

Name of meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 18 September 2017

Title of report: Update on Preparations for Winter Flooding

Purpose of report

To provide an update on actions from the previous annual scrutiny assessment of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) and to report on preparedness for the forthcoming winter period

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	N/A	
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	N/A	
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	N/A	
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	06/09/17	Naz Parkar
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance, IT and Transactional Services?	04/09/17	Debbie Hogg
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Governance and Commissioning?	06/09/17	Julie Muscroft
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Mc Bride and Cllr Khan	

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

1. Summary

Update on Recommendations from the Jan 2017 Flood Strategy (LFRMS) scrutiny review:

- Progress continues to be made in implementing the LFRMS action plan but some actions continue to be difficult to resource, particularly around community engagement.
- Scrutiny asked for feedback on the Calderdale Volunteer Project and a short report is attached at Appendix 1.
- Scrutiny asked for information on member engagement work and the pilot work. A short report is attached at Appendix 2.

Preparations for Winter Flooding:

- Following the December 2015 floods, the Council has reassessed its ability to support communities before and during a flood event and developed a new council policy and operational plan. The plan ensures that a 24/7, 365 days a year operational resource is available to be mobilised to key, high risk sites across the district. The resources will be attend in advance of flooding and relay information on site conditions back to the operational centre, as well as providing a Council contact point for the local community. The plan has a number of escalating

actions that the council can take in response to forecast flooding, with the actions triggered by a joint decision between the Emergency Planning and Flood Management teams. The plan has been assessed under both test and real rainfall events and will continue to be refined.

- The council has changed its approach to highway gully emptying to a demand management one. Previously, all road gullies in the district were emptied with the same frequency (once annually). Routes have now been altered to prioritise those gullies on the winter gritting routes, to be emptied twice yearly, and to respond reactively to reports of blocked gullies on all other roads.
- A programme of assessments and upgrades to trash grilles protecting highway culverts is continuing.
- A 6 year programme, funded by a £1.1 million grant from the Environment Agency, has commenced to repair and maintain the original capacity of old culverts. The culverts are all in critical locations where residential properties are at risk should the culverts block/collapse.

2. **Information required to take a decision**

For information only.

3. **Implications for the Council**

3.1 **Early Intervention and Prevention (EIP)**

None

3.2 **Economic Resilience (ER)**

The actions outlined in the report address flood risk issues that impact local communities and businesses, protecting infrastructure and people

3.3 **Improving Outcomes for Children**

None

3.4 **Reducing demand of services**

Information sharing and the encouragement of self-help is a priority in the LFRMS. A demand management led gully emptying service will make better use of limited resources and capital investment in drainage infrastructure will reduce future maintenance demands

3.5 **Legal/Financial or Human Resources**

None

4. **Consultees and their opinions**

None sought

5. **Next steps**

To continue to implement the LFRMS and report progress to Scrutiny in the annual review.

6. **Officer recommendations and reasons**

Members are asked to note the report

7. **Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendations**
Cllr Mc Bride has no comments on the report.

8. **Contact officer**
Tom Ghee, Flood Management
Tel: 01484 221000
Email: tom.ghee@kirklees.gov.uk

9. **Background Papers and History of Decisions**
Flood Strategy review – January 2017
<https://democracy.kirklees.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5057>

10. **Assistant Director responsible**
Paul Kemp, Service Director
Tel: 01484 221000
Email: paul.kemp@kirklees.gov.uk

Working with partners and the local community to deliver areas of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) action plan – a report on the Calderdale approach

Some of the actions in the Council's LFRMS action plan are resource intensive

- recording drainage and other water assets,
- collecting information from residents and businesses,
- sharing information on flood risk with individuals and local communities,
- identifying opportunities for multiple, small-scale projects at a catchment scale and working with landowners to deliver them
- identify the highest risk culverts and open watercourses and associated maintenance requirements
- identify highest risk private flood defence/drainage assets and work with owners to maintain them

The Council delivers some of these actions in a prioritised way through flood management officers but is unable to resource much of the work required.

Calderdale Council have suffered multiple, extensive flooding in the Calder valley in recent years which has generated a culture of community interest and self-help. Community flood groups in the settlements along the valley have been established for a number of years and have recently been coordinated, with the support of national funding, to identify and deliver local interventions to use the natural landscape to retain rainfall in the higher catchment. The "Slow the Flow Calderdale" project energises the local communities at risk of flooding to provide an emergency response resource when required and to assist in the collection of data.

