

Cabinet Meeting

24 February 2016

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| Report title | The Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the Black Country | |
| Decision designation | AMBER | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor Steve Evans City Environment | |
| Key decision | No | |
| In forward plan | No | |
| Wards affected | All | |
| Accountable director | Nick Alderman, City Environment | |
| Originating service | Highways Network | |
| Accountable employee(s) | Bob Willis | Urban Traffic Control and Traffic Manager |
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| Report to be/has been considered by | Environmental Infrastructure Board | 20 January 2016 |
| | Place Leadership Team | 1 February 2016 |
| | Strategic Executive Board | 9 February 2016 |

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Consider and approve, on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton Council, the Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the Black Country, which can be accessed via the link <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/3336/Flooding-of-the-Highway>

Recommendation(s) for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The outcomes of public consultation on the Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the Black Country.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This report seeks approval, on behalf of City of Wolverhampton Council, of the final Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the Black Country. This is a statutory requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. This report follows on from the Cabinet report of 21 October 2015, which sought and received approval to consult on the draft document.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Following severe flooding nationally in the summer of 2007 the Government commissioned the Pitt Review which recommended that local authorities should lead on the management of local flood risk, working in partnership with other organisations. Consequently two key pieces of legislation were enacted; the Flood Risk Regulations (2009) and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA 2010).
- 2.2 The Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), now has a statutory duty to co-ordinate local flood risk management and work with other organisations, such as the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water, to develop, maintain, apply and monitor the implementation of a local flood risk management strategy. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has stated that strategies must be published by April 2016.
- 2.3 Each Local Authority has a duty as LLFA for its particular area. However the Association of Black Country Authorities and the Environment Agency have encouraged joint working arrangements between Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Councils and City of Wolverhampton Council in respect of flood risk management, hence the Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the Black Country has been produced and consulted on. These are public documents which explain the local flood risk, clarify who is responsible for managing it and set out an action plan to define an approach to mitigate its worst impacts.

3.0 Key Points of the Strategy

- 3.1 The strategy's Vision Statement is "Flood risk will be managed so as to reduce the risk to all across the Black Country". The strategy is very high-level in accordance with DEFRA guidance. While referring to some "flooding hot spots" the action plan does not detail specific projects to mitigate specific risks.
- 3.2 The strategy notes that "Historically Wolverhampton has not suffered from major flooding... due to its history of drainage infrastructure development, the topography of the land and its location upstream of the country's primary river basins". "The main flood risk is from localised incidents caused by extreme surface water run-off and blocked gullies". Any flood risks from ordinary watercourses (which are the Council's responsibility as LLFA) are most easily found at www.environment-agency.gov.uk due to the frequent updates of the online mapping. They are often associated with poor maintenance of culverts and/or trash screens leading to blockages. Several historical groundwater flooding issues have also been reported, especially in the north-east of Wolverhampton.

4.0 Consultation Outcomes

4.1 Public consultation took place 9 November – 18 December 2015 across the Black Country. Answers to the ten questions on the strategy Consultation Response Form have been positive. Support has also been received from the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and Highways England. While the region is not prone to the flood risks recently apparent in northern England and Scotland the feedback is that the document fulfils its requirements to:

- Understand and communicate flood risk in the Black Country
- Manage the likelihood and impacts of flooding
- Help the Black Country citizens to manage their own risk
- Ensure appropriate development in the Black Country
- Improve flood prediction, warning and post flood recovery
- Work in partnership with others to deliver the local strategy

4.2 As the Strategy is a living document it is proposed that it will undergo periodic review with key amendments and issues to be reported to Cabinet.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 The Council's contribution towards the cost of preparing the Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the Black Country now totals £7,925.50, an increase of £1,213.00 from that previously reported to facilitate the finalisation of the strategy. This is funded from the Surface Water Management revenue budget managed by Highway Assets.
[TT/27012016/S]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 Section 9 of the FWMA 2010 places a duty on the Council, as LLFA, to develop, maintain, apply and monitor the implementation of a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
[TS/0502016/F]

7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 Chapter 2 (Vision and Aims) and Chapter 6 (Objectives) of the strategy document address the initial equality objectives contained in the Council's Equality Objectives Action Plan:

- To assess the impact of our equality activities and policies
- Promote (positive action) programmes to address imbalance / inequalities in the demographic of the City of Wolverhampton Council's workforce
- To improve our performance on monitoring systems for identifying any inequality / disadvantages in the employment of people
- All the Council's commissioning and procurement process take account of equality issues. All contracts include a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service fairly and equitably
- To advance equalities by taking practical steps to ensure services are accessible and efficient for all communities
- To establish a corporate system for collecting and monitoring equality

information about our customers based across the City

- To increase opportunities and strengthen mechanisms in place for underrepresented communities / protected groups to be involved

8.0 Environmental implications

8.1 If approved this report would help safeguard Wolverhampton against the environmental impacts of flooding.

9.0 Human Resources implications

9.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

10.0 Corporate Landlord implications

10.1 There are no Corporate Landlord implications arising from this report.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 The final report of The Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management in the Black Country can be found at:

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/3336/Flooding-of-the-Highway>

and

<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/article/7926/Have-your-say-in-Black-Country-flood-defence-consultation>