

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	8 May 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2764

Purpose of Report: To approve the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for West Berkshire.

Recommended Action: That the Executive approves the Strategy.

Reason for decision to be taken: To help manage flood risk across the District and comply with the Council's statutory duty.

Other options considered: N/A

Key background documentation: Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy Dec 2013.
 Flood Risk Management Action Plan.
 West Berkshire Strategic Environmental Assessment Report, Draft Feb 2014.
 West Berkshire Screening under the Habitats Regulations Draft Feb 2014.
 West Berkshire Water Framework Directive Assessment.
 Lambourn Valley Flood Management Plan.
 Pang Valley Flood Management Plan.
 All documents available to view at:
www.westberks.gov.uk/LFRMS

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:

- CSP1 – Caring for and protecting the vulnerable**
- CSP2 – Promoting a vibrant district**
- CSP4 – Protecting the environment**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Strategy principles:

- CSP5 - Putting people first**
- CSP6 - Living within our means**
- CSP7 - Empowering people and communities**
- CSP8 - Doing what's important well**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principles by:
 As detailed within the body of the report.

Portfolio Member Details

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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	7 April 2014
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Implications

- Policy:** None.
- Financial:** The management costs of meeting the flood risk management arrangements are incorporated within the Councils current revenue budget. At present it is considered there are adequate resources to undertake the processes required to implement the strategy, however this should be reviewed following the enactment of schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act relating to the approval of Sustainable Drainage as part of new planning applications.
- Personnel:** None
- Legal/Procurement:** None
- Property:** The strategy is aimed at managing flood risk and providing property owners with the means and knowledge to better protect their properties.
- Risk Management:** This strategy provides the framework for managing flood risk across the District.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>		

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 places a responsibility upon Local Authorities, as Lead Local Flood Authorities, to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management (the 'Strategy'). This Strategy forms the framework within which communities have a greater say in local risk management decisions.
- 1.2 The Strategy encourages effective flood risk management by enabling people, communities, businesses and the public sector to work together to ensure a clear understanding of the risks of flooding so that investment in risk management can be prioritised more effectively.
- 1.3 The Strategy will set out clear and consistent plans for risk management so that communities and businesses can make informed decisions about the management of flood risk, whilst encourage innovative management of flood risk and taking account of the needs of communities and the environment. It will form links between the Strategy and local planning decisions and, importantly, ensure that emergency plans and responses to flood incidents are effective and that communities are able to respond properly to flood warnings. This will in turn help communities recover more quickly and effectively after flood incidents.
- 1.4 The Council is required to consult the public and designated Risk Management Authorities that may be affected by the strategy. This consultation took place in January and February 2014. A Strategic Environmental Assessment under the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 has also been produced.
- 1.5 Through the West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, the Council, working with its partners, aims to increase awareness of local flood risk issues. The document sets out how partners are working together to reduce flood risk. It provides, for the first time, an overview of the ongoing flood risk management work underway across the District in the form of an Action Plan that will be regularly updated in line with priorities and funding availability.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 A full flood risk action plan has been developed for the District and is appended to the Strategy.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 This item is not relevant to equality.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 That the Executive approves the West Berkshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 requires West Berkshire District Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to provide the framework for managing local flood risk within the District.
- 1.2 The draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was available for public consultation from 21st January 2014 to 28th February 2014. Consultees included members of the Berkshire Strategic Flood Risk Management Partnership, Environment Agency, Regional Flood and Coastal Committees, Local Authorities, Parish Councils, Water companies, local flood forums and flood action groups, and members of the public.
- 1.3 Responses to the consultation are currently being collated and will be reported in full to the Executive on 8th May 2014.

2. Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

- 2.1 The government has recently given local authorities new powers to help manage flood risk in a more coordinated way. These new responsibilities relate primarily to 'local' flood risk, namely from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.
- 2.2 The Strategy establishes a set of objectives and corresponding measures (presented as a strategic action plan) that will steer the Council towards meeting those objectives; and provides a single consistent reference point against which the Council can develop and monitor flood risk management.
- 2.3 The Strategy sets out how West Berkshire Council will work with other agencies and the public to understand local issues and to communicate and manage the risk of flooding. The Strategy will help communities, individuals and businesses understand local flood risk, what action they can expect to see with regards flood risk management and what action they can take to reduce the impact of future flood events.

3. Strategy Objectives

- 3.1 There are six main objectives in the Strategy as listed below. These are covered in more detail within the document itself along with the strategic measures and actions required to achieve these objectives. The main objectives are:
 - (1) To provide a clear explanation of the roles and responsibilities of organisations and individuals and how we can work together to manage flood risk;
 - (2) To develop a clear understanding of flood risk within West Berkshire and how best to increase the public's awareness;
 - (3) To develop plans to reduce existing flood risk while taking account of people, communities and the natural environment;

- (4) To identify measures aimed at reducing existing flood risk;
- (5) To ensure planning decisions take full account of flood risk;
- (6) To ensure our emergency plans are effective and that individuals and communities understand their role before and during a flood event.

