

OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

SURREY LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

10 SEPTEMBER 2012

KEY ISSUE

To inform the Elmbridge Local Committee of partnership arrangements and responsibilities for strategic flood risk management in Surrey; and consult on our ambitions in the draft Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

SUMMARY

Recent Government legislation has provided local authorities with a number of new responsibilities in relation to flood risk management. It has also provided a timely opportunity to review the activities that we already carry out. The Surrey Flood Risk Management Strategy marks the start of a new, more coordinated approach to the work that we all carry out in this important area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Elmbridge Local Committee is asked to:

- i. Comment on the partnership approach and ambitions for strategic flood risk management in Surrey.
- ii. Note the impending publication of a draft Surrey Flood Risk Management Strategy, with a view to giving comment during the consultation period (September to November 2012).

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Surrey is a county with a high risk of flooding. It has experienced major flood incidents, including several in the last 10 years. Evidence indicates that in future the damage caused by flood incidents could increase, due to the impact of climate change and further pressure for development in areas at risk of flooding.
- 1.2 Surrey County Council has been designated lead local flood authority and consequently has a number of specific new responsibilities that relate primarily to 'local flood risk', namely from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses (smaller rivers, streams and ditches). Flood risk from all other rivers (known as main rivers) remains the responsibility of the Environment Agency.
- 1.3 As local planning authorities, districts and boroughs are required to take account of national planning policy guidance on flood risk, amongst other considerations, in both their development control and forward planning work. They also have a number of other powers and statutory obligations on flood risk management, such as powers to designate structures and features that affect flood risk.
- 1.4 The Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board (hereafter the Partnership Board) was set up to ensure there is a strategic approach to flood risk management within Surrey. Under it, partners will work towards a joint understanding of local flood risk and an alignment of priorities and investment.
- 1.5 The Partnership Board's core membership includes Surrey district and borough representatives (to reflect areas with the greatest flood risk):
 - Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
 - Guildford Borough Council
 - Reigate & Banstead Borough Council
 - Runnymede Borough Council
 - Woking Borough Council (Chief Executive champion).

However, the inclusion and participation of all boroughs and districts is sought through collaborative working arrangements and the requirement to share information.

- 1.6 The Partnership Board has commissioned the Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (hereafter the strategy). The strategy will take account of all types of flooding, which reflects the partnership approach. It also recognises that residents and businesses do not always distinguish between different types of flood risk; the impact is their key concern.

- 1.7 The strategy clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved in flood risk management in the county, including how they work together. It sets out ambitions and priority actions. It also provides a list of projects. These will be submitted to the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee with the intention of leveraging funding.
- 1.8 Our ambitions to 2017 in the draft strategy (in no particular order) are:
- i. Drainage strategy - We will develop a long term drainage asset management strategy, which covers highways and ordinary watercourse maintenance. As a result we will target high risk and high need areas in a joined up way.
 - ii. Infrastructure - The relevant local authorities will work together with the Environment Agency to ensure the development and implementation of flood risk management strategies including the Lower Thames and Wey. This will bring tangible reductions in flood risk to some Surrey communities.
 - iii. Sustainable drainage - We will develop an approach to sustainable drainage systems that is fully integrated with the planning system. Large development sites will be exemplars. We also want to see more retrofitting of sustainable drainage systems in high risk areas.
 - iv. Resilience - Together we will promote flood resilience and resistance measures to 'at risk' households and businesses in Surrey. This will include the continued development and sharing of 'self help' opportunities.
 - v. Insurance - We will urge the Government to work with the insurance industry to guarantee the availability and affordability of flood insurance.
 - vi. Funding - We will be ambitious in our approach to securing national flood risk management funding, and in exploring additional funding sources. We will assist, where possible, in supporting the funding of property level protection schemes in high risk areas.
 - vii. Communications - We will continue to explain what work is underway to reduce flood risk, how this is prioritised and what role residents and businesses can play.
 - viii. Technology - We will continue to promote and use innovative technologies, to better understand the nature of flood risk, and identify potential flood risk mitigation measures.

