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REPORT

**Councillor Michael Hewitt:Chairman of the Flood
Steering Group.**

Councillor Brown: Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport

Position Statement of the Salisbury District Flood Steering Group

I SUMMARY

- I.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the progress made by the Flood Steering Group since the interim report to Cabinet in November 2003.
- I.2 The Steering Group has previously identified four priority areas where joint working between authorities was likely to be beneficial namely, the Bourne Valley, the Upper Till, Tisbury and Pitton. The report contains a position statement in respect of each of the four areas plus comments on two additional areas, Teffont and Hanging Langford and Wylde.
- I.3 Flooding in the Bourne Valley has been investigated, some maintenance work carried out to the main river channel, a new telemetry system installed and the road closure procedure confirmed. The Steering Group does not consider that any further work can be undertaken at present.
- I.4 Flooding in the Upper Till area (Tilshead, Orcheston & Shrewton) is principally due to ground water. The main effect is flooding of roads causing access difficulties, although several properties are at risk as well. Salisbury District Council has just completed phase 2 improvements to the Watercourse downstream of Tilshead. Further works are likely to be very expensive.
- I.5 A joint Environment Agency, Wiltshire County Council and Salisbury District Council flood defence scheme is being developed for part of Tisbury. It is estimated that the cost to Salisbury District Council can be funded from the capital programme and Cabinet is requested to confirm in principle that Salisbury District Council will participate subject to final approval when actual costs are known.
- I.6 With regard to Pitton the Cabinet has already approved works to improve the watercourse downstream of the village. Southern Water will also undertake some sealing of sewer manholes to reduce sewage contamination of flood water.
- I.7 The report also comments on problems at Teffont for which no funding is currently available, Hanging Landford and Wylde, and makes reference to the Flood Warden Scheme, improved ground water monitoring and a flood awareness video which will soon be available for purchase.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 During the winter of 2003/04 rainfall was below average, groundwater levels remained low and there was no flooding except for minor localised events caused by short but intense rain storms.
- 2.2 Since the last report to Cabinet in November 2003 the group has met three times and focused on the previously identified priority areas.
- 2.3 Other joint working has also enabled a co-ordinated approach to be made in providing information and advice to “at risk” communities.

3 THE PRIORITY AREAS

- 3.1 The areas in which joint working between Authorities was likely to be beneficial in reducing the impact of flooding are:-
 - The Bourne Valley
 - The Upper Till
 - Tisbury
 - Pitton
- 3.2 Locations considered priority for action where only one Authority is primarily involved are:-
 - Teffont Magna & Evas Salisbury District Council
 - Hanging Langford & Wylde Wessex Water Company

4 PROGRESS AND POSITION STATEMENT FOR PRIORITY AREAS

4.1 The Bourne Valley

- 4.1.1 The river Bourne is a statutory main river. The Environment Agency have undertaken some clearance in Cholderton and carried out maintenance on other stretches of the Bourne both in Salisbury District Council area and upstream in the Shipton Bellinger /Tidworth area, to maintain the main channel and maximise the capacity of the river.

Studies by the Environment Agency have not revealed any structures (bridges culverts etc) that cause flooding and have been unable to identify any viable flood defence schemes.

A new telemetry system has been installed which will assist in providing an early warning of flood risk on the Bourne.

- 4.1.2 The Wiltshire County Council highways department has in place provisions to enable closure of all or part of the A338 during a flood event and has an emergency call out arrangement where the responding officer has power to close the road.

There are difficulties associated with road closures, e.g. access for residents and road users ignoring the closure.

- 4.1.3 The steering group does not consider that any further productive work can be undertaken at present.

4.2 The Upper Till

4.2.1 Tilshead

- (a) This is an ordinary watercourse and Salisbury District Council have just completed Phase 2 improvements to the watercourse for a distance of 1000 metres downstream of the village.
- (b) Further improvements could be made in the Candown Road area, by increasing capacity of highway drains or constructing an additional culvert.

The flooding that occurs puts at risk 3-5 dwelling and causes access difficulties to Westdown Camp and about 40 dwellings. The cost of works is likely to be high and is unlikely to attract DEFRA grant.

- (c) The cause of the flooding is groundwater and the main effect is flooding of roads and highway improvements are an option which the Wiltshire County Council highway department is aware of.

4.2.2 Orcheston

- (a) This is an ordinary watercourse and flooding is caused by ground water. The principal effect is road flooding causing access difficulties to about 10 dwellings, 6 mobile homes, the Church and shop. The flooding also affects some septic tank drainage systems.
- (b) Improvements to the size of the road culvert and maintenance of the existing ditches and culverts would reduce the flood risk.

4.2.3 Shrewton

- (a) This is part statutory main river and part ordinary watercourse. Some minor clearance of the ordinary watercourse has been carried out by Salisbury District Council. The principal problem is road flooding causing access difficulties to approximately 40 dwellings.

