

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

32

Report of Corporate Director for Place
To
Cabinet

On
22nd September 2015

Report prepared by: Richard Atkins, Coastal Defences
Engineer

Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Executive Councillor: Councillor Martin Terry
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of the production of the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and the measures taken to consult on it. (There is a separate report on this agenda dealing with the Council's related Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP)).
- 1.2 To seek Members' approval to the Plan and agreement to submitting it to the Environment Agency and posting it on the Council's website.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Members adopt the Strategy as the Council's strategic approach to mitigating the effects of surface water flooding throughout the Borough.**
- 2.2 **That, if required due to imposed timescales, authority be delegated to the Corporate Director for Place, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Public Protection, Waste and Transport, to make amendments to the document arising from Members' or consultees' comments.**
- 2.3 **That Members approve the submission of the Strategy to the Environment Agency and publicising it on the Council's website**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Floods and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA) designated unitary and county authorities, including Southend-on-Sea Borough Council as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs). Among the new duties that the Act created was one for each LLFA to develop a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) for its area.
- 3.2 In parallel with the FWMA, the Floods Regulations 2009 (FR) transcribed European directives into UK law, and this required the submission, by December

2015, of a Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP). This largely overlapped with the requirements for the LFRMS, but with a wider scope, as it included coastal and main river risk. For the Anglian region, the Environment Agency (EA) led on developing a combined document, with individual LLFAs contributing the information for their areas. Because of the overlapping nature of these two documents, and with EA agreement, Southend Borough Council has produced a LFRMS with an enlarged scope to cover the requirements of the FRMP, to serve as a combined document.

4 The Strategy

4.1 The purpose of the LFRMS is to set out, with approximate costs and timetables, Southend's strategy for reducing the risks from surface water flooding throughout its area. The Strategy is required to be consistent with and supportive of the national strategy produced by the Environment Agency (EA).

4.2 As a strategy, therefore, it proposes a wide range of generic measures derived from the objectives established by the EA, rather than identifying individual projects for implementation. These objectives are:-

- Improve understanding of flood risk including likely effects of climate change
- Encourage future development to provide a betterment to flood risk
- Pursue flood risk management measures using a risk based approach that provide multiple social, economic and environmental benefits to the borough
- Raise awareness of flood risk and management measures to communities, residents and businesses
- Use knowledge of flooding to inform the emergency response
- Continue to manage local flood risk and coastal flooding and erosion

The Strategy considers each of those objectives and sets out a range of measures and individual actions for achieving them, which are summarised in the Action Plan.

4.3 Before the development of the LFRMS and the FRMP, the government had provided funding to selected authorities, including Southend, to prepare Surface Water Management Plans (SWMP) to identify sources of surface water flooding and consider potential mitigation measures. The SWMP for Southend is being submitted for consideration by Cabinet along with the LFRMS. SWMPs are based on nation-wide digital modelling by EA. In the case of Southend's SWMP, opportunity has been taken to review the original document to include updated modelling and to incorporate knowledge gleaned as a result of experiences with flooding since the production of the original draft produced in 2011.

4.4 Much of the background data contained in the SWMP was used and developed for the LFRMS, using the updated modelling results from the EA. The modelling, however, did not include consideration of the impact of the local sewerage system on flooding, nor the effects of high levels in receiving waters. The scope of flooding sources was limited to surface water, groundwater and ordinary

watercourses. Sewer flooding was to be considered, qualitatively, only where it was known to be affected by high levels of tides or receiving watercourses.

- 4.5 It should therefore be noted that as the modelling for the SWMP process did not consider the interaction of surface water flows with either the underground drainage system or with tidal conditions and the ability to discharge water to sea, the definitions of flood risk areas in the Strategy should be viewed in that context, but the modelling has produced indicative risk areas, which largely reflect the general realities of recent experience of flooding in the town. They should not be used to identify individual properties at risk.

The LFRMS establishes a starting point for a long term strategy to manage flood risks, which will influence future capital investments, maintain, public engagement and understanding, land use planning and emergency planning and future developments across Southend.

The aim of the LFRMS is to set out the approach the Council would take, as Lead Local Flood Authority, to manage local flood risk in both the short term and the long term, with proposals for actions that would help manage the risk in a way that delivers the greatest benefit to its residents, businesses and the environment.

The Flood Water Management Act (FWMA) sets out what must be addressed in a LFRMS. These issues are addressed in the strategy in the following areas;

- Assessment of flood risk
- Roles and responsibilities for flood risk management
- Objection for managing flood risk
- Measures proposed to deliver the objectives
- How the strategy contributes to the achievement of environmental objectives
- How the strategy will be monitored and reviewed
- Executive summary

- 4.6 The Strategy includes an Action Plan listing a range of proposed generic organisational, planning, informative and educational measures to be considered for implementation throughout the town. The action plan has a number of measures for which actions have been identified and for each of these the proposed funding route, timescale for implementation and delivery lead and partners have been identified. A number of these actions are also identified in the SWMP Action Plan, because of the related purposes of these documents.

- 4.7 The Executive Summary, the Action Plan, and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan are appended to this report, and the full version of the LFRMS has been made available to Members for reference. The Report on the Public Consultation will follow.

The strategy has been prepared taking into account other flood risk or related documents including:

- South Essex Catchment Flood Management Plan
- Southend on Sea Borough Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment

- Southend on Sea Borough Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Southend on Sea Borough Council Surface Water Management Plan
- Essex and South Suffolk shoreline Management Plan
- Southend on Sea Shoreline Strategy Plan

4.8 The LFRMS is intended to be formally reviewed on a six year cycle, but it will also be kept under review by consideration at quarterly Local Flood Partnership meetings.

