

Title: Overview and Scrutiny Flood Management Briefing Paper
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Background

Please find responses to questions submitted by Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding flood management within Buckinghamshire. A presentation will be delivered providing background information to support this paper.

Responses

How have the Council and its partners acted to reduce the likelihood of flooding since 2007?

Buckinghamshire County Council

- £200k funding has been secured to develop Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP) in High Wycombe and Chesham.
- The County's Resilience Team works in partnership and co-ordinates work streams with emergency services regarding flooding and severe weather emergencies.
- Transport for Buckinghamshire conducts ongoing highway gully and drain clearance and maintenance.
- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has informed the Buckinghamshire Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework (LDF).
- County officers with flood management responsibilities have attended workshops and seminars to increase technical capabilities.
- Flood and weather warning information page on the Buckinghamshire County Council website in addition to guidance on developing community resilience plan.
- CCTV survey of Chesham culvert undertaken. Currently working with the Environment Agency (EA) to carry out structural repair work to reduce the risk of collapse and flooding.

Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC)

- £325k has been secured for flood protection and resilience measures for 57 properties in Buckingham. The Environment Agency is providing funding for measures for a further 43 properties in 2010.
- Flood assessment studies have been completed of Leckhamstead, Little Horwood, and Padbury. Grant funding to deliver actions identified due in 2010.
- AVDC actively works with Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), riparian owners and the community to reduce flood risk and improve flood resilience.
- AVDC organises and chairs a multi agency Aylesbury Vale flooding group. Flooding issues are discussed and work stream co-ordinated to reduce flood risk.
- Exercised powers under the Land Drainage Act to resolve some local flooding issues.
- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has informed site allocations within the Aylesbury Vale Local Development Framework (LDF).

Wycombe District Council (WDC)

- Worked with Parish Councils with flooding issue in their areas to develop Community Resilience Plans.
- Worked with the County's Resilience Team to produce a flood management plan for the River Thames
- Supported the Environment Agency in developing the Marlow Flood Alleviation Scheme to protect 420 properties in Marlow
- Exercised powers under the Land Drainage Act to resolve some local flooding issues.
- Raised awareness with Councillors of the risk of flooding in the District. A Councillor has been nominated as a Member of the Local Government Flood Forum and has attended their meetings.
- WDC organises and chairs a multi agency Aylesbury Vale flooding group. Flooding issues are discussed and work streams co-ordinated to reduce flood risk.
- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has informed site allocations within the Wycombe District Local Development Framework (LDF).

South Bucks District Council

- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has informed site allocations within the South Bucks District Local Development Framework (LDF).

Chiltern District Council (CDC)

- An internal CDC flood management group has been created to address flood management issues within the District.
- A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has informed site allocations within the Chiltern District Local Development Framework (LDF).
- Updated information is provided on the CDC website for "Flood Watch".

What future plans are there to reduce the likelihood of surface water flooding?

- The first Buckinghamshire Strategic Flood Management Group took place on 30th November 2009. The meeting was organised and chaired by Jim Stevens (Head of Transport for Buckinghamshire). The group was attended by representatives from the Environment Agency, Buckinghamshire District Councils and Internal Drainage Boards. The group discussed and moved forward actions on:
 - Developing Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs) in High Wycombe and Chesham through a working group involving County and District representatives.
 - Creating a suitable a Buckinghamshire local flood management governance structure.
 - Identifying means to work in partnership to address issues raised by the Floods Bill.
 - Agreeing to meet three times a year to move forward the flood management agenda.

- The County Council's Resilience Team is developing a Community Resilience strategy working with parish and town councils to enhance the resilience of their communities, including specific hazards such as flooding.
- CDC currently investigating ways to record flood incidents on our GIS both from river and surface water.

What is the Council's stance on construction on flood plains?

- The County Council takes guidance from Planning Policy Statement 15 "Development & Flood Risk": The County Council discourages development on flood plains where possible. When development is unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures must be implemented to lower the risk of flooding to an acceptable level.

What are the main barriers to reducing the likelihood of flooding?

Please find a summary of the key issues and barriers relating to flood management below. Further explanation will be provided in the supporting presentation.

- **Governance** - Need to develop a local flood management governance structure including all relevant stakeholders with clearly defined responsibilities that addresses the requirements of the draft Flood and Water Bill.
- **Funding** - Total cost of implementing the draft Flood and Water Bill for English local authorities, according to the central government, is £72m per year. The Government claims implementing the Bill will be a "Spend to Save" initiative resulting in savings to local authorities of £84-£172m per year. The accuracy of these figures has been questioned by LGA.
- **Data collection & analysis** – Risk maps, drainage asset register, (including highways and private landowners), action planning
- **Staff resource** – Estimated 3-8 full time equivalents required per year to implement requirements of the Bill. There is currently no flood management post within County Council and limited posts within Districts
- **In-house Flood Expertise** – Lack of sufficient expertise within County and Districts to deliver requirements outlined in the draft Flood and Water Bill.

How can/do local people have an input into local flood management planning?

- Districts councils have facilitated and led community involvement in flood management issues across the County. Examples include:
 - Supporting flood action groups in at risk settlements e.g. Buckingham, Padbury
 - Information campaigns to raise awareness with local communities
 - Consultation on the development of flood studies e.g. Leckhamstead, Little Horwood, and Padbury flood studies
 - Working through parish councils in at risk areas to address flooding
- The County Council's Resilience Team is developing a Community Resilience strategy working with parish and town councils.
- The guidance for developing SWMPs requires a significant amount of consultation with members of the public. The guidance will be followed when developing SWMPs in High Wycombe and Chesham.0

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