

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION****DATE: 22 FEBRUARY 2022**

**LEAD OFFICER: KATIE STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE**

**SUBJECT: FUNDING AGREEMENT FOR SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL CONTRIBUTION TO THE BYFLEET-SANWAY, GUILDFORD AND CHAMBER MEAD FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEMES**

**ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: GROWING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY SO EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT//ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE**

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| <b>PURPOSE OF THE PAPER</b> |
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As part of the approved Surrey Flood Alleviation Programme, the Council is making financial contributions to the following schemes to be delivered by partner organisations:

- Outline business case Byfleet-Sanway flood alleviation scheme - £180k;
- Outline business case Guildford flood alleviation scheme - £50k and
- Chamber Mead Wetlands project contribution to delivery – £250k.

The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for entering into a legal agreement to enable contributions to be made to the above three schemes. It also seeks agreement to the recommendation that the approval for all future legal agreements for schemes in the Surrey Flood Alleviation Programme are delegated to the Executive Director for Environment, Transport and Infrastructure in consultation with the Executive Director for Resources and the Cabinet Member for Community Protection after approval via the Capital Programme Panel (CPP).

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| <b>RECOMMENDATIONS:</b> |
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It is recommended that the Cabinet Member agrees that:

1. Surrey County Council enters into a legal agreement with the Environment Agency to enable a contribution of £180k towards the development of an outline business case for the Byfleet-Sanway flood alleviation scheme.
2. Surrey County Council enters into a legal agreement with the Environment Agency to enable a contribution of £50k towards the development of an outline business case for the Guildford flood alleviation scheme.
3. Surrey County Council enters into a memorandum of understanding with South East Rivers Trust to enable a contribution of £250k towards the delivery of the Chamber Mead Wetlands project
4. That all future legal agreements for schemes in the Surrey Flood Alleviation Programme are delegated to the Executive Director for Environment, Transport

and Infrastructure in consultation with the Executive Director for Resources and the Cabinet Member for Flooding.

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In October 2019, Surrey County Council (SCC) Cabinet approved the investment of £270M to deliver the objectives of Surrey's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. £237M of this is a financial contribution to the River Thames Scheme. The remaining £33M is to invest in activities in priority flooding areas across the County as part of the Surrey Flood Alleviation Programme. A number of these schemes are in partnership with other flood risk management authorities and as such need a separate legal agreement to enable these contributions to be made.

Approving contributions to joint partnership schemes with other flood risk management authorities and partners unlocks significant additional partner investment which increases the protection of residents in flood risk areas and supports delivery of the Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Legal agreements are required for these contributions to ensure Surrey County Council is not exposed to undue financial risks. Agreeing to delegate approval of future legal agreements will support quicker delivery of schemes with funding that has already been approved as part of the Council's capital programme.

#### **OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEMES:**

##### **Byfleet-Sanway Flood Alleviation Scheme**

1. Byfleet has a history of flooding with several floods in recent years: September 1968, autumn 2000 and winter 2013/14, when 74 properties were affected.
2. The Environment Agency has been working with Surrey County Council, Woking Borough Council, Surrey Wildlife Trust, Byfleet Flood Forum, National Highways and Thames Water to develop a flood alleviation scheme to reduce this flood risk. Residents have also been consulted through a series of workshops last year and through the local flood action group.
3. The proposed scheme will reduce the risk of flooding for 153 properties.

##### **Guildford Flood Alleviation Scheme**

4. Guildford has a long history of flooding impacting major roads, railway lines and businesses. Most recently in December 2013, when 92 properties were affected, but also in 2000 and in 1968 when large parts of the town were affected.
5. The Environment Agency is working in partnership with Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council, Thames Water, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, the National Flood Forum, the National Trust, Guildford Flood Action Group and residents to develop a scheme to reduce the risk of flooding directly from the River Wey and indirectly from the overwhelmed surcharged local drainage systems in Guildford town centre.

