

# Chesham and Chiltern Villages Local Area Forum

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**Title:** Flood Management Overview

**Date:** 11<sup>th</sup> June

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**Electoral divisions affected:**

## Summary

Provide an overview of new flood management legislation and details of DEFRA grant provided to develop a Surface Water Management Plan in Chesham.

## Background

1. Flooding and flood management is a cross cutting issue that has an impact on the service delivery of many areas of local government. Flooding considerations are integral within the planning system, engineers are responsible for developing and maintaining infrastructure that has a bearing on flooding, emergency planners must prepare for flooding events and social services must help deal with the consequences.
2. Flooding occurs from four main sources – watercourses (e.g. rivers, streams, canals), surface water run-off, the sea and groundwater (**Appendix A**). These sources need to be effectively managed to minimise flooding risk and impact as does the planning and response to a flooding event.
3. One in six homes in England are at risk of flooding. The recent Environment Agency “Flooding in England (2009)” report identified that 111,356 properties in the South East England Region are at significant risk of river flooding, of those 3% (3,650) are within Buckinghamshire. In Chesham, 4,400 homes have been identified as being at risk of surface water flooding (**Appendix B**)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



4. The Government has recently passed two pieces of flood management legislation. The Flood Risk Regulations (2009) and the Flood and Water Management Act (2010). The legislation is the UK's response to the EU Flood Directive and addresses the following issues:
  - Current flood legislation is outdated with its roots in the 1930s and 1940s
  - Responsibilities for different aspects of flood management in the UK are poorly defined often leading to lack of ownership and accountability
  - No organisation currently has any clear responsibility for flooding from surface run-off or groundwater sources
5. The legislation clarifies new roles and responsibilities for flood management stakeholders (**Appendix C**). Buckinghamshire County Council, as the top tier authority is required to adopt the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) role. This places a responsibility on the County Council for the strategic overview and co-ordination of local flood risk management within Buckinghamshire.
6. DEFRA recently announced £9.7 million grant fund to be used to develop Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP) in high risk flood areas. SWMPs will help local authorities and relevant delivery bodies understand and manage local flood risk as well as to influence land use planning and flood risk management investment decisions.
7. A grant was allocated to the County Council by DEFRA in 2009 and £171k is available to develop SWMPs in Chesham and High Wycombe (**Appendix B**). These settlements were identified following a DEFRA study that ranked settlements in order of susceptibility to surface water flooding. 5,800 properties are at risk in High Wycombe and 4,400 in Chesham. Development of SWMPs in these areas is a priority due to the high risk status.
8. In order to effectively steer the development of SWMPs in Chesham and High Wycombe the Bucks Strategic Flood Management Group (BSFMG) was formed in 2009. The first meeting took place on 30th November 2009 and the second meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010. The meeting was organised and chaired by Jim Stevens (Head of Transport for Buckinghamshire). The group is attended by representatives from the Environment Agency, Buckinghamshire District Councils and Internal Drainage Boards. The group discussed and moved forward actions on:
  - Developing SWMPs in High Wycombe and Chesham through a working group involving County and District representatives.
  - Creating a suitable Buckinghamshire local flood management governance structure.
  - Identifying means to work in partnership to address issues raised by new legislation.
  - Agreeing to meet regularly to move forward the flood management agenda.
9. The SWMP working group has met twice. Representatives from WDC, CDC, BCC and the Environment Agency sit on the group. The group is currently tasked with developing a project structure to deliver the SWMPs.

## **Further Information**

10.A presentation on SWMP development progress and an update in flood management legislation will be given to Chesham LAF in the autumn. In the meantime if you have any questions please contact Duncan Laird on 01296 387133 ([dlaird@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:dlaird@buckscc.gov.uk))

## APPENDIX A – SOURCES OF FLOODING

- **River** - occurs when a river cannot cope with the water draining into it from the surrounding land
- **Ordinary watercourse** – flooding from all watercourses that do not form part of a main river
- **Surface water** - when heavy rainfall overwhelms drainage capacity of the local area
- **Groundwater** - when water levels in the ground rise above surface levels
- **Sewer** - occurs when sewers are overwhelmed by heavy rainfall or when they become blocked
- **Coastal** - flooding that results from a combination of high tides and stormy conditions

## APPENDIX B – TOP 10 SETTLEMENTS IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE WITH PROPERTIES AT RISK OF SURFACE WATER FLOODING

| England Rank | Settlement                         | Properties at Risk |
|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>50*</b>   | <b>High Wycombe</b>                | <b>5,800</b>       |
| <b>67*</b>   | <b>Chesham</b>                     | <b>4,400</b>       |
| 166          | Aylesbury                          | 2,000              |
| 176          | Marlow                             | 1,900              |
| 292          | Amersham                           | 1,100              |
| 390          | Wendover                           | 810                |
| 436          | Chalfont St.Peter & Gerrards Cross | 710                |
| 470          | Princes Risborough                 | 640                |
| 485          | Bourne End & Flackwell Heath       | 610                |
| 575          | Hazlemere & Tylers Green           | 480                |

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