Observations:

- The community groups have formed naturally as flood events have occurred and it's clear that the groups develop locally with residents and business with a collective interest in helping themselves
- The groups are volunteer-based, requiring little financial support to operate. A simple website and extensive use of social media are the main mechanisms for exchanging ideas and organising programmes of work
- Calderdale Council have £1million (£800k gov grant/£200k council) to carry out natural flood management (NFM) initiatives, much of it coordinated through, and carried out by, local community groups. A dedicated council officer role has been created to coordinate and manage the project.

The Approach in Kirklees?

- **We try and encourage self- help.**

We benefit from a little luck in recent years that the rainfall event that would trigger widespread flooding in our most vulnerable communities (Marsden, Milnsbridge, Holmfirth, New Mill, Leeds Road (Hudds), Mirfield and Ravensthorpe) hasn't occurred. Flood risk isn't real to people until flooding occurs and it's difficult to engage with at-risk communities that haven't yet suffered flooding. Our community engagement approach is to target the higher risk communities, convey the level of risk, offer advice on flood resilience/resistance works and encourage local responsibility for drainage features.

- **We support local interest groups where we can.**

Following a number of flood studies in the Dearne Valley (The part of the district that drains to the Don rather than the Calder) we are currently working with a local community group who have an interest in the ecological status/improvement of the river Dearne. The intention is to use our flood studies to identify works that complement the group's interests but delivers our flood mitigation measures. Eg a recent natural flood management report for the Upper Dearne has identified locations where tree-planting, improved ground infiltration and "leaky dams" may have an impact in reducing peak flows in the river.

- **Develop a better understanding of local flood risk that we can share**

We continue to carry out a programme of flood risk studies in the highest risk areas to identify schemes or initiatives that may be affordable and effective. Where physical measures are not affordable or feasible, we will share the outcomes of reports and surveys with affected communities.

We have a longer term aspiration to collect detailed knowledge of local flood risk and to present it to local members, businesses and communities in a way that is easily understood and useful.

Summary

The catalyst for the community volunteer movement in Calderdale has clearly been the repeated flooding that has occurred in the last 5 years. The support has been sustained and encouraged by the award of government funding to support projects that can be delivered by the volunteer groups.

It is difficult to mobilise at-risk communities in Kirklees when they have yet to experience flooding and, at the moment, we continue to be opportunistic and engage with existing community groups where we can.

Member Engagement on Drainage and Flood Risk Issues

Background

Every ward in the district has varying degrees of flood risk, from rivers, small watercourses and from overland flows. Every ward has the legacy of old drainage systems, including culverted watercourses, mill races and mill ponds (often abandoned). Responsibility for, and ownership of, drainage features is complex. Feedback from a number of members has highlighted an interest from them to be better informed in relation to the main drainage and flood risk issues in their ward.

Pilot Project

The Council holds an increasing amount of information on drainage systems and flood risk and there are a number of ways in which it can be shared. A pilot project is currently underway that provides a bespoke ward-based summary of the main drainage and flood risk issues in the ward. The information will be provided in pdf but can be printed as an A3 leaflet. The leaflet would contain:

- A general overview of the natural catchment in the ward, drainage provision, recent flood history and predicted flood risk
- Roles and responsibilities for water management will be explained
- An overview map of the main features, issues etc
- Detailed maps of the main communities in the ward where flood risk is highest. The maps would include:
 - The risk from river flooding
 - The risk from surface water flooding
 - Reservoirs/mill ponds in the area
 - Main rivers and minor watercourses (both open stream and culverted)
- A statement on how the council is managing flood risk in the ward, to include:
 - Previous or planned flood studies
 - Works carried out, or planned, to manage flood risk
 - Community engagement exercises and information
 - Its role in managing surface water drainage on new development sites
- Contact details for council officers and external partners

It is proposed that two pilot wards are chosen, Holme Valley South and Newsome, to attract consultation feedback from wards that differ in hydrological character.

Programme

Once a template has been developed and the level of content agreed following consultation on the pilot, it is proposed to deliver ward based information across to all 32 council wards over the next 2 years.