

Wiltshire Council

Environment Select Committee

28th October 2014

Subject: **Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**

Cabinet member: Councillor Jonathan Seed – Campuses, Area Boards, Libraries, Leisure and Flooding

Executive Summary

Flooding is a serious issue in Wiltshire, with extensive flooding in the north of the county taking place in 2007 and 2008, and more recently across the whole county in 2014, when over 500 properties were affected.

Wiltshire Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority for the county and has prepared a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to describe its approach to flooding and how it will work with other organisations.

Wiltshire Council's Local Flood Risk Strategy seeks to

- Improve knowledge regarding flood risk
- Improve protection from flooding
- Improve resilience to flooding
- Improve the environment
- Improve communications about flooding issues

Wiltshire Council cannot deliver the objectives of the local strategy without the assistance of others. The Council works with other risk management authorities, especially the Environment Agency and water companies, local town and parish councils, community groups, other local authorities and the public.

The Council is carrying out a public consultation on its proposed Local Flood Risk Management Strategy prior to the strategy being considered by Cabinet early next year. Responses to the consultation are requested by the end of December.

Proposal

Environment Select Committee is requested to consider the proposed Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy so that any comments can be taken into account when the Strategy is considered by Cabinet.

Reason for Proposal

To provide Environment Select Committee with the opportunity to consider and comment on the strategy before it is adopted.

Parvis Khansari**Associate Director Highways and Transport**

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. To consider and comment on the proposed Local Flood Risk Management strategy before it is considered for adoption by Cabinet.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The overall aim of the response strategy is to support the Wiltshire Council Business Plan vision to create stronger and more resilient communities. The suggested improvements meet the Business Plan outcomes of:
 - People work together, solve problems locally and participate in decisions that affect them, and
 - People feel safe and are as protected as possible from harm.

Background

3. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires Wiltshire Council to develop a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). The Council is responsible for maintaining, applying and monitoring the strategy, and ensuring that it is consistent with the National Flood and Coastal Risk Management Strategy.
4. Wiltshire experienced severe flooding between December 2013 and March 2014, with over 500 properties flooded and a number of roads having to be closed to traffic. Many communities in Wiltshire were also affected by the flooding in 2007 and in 2008. Many communities in Wiltshire have experienced at first hand the damage, distress and disruption that flooding can cause.
5. Flood risk within Wiltshire is often a complex interaction between river, surface, ground water and sewer flooding, and the local geology is a significant factor. The northern part of the county is predominately underlain by clay, with flooding generally caused by river or excessive surface water runoff. The south of the county is characterised by underlying chalk deposits, with potential risk of ground water flooding in many areas.
6. The risk of flooding is increasing due to pressures in urban environments, and with climate change more severe rainfall events are predicted. These will create additional challenges for communities and have implications for new developments.

7. The Council's Strategic Flood Risk Management Group is chaired by a Cabinet member portfolio holder, Councillor Seed, who works closely with the Chairs of the three Operational Flood Working Groups, currently chaired by Councillors Hewitt and Jacobs.
8. The Operational Flood Working Groups cover the north and south of the county, based broadly on river catchment areas, with a separate group for Salisbury, and usually meet every two months. The meetings are generally attended by representatives from the Environment Agency, Wessex Water, Thames Water, Highways Agency, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue, Canal and Waterways Trust and other organisations having an interest in flooding and drainage matters, including town and parish councils.
9. The Council has a significant budget for drainage improvement and flood alleviation of works, which is £1,000,000 in 2014/15, and bids for additional funding as opportunities arise to help in implementing its strategy.

Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

10. The LFRMS is included as **Appendix 1** of this report and explains:-
 - The roles and responsibilities of Wiltshire Council as a Risk Management Authority and its management functions.
 - How the council works with neighbouring authorities and others
 - The objectives for managing local flood risk
 - The measures proposed to meet these objectives
 - How technically and financially and when these measures will be implemented.
 - How we will develop, maintain, apply and monitor our LFRMS
11. The aim of the strategy is to work with stakeholders, local communities and organisations responsible for managing flood risk to enable a better understanding of flood risk and thereby reduce the risk of flooding within the county where it is technically, environmentally, socially and cost effective to do so.
12. It is proposed to adopt the following objectives to:-
 - Improve knowledge regarding flood risk
 - Improve protection from flooding
 - Improve resilience to flooding
 - Improve the environment
 - Improve communications about flooding issues
13. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy describes responsibilities with regard to flood risk, the types of flood risk and how flood risk is managed in Wiltshire.

Consultation

14. The Council is seeking the views of the public, local councils, other organisations and the public regarding the proposed strategy. The public and others will be invited to comment in writing or through the Council's website.
15. The consultation will be a Chairman's announcement at the Area Boards and an invitation to comment will be included in the Parish Newsletter.
16. This committee is invited to review the proposed document so that any comments can be considered by Cabinet when the strategy is considered for adoption early next year.

Recommendation

17. Environment Select Committee is requested to consider the proposed Wiltshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy so that any comments can be taken into account when the Strategy is considered by Cabinet.

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