

Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report:	West Berkshire Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
Report to be considered by:	Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport (Operational), ICT and Customer Services
Date on which Decision is to be taken:	29 June 2011
Forward Plan Ref:	ID2221

Purpose of Report: To gain approval of the West Berkshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) for submission to the Environment Agency in June 2011.

Recommended Action: To note and approve the contents of the West Berkshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment report.

Reason for decision to be taken: To adhere to national deadlines for the submission of PFRA's to the Environment Agency.

Statutory: **Non-Statutory:**
Other:

Other options considered: None

Key background documentation: The Environment Agency's "Living Draft" Guidance for Lead Local Flood Authorities on Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments.

Portfolio Member Details	
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Implications

Policy: This report is inline with the Council's Policy of managing flood risk within West Berkshire.

Financial: None as a result of this report.

Personnel: None

Legal/Procurement: None

Property: None

Risk Management: This document will form part of a Flood Risk Management strategy for West Berkshire.

Equalities: Stage 1 EIA Completed

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: Councillor Graham Jones

Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman: Councillor Brian Bedwell

Ward Members: All Members

Opposition Spokesperson: Councillor Royce Longton/Councillor Keith Woodhams

Local Stakeholders: Stakeholders will be consulted as part of the evidence gathering for the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment report.

Officers Consulted: Jon Winstanley, Carolyn Richardson, Mark Edwards, Bryan Lyttle, Mark Heelis (Environment Agency).

Trade Union: N/A

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by OSC or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 implement the requirements of the European Floods Directive 2007, which aims to provide a consistent approach to managing flood risk across Europe. The Regulations establish four stages of activity within a six year flood risk management cycle to ensure that information is maintained and kept up to date for future use and to support other local flood risk assessments (such as the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plans) and as part of local strategies. The first two stages of the cycle are covered by a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA). This process is detailed in **Appendix A**.
- 1.2 The EA guidance for producing PFRA's states that in order to meet the minimum reporting requirements set out by the European Commission, the PFRA should be subject to the relevant Council's internal approval system including Overview and Scrutiny. This is to make sure the document meets the required quality and consistency standards prior to submission to the Environment Agency in June 2011. An approval process including submission to the Council's OSMC in April 2012 was agreed by Corporate Board in October 2010.
- 1.3 This Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, comprising this report and separate data spreadsheets, provides a high level overview of flood risk across West Berkshire from local sources of flooding. These include surface water, groundwater, ordinary watercourses and canals. It also considers flooding from main rivers because of the interaction between main rivers and local sources of flooding. The methodology for producing the PFRA has been based on the Environment Agency's Final PFRA Guidance and Defra's Guidance on selecting Flood Risk Areas, published in December 2010.
- 1.4 The Environment Agency has used a national methodology, as set out by Defra, to identify indicative Flood Risk Areas across England. No national indicative Flood Risk Areas have been identified within West Berkshire. However, Thatcham was highlighted as being nationally important with regard to surface water flooding.
- 1.5 To gain an overall picture of flood risk across West Berkshire, records of past flooding from local sources was collected from Parish Councils, the Environment Agency, Thames Water Utilities, British Waterways, Berkshire Fire & Rescue and the West Berkshire Council reports into the flooding in 2000/2001 and July 2007. Details of the economic consequences of past flooding were for the most part unavailable. However, based on the evidence collected Thatcham is considered to have 'significant harmful consequences' under the criteria set by the Environment Agency.
- 1.6 For this reason, Thatcham is considered to be a locally significant Flood Risk Area. Newbury remains vulnerable to flooding from the River Kennet and because of the interaction between the River Kennet and the Kennet & Avon Canal, Newbury is also considered to be a locally significant Flood Risk Area.
- 1.7 It should be noted that there is a risk of flooding from local sources across the whole of West Berkshire, particularly from surface water. Based on national surface

water modelling approximately 21,700 properties are at risk from flooding to a depth of 0.1m and 7,600 are at risk from flooding to a depth greater than 0.3m during a rainfall event with a 1 in 200 annual chance of occurring.

- 1.8 The preparation of this PFRA is just one of several new responsibilities for Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA) under the new legislation. West Berkshire Council has a number of new responsibilities and duties as the LLFA under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, which include the development of a local strategy for flood risk management, maintaining an asset register, investigating flooding incidents, and to approve and maintain sustainable drainage systems.

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 That Corporate Board approves the attached PFRA and that the document be taken forward to Management Board on 14 April 2011, OSCM on 6 June 2011 and Individual Decision in June prior to being submitted to the Environment Agency on 22 June 2011.

Appendices

Appendix A – PFRA and the Flood Risk Regulations

APPENDIX A

PFRAs and the Flood Risk Regulations.