5. Consultation

5.1 It is a requirement that both the SWMP (see agenda item 31) and the LFRMS be subject to public consultation, which has been undertaken. This commenced on 14th August and closed on 14th September 2015. This included the Environment Agency and Anglia Water, local residents' associations and via the Council's consultation portal. As the consultation period has only recently closed, an update on this will be provided at Cabinet, together with any recommendations for the text of the LFRMS. The stakeholder engagement plan is attached at **Appendix 3**.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 *Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities.*

Safe

Flooding can create substantial hazards for the public in their homes and in the street, from flowing and potentially deep water, in addition to risks to health considered below. This leads to the inevitable extensive deployment of emergency services personnel and equipment and of resources from the local authorities. In extreme cases, life can be placed at risk.

Implementation of the Strategy would reduce flood risk in the Critical Drainage Areas, and so contribute to the Corporate priority of Safety

Clean

The immediate aftermath of surface water flooding is a residue of debris, gross contamination from overflowing sewers and quantities of household effects, ruined by the water, which unavoidably are deposited outside private residences until they can be disposed of. These factors create smell, nuisance and mess in the affected areas.

Implementation of the Strategy will result in a reduction in the number of premises affected in this way.

Healthy

Flooding creates substantial risks to the health of affected residents due to direct contact of contaminated water with the person and with the fabric of their properties, and potential for injury due to falling, or impact of floating debris. In addition it leads to high levels of stress with the heightened probability of effects on mental health.

The Strategy outputs will reduce these impacts by reducing the extent of areas affected by flooding incidents.

Prosperous

The reduction of flood risk will have large economic benefits to residents, business owners and landlords, including the Council, by:-

- Reducing uninsured losses
- Reducing insurance premiums
- Improving the viability of businesses in flood risk areas.

The Strategy will therefore have a beneficial impact on the cost of living for residents and the overhead costs of businesses.

Excellent

Adoption and Implementation of this Strategy will ensure that the Council discharges duties under the FWMA and FR, and provides improving outcomes for the residents of Southend. It will also serve as an evidence base for funding applications to EA and for discussions with developers.

6.2 Financial Implications

- 6.2.1 Since 2010, LLFAs have been in receipt of Government funding, in the form of Area Based Grant to fund the delivery of the new duties imposed by the FWMA. For Southend this has amounted to approximately £160k annually and has been sufficient to deliver the required duties. There is no present clarity on the future of this funding beyond the current Spending Review period, but it is considered that annual expenditure of this order will adequately permit the Council to carry out the non-structural measures proposed in the Action Plan.
- 6.2.2 Although implementation of the Strategy is at all times subject to available financial resources there is an expectation that the Council will make all practicable efforts to carry out the planned actions.
- 6.2.3 Projects for capital structural schemes arising from the Strategy which provide relief from surface water flood risk qualify for support from central government on the same basis as coastal defence schemes. These generate funding for a proportion of their costs according to the level of benefits. For example a unit value of support is available for each property moved from one level of flood risk to a lower one. The balance of project costs above the level of government support would need to be found from match funding. The funding sources would need to be identified on a scheme-by-scheme basis. Agreement to the LFRMS is an essential first step in the process of seeking EA funding towards projects. The scheme development process for capital projects will identify the funding available from government, and consequently, the sums which will need to be raised locally. This may require capital bids to be brought to Council as projects come forward, and this will form part of the Capital Programme.

6.3 *Legal Implications*

The LFRMS is a document required by law

6.4 *People Implications*

6.4.1 The implementation of the Action Plan, particularly in respect of structural projects will call for expert support. The Council has in place a contract with AECOM consultants for support in a wide range of functions connected with local flood risk. They were appointed in 2012 through a competitive tender process and could provide support for the LFRMS. Professional fees are subject to the financial support on the same basis as scheme costs as referred to in 6.2.3 above.

6.4.2 It is expected that other elements of the Plan, such as public education and information will be funded through existing staffing budgets.

6.5 *Property Implications*

The reduction of the impact of flooding would benefit many properties within the borough.

6.6 *Consultation*

Public and expert consultation has been undertaken on the LFRMS and the Stakeholder Engagement Plan and the Consultation Report are attached as appendices.

6.7 *Equalities and Diversity Implications*

The risk to people from flooding is borne disproportionately by the elderly, and people with health or disability issues. Therefore the scheme will impact more beneficially on these vulnerable groups.

6.8 *Risk Assessment*

The key risks to implementation of the LFRMS are considered to be:-

- The resources required are not available at the appropriate time
- The availability of Government support changes detrimentally for the Strategy
- Stakeholder/Member opposition to strategy.

6.9 *Community Safety Implications*

6.9.1 Community safety, from consideration of the safety of life and limb to the on-going health risks posed by flood water, is the leading issue of concern in connection with flooding.

6.9.2 Implementation of the Plan will be a major contributor to reducing this area of concern.

6.9.3 The LFRMS has also been developed in consultation with the Emergency Planning Officer and will inform any work required to update the Emergency Response Plan.

6.10 *Environmental Impact*

The negative impacts of flooding on the human environment have been commented on above. The impact of the Plan will be to substantially reduce the level of risk to residents across the Borough.

7. **Background Papers**

None

8. **Appendices**

- Appendix 1. Executive Summary of the LFRMS
- Appendix 2 LFRMS Action Plan
- Appendix 3 Stakeholder Engagement Plan
- Appendix 4 Consultation Report – to follow