

**FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT IN BUCKINGHAM**

The Anglian (Central) Regional Flood Defence Committee met today to discuss, amongst other things, how to manage flood risk in Buckingham. Buckingham was seriously affected by the floods last summer and the Committee was keen to see the Environment Agency doing what it could to reduce the risk in Buckingham as far as possible.

Committee members agreed that we should make provision in our budgets for enhanced maintenance works, where appropriate and regular attention to routine works that would keep the channel performing at an optimum level. They also agreed that we should investigate the feasibility of protecting the properties at highest risk of flooding, by installing appropriate flood resistance and resilience products; things like bespoke door boards, air-brick covers and non-return valves on waste water pipes.

However, the Committee was unable to agree to further expenditure on progressing a capital flood alleviation scheme for Buckingham. A recent viability study has shown that it would not be cost effective to build extensive flood defences. The proposal was to protect Buckingham to withstand a 2% annual probability (1 in 50 year) flood event, by constructing an upstream flood storage reservoir and some flood walls and gates in the town itself. However the cost of this proposal outweighs the benefit and only a few properties would actually benefit from reduced flood risk.

If you would like to know more about how we can work together with local authorities and the local community to reduce flood risk and be better prepared for when a flood actually comes then please get in touch.

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## **Environment Agency - Update**

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**Buckingham Local Area Forum**

**25 September 2008**

**Contact Officer: Rob Bakewell, Flood Incident Management Team Leader, Environment Agency**

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### Operations Update

We have been working hard with a number of landowners and Buckingham Town Council to progress the planned desilting works - from Packhorse bridge to Maids Moretaine high flow cuts (approx 1 km) and to clear beneath London Bridge. We have re-assessed the need to remove the silt/soil that has accumulated on the upstream left bank of Woolpack Bridge and have decided to leave this in situ as removing it would provide no flood risk benefit and the area is considered to provide a valuable habitat. We have removed a overhanging trees and branches (bushing works) to improve the conveyance of the channel in high flows. We plan to start our desilting operations on site early to mid October. We will continue to inspect the channel on a routine basis.

### Action in minutes.

From my notes the action on us was to clarify the works we routinely carry out (inc inspections) and those we have programmed for this year - as the secretary did not capture all this in the meeting. Following the meeting I was contacted by Liz Wheaton (Democratic Services Officer, Bucks CC) by email with a request for this information. My colleague, Derek Beazley responded to this promptly - the wording of which was, almost verbatim, then included within the minutes.

### Omissions from minutes

It is disappointing that there is no general clarification within the minutes, of riparian owner responsibilities. Following a request, I went to some length to explain the specific duties and responsibilities of riparian owners and the agency's role - challenging the standpoint of, and assumptions made by many present. This information was generally acknowledged and accepted in the meeting, particularly by those at the top table - and a record of this in the minutes would have been useful.

**- Report ends -**