- (b) Consideration has been given to a bypass culvert but the cost/benefit is unfavourable.

4.3 Tisbury

- 4.3.1 This is statutory main river on which Environment Agency have been carrying out feasibility studies for a flood defence scheme based on a proposed solution produced by Salisbury District Council and local residents following the last major flood in October 2000.
- 4.3.2 During the last year this scheme has been developed further through the steering group and provides for the provision of a flood defence embankment, work to Fonthill Brook, which is an ordinary watercourse and alterations to road levels.
- 4.3.3 The proposed scheme has been approved for funding by the Environment Agency Flood Defence Committee, included in Wiltshire County Council Highways works programme and Salisbury District Council's contribution can be funded from the provision in the capital programme for flooding works.
- 4.3.4 The tender cost can be broken down into the various elements of work for each of the 3 authorities. The cost of the ordinary watercourse works are likely to be in the region of £25 K. At this stage Cabinet is requested to confirm in principle that Salisbury District Council will participate in the proposed scheme subject to final approval when actual costs are known.
- 4.3.5 The necessary planning application is expected to be submitted in the next few months.

4.4 Pitton

- 4.4.1 The proposals to improve the downstream section of the watercourse were approved by Cabinet on 21st July 2004.
- 4.4.2 The contract is out to tender and final liaison is in progress with the land owners and Wiltshire County Council Highways department.
- 4.4.3 It is anticipated that the work will be completed by November.
- 4.4.4 The Southern Water Company are to undertake some sealing of sewer manholes to reduce the risk of sewage contaminating any flood water.

4.5 Teffont (SDC)

- 4.5.1 This is an ordinary watercourse with a high risk from flash flooding following extreme rainfall events to 40 dwellings 2 churches and a hotel.

- 4.5.2 A proposed flood relief scheme has been designed, however, it is likely to have a high cost but could be implemented in phases.
- 4.5.3 The proposals would currently qualify for DEFRA grant aid but the project would have a lead in time of approximately 2 years. Specific funding would need to be allocated in Salisbury District Council's future capital programme.

4.6 Hanging Langford & Wylve

- 4.6.1 Investigations by Wessex Water into infiltration are ongoing, but these can only be carried out when ground water levels are high

5 FLOOD WARDEN SCHEMES

- 5.1 The Environment Agency and Salisbury District Council have been working together to develop a flood warden scheme for 'at risk' villages, to provide a single point of contact and in some locations to develop a local emergency plan for flood events.

6 GROUND WATER

- 6.1 In conjunction with the flood warden scheme, the Environment Agency, with some input from Salisbury District Council undertook a series of information and awareness raising days with members of Parish Councils to explain ground water flooding.
- 6.2 In order to increase the local knowledge of groundwater movement Salisbury District Council has made a contribution to the cost of 5 ground water monitoring sites in the District which have been installed by the Environment Agency. In the longer term the information gathered from these sites will assist with predicting ground water flooding.
- 6.3 Access to information from these sites is available to Salisbury District Council via the internet.

7 THE FLOOD AWARENESS VIDEO/DVD/CD

- 7.1 The Southern Water Company with joint funding from the Environment Agency and Hampshire County Council have produced an interactive CD that comprehensively addresses aspects of drainage, sewerage and flooding and which can be used for creating presentations on these subjects. The information it contains will also be available as a video and DVD. The section on flooding is particularly informative.
- 7.2 It is likely to be used by the Environment Agency and Water Companies for presentations at seminars etc. and copies can be purchased by other agencies for their own use.
- 7.3 The DVD could be particularly useful for presentation at area committees and Parish Councils.

8 CONCLUSION

Although last winter was relatively dry the Salisbury District Flood Steering Group has continued to co-ordinate action on flooding for the district. It provides a very useful forum for focusing attention on flooding and facilitating joint working between the various agencies involved in flood alleviation, drainage and sewerage at a local level.

9 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 9.1 Note the position statement of the Salisbury District Flood Steering Group.
- 9.2 Confirms in principle that the council will participate in the proposed flood alleviation scheme for Tisbury, subject to final approval when actual costs are known.
- 9.3 Gives formal approval for the steering group to continue for a further twelve months.

10 IMPLICATIONS

10.1	Financial	:	£100,000 is allocated for flood alleviation schemes in the council's capital programme to 2007/08. To date £36,500 has been allocated for work at Pitton.
10.2	Legal	:	None at this time
10.3	Personnel	:	None
10.4	Community Safety	:	None
10.5	Environmental	:	Flood defence works will reduce the environmental impact of flooding which causes damage to property, disruption of services, erosion and pollution.
10.6	Council's Core Values	:	Providing excellent service. Being fair and equitable. Being environmentally conscious.
10.7	Wards affected	:	All
10.8	Consultation undertaken	:	None