2. ANALYSIS

- 2.1 By far the greatest flood risk in the Elmbridge area is from the River Thames. Molesey is highlighted within the strategy as being one of the communities with the largest number of properties with a significant likelihood of fluvial flooding (produced by the action of a river or stream) in the county.
- 2.2 The strategy sets out the commitment of the local authorities covered by the Lower Thames to work together with The Environment Agency on implementation of the Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- 2.3 According to Surrey's Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, Thames Ditton is one of the 10 highest risk areas for surface water flooding in Surrey. This assessment is based on national datasets supplemented with local knowledge. The strategy explains how areas identified as being at risk will be considered for surface water management plans in order to develop sustainable responses to manage surface water flooding.
- 2.4 Joint working between county and borough officers has ensured that the local structures likely to have a significant impact on flooding have been included on Surrey's flooding asset register. Important Information on ownership and state of repair of key culverts, ditches and drainage systems is now held centrally and will influence maintenance regimes.
- 2.5 Environment Agency work on high priority weirs on the River Thames, and surveying and modelling of the Dead River, is included in the 2012/13 programme of schemes.

3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 We could have produced a strategy that only addressed surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. The Partnership Board decided on an integrated strategy.
- 3.2 With regard to the ambitions in our strategy, we could:
 - Be more ambitious in our partnership working
 - Be less ambitious.
- 3.3 Changes in national funding mean we also need to consider options for local funding that may be allocated to local flood risk priorities.
- 3.4 The Strategic Environmental Assessment process for the annual strategy action plan will provide a clear account of the environmental risks and opportunities for environmental gain that are associated with options being considered.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1 Public consultation on the Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy runs from September to the end of November 2012. It can be found at www.surreycc.gov.uk/floodriskstrategy or call 03456 009 009.

5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 In April 2012 the way that the Government funds flood risk management projects changed. We are developing an understanding of areas in Surrey that have the highest eligibility for national funding to ensure that Surrey receives its fair share.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 We have considered equalities implications in a full equality impact assessment of the strategy.
- 6.2 In terms of prioritising locally important schemes, we will consider areas of the county where there are concentrations of vulnerable residents, who could be particularly at risk in the event of flooding (for example elderly, disabled or less mobile residents).
- 6.3 Members can report flood incidents and encourage people in known high-risk flood areas to be prepared for flood incidents. To report any problems related to floods, see [Who to contact to report problems with floods](#).

7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Surrey's Local Resilience Forum does not identify crime and disorder as a risk associated with flood incidents in the [Surrey Community Risk Register](#).

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Surrey County Council is the lead local flood authority and has a statutory duty to produce a strategy. However, the county council and partners also view the strategy as a real opportunity to work together to reduce risk to residents and businesses and prepare for the future.
- 8.2 The Elmbridge Local Committee is asked to:
- Comment on the partnership approach and ambitions for strategic flood risk management in Surrey.

- Note the impending publication of a draft Surrey Flood Risk Management Strategy, with a view to giving comment during the consultation period (September to November 2012).

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 There is a role for everyone to play in the management of flood risk. We can coordinate our services better so that the risk of flooding is reduced and the aftermath of flood incidents are as minimal as can be.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

10.1 We will circulate the draft strategy widely to community groups, individuals and organisations with an interest in flood risk management. Public consultation ends 12 weeks after publication, which is likely to be 30 November 2012. We will update the draft strategy in response to people's comments. The strategy will become a statutory document, which Surrey's local authorities, water companies and internal drainage board must have regard to.

10.2 The Partnership Board will provide an annual progress report to the Surrey County Council Environment and Transport Select Committee and Directorate Leadership Team for Environment and Infrastructure. The outcomes and decisions of the Partnership Board will feed into the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC). The Partnership Board will receive quarterly reports from each of the Lead Local Flood Authority's operational groups that provide:

- Updates on the groups' work programmes and key issues for review and endorsement
- Assurance that liaison is working and that partners are fulfilling their commitments
- Recommendations for actions which the senior officers need to focus further attention on.

Please note: To report any problems related to floods, please contact the relevant agency and not the officers below, thank you. See [Who to contact to report problems with floods](#).

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: Draft Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and/ or an executive summary of the draft strategy.