## **Chamber Mead Wetlands Project**

6. The Hogsmill River is one of only 200 chalk streams in the world, though sadly, it has been long-suffering from regular pollution inputs of raw sewage from the Epsom and Ewell Storm Tanks, mis-connected sewers and urban runoff. Pollution harms wildlife within the river, poses a public health risk and impacts the amenity value of the Hogsmill River.
7. A collaborative project is being developed between Surrey County Council, the Hogsmill Catchment Partnership, the Environment Agency, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, the Coca-Cola Foundation and led by the South East Rivers Trust.
8. A series of wetlands within the Hogsmill Local Nature Reserve are proposed to help contribute to flood risk mitigation, improve water quality, bring significant habitat, species and biodiversity benefits and boost the amenity value of the area.

### **CONSULTATION**

9. The Surrey Flood Alleviation Programme was developed in partnership with the Environment Agency and the Districts and Boroughs and is reviewed on a bi-annual basis. The Programme was approved at the Surrey Flood Risk Management Partnership board and a briefing for members took place in November 2021. The programme supports the Surrey Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which was taken to all local/joint committees in 2019.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS**

10. The Council's financial contributions are fixed so any overspend will be covered by the Environment Agency or other partners.
11. The legal agreements will stipulate that Surrey financial contributions shall be spent on capital elements of the schemes.
12. To ensure the schemes align with the Council's Greener Futures strategic objectives, such as net zero and nature recovery, a member of the Flood & Climate Resilience Team will have a place on the project board for all schemes.

### **Financial and value for money implications**

13. This paper seeks approval to enter into legal agreements that will enable the release of financial contributions to the aforementioned schemes. Below is a table outlining the financial contributions that will be made. The contributions will come from the Surrey Flood Alleviation Programme which was approved by Cabinet in October 2019.
14. The contributions and legal agreements for Byfleet-Sanway and Guildford are limited to the delivery of Outline Business Cases only. Any future contributions towards the construction of the schemes will require separate legal agreements and approvals at the appropriate time. The Chamber Mead contribution is for construction and will not require any further funding.

| <b>Scheme</b>                    | <b>Byfleet-Sanway OBC</b> | <b>Guildford OBC</b> | <b>Chamber Mead</b> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Estimated Total Cost £000</b> | £2,300                    | £1,400               | £1,000              |
| <b>SCC Cost £000</b>             | £180                      | £50                  | £250                |
| <b>Financial Year</b>            | 2021/22                   | 2021/22              | 2021/22             |

#### **Section 151 Officer commentary**

15. Although significant progress has been made to improve the Council's financial position, the medium term financial outlook beyond 2022/23 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
16. The Section 151 Officer supports the contributions proposed in this report, which will be met from the Surrey Flood Alleviation capital budget approved for this purpose. Should any of these schemes not proceed, as with any other scheme, it may be necessary to meet those costs from the Council's revenue budget. Any further contributions to these schemes will be subject to separate approval, as necessary.

#### **Legal implications – Monitoring Officer**

17. There are no significant legal implications raised and legal services will assist with the conclusion of the contractual agreements.
18. There is no change to SCC's financial or reputational risks associated with the associated contracts beyond those previously agreed by Cabinet in October 2019.

#### **Equalities and diversity:**

19. As this paper is to support partners to develop the scope of these schemes, an Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment has not yet been completed.
20. An Equalities and Diversity Impact Assessment will be produced for the schemes in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

#### **Environmental sustainability implications**

21. The wider benefits of the schemes beyond managing flood risk include; wetland creation, planting more trees, flowers and hedges, improved accessibility and improved water quality.

22. A carbon and climate impact assessment will be carried out as part of the development of the schemes.

### **Public Health implications**

23. Flooding has a major impact on the mental health of those affected, such that, by reducing flooding, the mental health impacts associated with it will be reduced.
24. There is a wider health impact in that flood alleviation schemes will enable people to safely live in their homes with reduced risk to their homes and their families being put at physical risk by a flood.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

25. If Cabinet approves entering into the agreements with partners the next steps will be:
- The Council signs legal agreements with the appropriate partners for each scheme – March 2022
  - The Council will make the financial contributions to each scheme – March 2022

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#### **Contact Officer:**

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#### **Consulted:**

Environment Agency, South East Rivers Trust.

#### **Sources/background papers:**

- [Funding Flood Risk Management in Surrey](#) – SCC Cabinet 29 October 2019
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