3.2 The Strategy builds on the extensive flood risk management work already carried out in the District. 2013 saw the drafting and consultation on flood management plans for Lambourn and Pang Valleys with forums established to manage the implementation of these plans.

4. Consultation

4.1 The draft strategy and associated documentation was published on the Council's web-site from 21st January 2014 with comments invited by 28th February 2014. A leaflet giving an overview of the strategy was sent to all Ward Members, Parish Council's, Professional Partners, Flood Forums, Flood Action Groups and relevant West Berkshire Officers.

4.2 The leaflet and web-site invited consultees to review the Strategy along with the associated documentation and provide feedback using the online survey form. Consultees were asked the following four questions

- (1) Do you disagree with any of the objectives or would you like any additional objectives included?
- (2) Do you have any comment on these measures and do you feel there are any additional measures that should be included to achieve the objectives of the strategy?
- (3) Does the strategy clearly define the roles and responsibilities?
- (4) Is there anything else you would like to comment on? Please detail below any additional information you would like to see covered by the strategy.

4.3 In total 58 responses were received from a mixture of residents, Local Ward Members, Parish Councils, Flood Groups and residents associations. Not all the consultees answered all of the questions, however a wide range of feedback and comments have been received. Details of all the consultation responses along with officers comments are listed in Appendix B.

4.4 The feedback from the consultation has been constructive and supportive. The general consensus from the responses is that the document is welcomed and the objectives are appropriate as a road map to reducing flood risk within the District. Consultees also felt the document also clarifies the roles and responsibilities.

4.5 The main recurring issue raised from consultees is concerns about future development and associated flood risk. Many of the consultees raise concerns about specific potential development sites. It should be noted that Objective 5 of the strategy is aimed at 'ensuring planning decisions take full account of flood risk'. Through the Action Plan strategic measures will be introduced to ensure all new

developments incorporate sustainable drainage measures and that they do not increase flood risk.

5. 2014 Flood Event

- 5.1 In the 66 days from 13 December 2013 to 16th February 2014, 409mm of rain fell in the Thames Valley Catchment. To put this into context this is the largest 66 day total since records began with widespread flooding causing damage to roads and properties with a major incident declared in West Berkshire during February 2014.
- 5.2 Approximately 150 properties were flooded in the District with 104 roads and footpaths being closed at the height of the flooding. A full review of the flood event will be undertaken and investigations will be undertaken under section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act. The resulting actions from this review and the investigations will be added to the Local Flood Risk Management Action Plan.

6. Overview and Scrutiny

- 6.1 The Flood and Water Management Act has made an amendment to the Local Government Act, under Section 21F, introducing powers for Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review and scrutinise the activities of the flood risk management authorities. In addition, under the Flood Risk management Overview and Scrutiny (England) Regulations 2011, the lead local flood authorities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is empowered to request reports or the attendance at meetings of any flood risk management authority, to enable the scrutiny of the delivery of their flood risk management functions.
- 6.2 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission will receive an annual report on progress of the strategy implementation over the financial year and plans for the forthcoming financial year. The report will be submitted to the Commission in April every year.

7. Implementation and Review

- 7.1 Reviewing and updating this strategy will be essential to ensure it remains fit for purpose and as a way of demonstrating successes in delivering reduced flood risk within West Berkshire. Implementation of the strategy will be lead by the Projects Team within the Council's Highways and Transport Service, working closely with the Council's Civil Contingencies Manager and Professional Partner Organisations through the Berkshire Strategic Flood Action Group.
- 7.2 Review and update of the Strategy Action Plan will take place monthly and a comprehensive refresh will be undertaken annually. This annual refresh will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission as detailed in 6.1 above.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 Flooding can have far reaching significant detrimental impacts on people's lives. From short duration nuisance flooding of highways, open space and river corridors to flooding of people's homes and businesses leading to damage, loss of personal possessions, displacement during remedial works and environmental impacts from pollution. The effects can also lead to physical and mental health issues and increased strain on people's lives.

8.2 Approving and implementing this Strategy will demonstrate West Berkshire's commitment to managing flood risk. This Local Flood Risk Management Strategy sets out how West Berkshire Council will work with its partners in local flood risk management to understand local flooding, communicate risks and manage unacceptable risks now and in the future.

9. Recommendation

9.1 The Executive approves the West Berkshire Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Appendices

Appendix A - West Berkshire Flood Risk Management Strategy Consultation Leaflet.

Appendix B - Consultation Responses.

Appendix C - Draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: All Ward Members, All Parish Councils, All Flood Wardens, Focus Groups and Flood Action Groups. Professional Partners (including EA and Thames Water).

Officers Consulted: Carolyn Richardson, Bryan Lyttle, Mark Edwards and Corporate Board

Trade Union: N/A