, we will identify areas that can be taken forward for more detailed appraisal and consultation with communities to select a preferred solution. CRM will not be suitable for all communities and properties. Our assessments will identify those measures that can be taken forward based on how much they cost and the benefit they provide along with engineering decisions.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	Set out below
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

8.1 Sustainability implications

The River Thames Scheme is not just a flood alleviation scheme. The Scheme will provide social, environmental and economic benefits. It will create more than 40 hectares of new habitat for wildlife, unlock a range of recreational activities for local communities and create open spaces, public foot paths and cycle ways. We have been, and will continue to engage with local communities to hear their ideas and community aspirations to create a wonderful place to be in the Lower Thames.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The River Thames Scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses and critical infrastructure (Roads, sewerage network, power supplies) between Datchet and Teddington.
- 9.2 The scheme consists of:
 - Construction of 14km of new flood channel, built in 3 sections
 - Improving the flow capacity of Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington weirs
 - Building community resilience through flood planning, community resilience measures, and improved emergency planning

Creating over 40 hectares of wildlife habitat and creating recreational opportunities for a wide range of activities

- 9.3 Further public events to inform and seek feedback from residents and stakeholders will be held in 2018 and beyond. We ask that Councillors attend as necessary to share their views and ideas.
- 9.4 We recommend sign up to our quarterly newsletter for timely updates and progress on the River Thames Scheme. Sign up here:
<http://ow.ly/SzdH30d7F3h>

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Outline Business Case (OBC), including the final outline design will be submitted to HM Treasury during 2018. The formal Planning process will commence once the OBC has been approved. Stakeholders and members will be updated through the scheme Sponsoring Group and Programme Board and future committee meetings. Residents will be informed through our newsletter and through Community Resilience Advisors attending and arranging community meetings.

Contact Officer:

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tina.donaldson@environment-agency.gov.uk or rts@environment-agency.gov.uk

Consulted:

Stakeholders, various council officers, ward councillors and members of the public

Annexes:

River Thames Scheme briefing note
Environmental Impact Assessment information sheet

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