

PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

14 January 2014

Update on Flood and Drainage Management Briefing Note.

Introduction

At the PDS meeting on 20 November 2013 Panel Members received a joint presentation from Kelvin Packer, (Service Manager – Highways) and Ed Lockington (Environment Agency) on the duties placed upon B&NES by recent legislation and the outcome of flooding investigations in Chew Magna and Chew Stoke.

The Panel requested that an update is reported to the January 14 Panel meeting. This briefing note sets out the progress and actions undertaken since the original Panel Report.

Actions taken

The November presentation contained a slide showing how the Authority is responding. The Panel requested that the Authority's response was updated with progress and timescales. This is set out in the table below:

Action	Progress	Completion date
Establish a flood risk Board	Meeting with EA on 6 January to agree the format of the Board	First formal Flood Risk Board meeting to take place in March 14
Undertake regular Meetings with the EA	Meetings arranged by Flood Risk Manager	Completed- First meeting January 2014
Appoint Flood Risk Manager	Jim Collings appointed to role in December 13	Completed – December 2013
Create a single Drainage Team dealing with both highway and Land drainage team	Combined team created and reporting to Craig Jackson (Highway Maintenance and Drainage Manager. Now recruiting to vacant posts	Appointment to remaining posts by April 2014
Review the relationship with Emergency Planning and formally set up new working arrangements	Initial discussions completed. Further review meetings planned to finalise any changes to working arrangements	Complete review by April 2014*

* As a result of previous flooding incidents and the very heavy rainfall around Christmas 2013 the Highways team and Emergency Planning have already established arrangements to create a joint incident management control, which has proven to be very effective in co-ordinating the response to flood risk.

Chew Magna Flooding and Property level Protection (PLP)

Following the November Panel Meeting, Kelvin Packer and the representatives of the Chew Valley Flood Forum agreed to compile a list of residents' concerns regarding any defective equipment in order that this could be discussed with the suppliers at a meeting in December 2013.

The Chew Valley Flood forum received 35 returns from the 69 properties canvassed and of those, 20 properties identified defects. The CVFF recognises that a number of the defects reported have resulted from poor equipment storage or storm related damage caused during use.

The CVFF continues to work with officers and is proactively endeavouring to obtain a return from the remaining properties to establish a complete picture.

In December 2013 a constructive meeting was held with the supplier of the flood barriers to discuss the extent of, and costs of any remedial works, as well as providing a maintenance scheme for residents.

In addition the supplier has agreed to a joint review of their records along with the survey results from the CVFF (once available). This will enable the next steps to be agreed. It is anticipated that a further meeting will take place in February 2014.

The supplier has offered an open invite to the Panel to visit their premises and see first-hand, the products in test and the systems in place to ensure quality control for their customers.

Further Works

It was reported in November that the Council was planning to undertake an independent survey of the PLP measures and to inform what further flood mitigation works may be undertaken. JBA consultants have been formally appointed through the Environment Agency's framework to complete this survey. At the time of drafting the briefing note Officers await confirmation the survey commencement date.

Now that the Council has a Flood Risk Manager in post, across summer 2014 officers will be working through the previously published Chew Magna flood investigation report and implementing appropriate actions.

Chew Stoke Flooding

At the November Panel meeting it was reported that a public meeting with the residents of Chew Stoke was required in order to brief the community on the outcome of the flood investigation. This meeting took place in December 2013 and was attended by Jim Collings, Flood Risk Manager.

A survey of the sources of surface water flooding and a number of improvement works to the highway drainage system have been identified and

as a result a works order for improvements has been issued to our Contractor. These works will be completed prior to 31 March 2014.

Officers have also reviewed the Food Warning signage and produced a report on a range of improvements/changes that could be implemented. However, these are not widely supported by the community as they are potentially visually intrusive. Therefore, the officers' findings will be discussed with the Cabinet Member for Transport, prior to seeking agreement to include any works in the 2014/15 works programme.

Concern was expressed by the CVFF that surface water run-off from farm land was a contributory factor to flooding and Panel requested officers to contact the NFU to discuss whether contour ploughing etc. could make a difference.

In order for a meaningful dialogue with the NFU officers have reviewed the impact of farming on flooding, as well as the flood investigation results for Chew Stoke. It has been concluded that farming had a negligible impact on the flooding due to the degree of ground saturation present, intensity of the storms and rapid response nature of the catchment. However, drainage staff is planning to hold a meeting with the NFU to discuss farming and land management issues in February 2014.

As with the Chew Magna investigation, the Flood Risk Manager will be working through the previously published report and implementing appropriate actions across summer 2014.

Resources

Since the report to the November PDS panel a Flood Risk Manager has been appointed, A Senior Engineer has returned from maternity leave and a Drainage Graduate trainee has been appointed to the team, who is, in part funded by the Environment Agency.

A permanent appointment has also been made to the Engineer Post in Highways, who will also be working on highway drainage issues.

There are three vacant posts in the drainage team (Senior Engineer, Engineer and Senior Technical Officer). It is planned to advertise these vacancies in February 2014.

Action Plan

Officers are meeting with the Environment Agency on 6 January 2014 to review the actions to be included in the Action Plan. A meeting has also been scheduled with Cllr Charles Gerrish, the Council's representative on the Wessex Flood Defence Committee, to review the proposed actions for inclusion in the operational Highways and Drainage Service Plan 2014/15. There is already a proposal for an additional £200k investment planned for flood mitigation/enhanced PLP. Officers will brief the relevant Cabinet Members once the action plan is formed and any required funding will be sought through the normal budget approval process.

