

REPORT TO CABINET

Title: **FLOOD MONITORING**

Date: **28 May 2009**

Member Reporting: **Councillor C Rayner**

Contact Officer(s): **David Perkins, Head of Operations**
Tel: 01628 686860

Wards Affected: **All**

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update on actions taken in regard to flooding since the last Flood Monitoring Report at November 2008 Cabinet.

- The draft Water Bill to be published in April 2009.
- The Council is developing plans with the Environment Agency to create a Local Flood Forum that will report to Cabinet every six months.
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been agreed by the Environment Agency and is due to be published in May 2009.
- Community Flood Plan template available on the Council's website and workshops being held for Parish Councils. The Council will work with Parish Councils to assist in the formulation of these plans.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- i) That approval is given to progress the setting up of a multi agency Flood Working Group.**
- ii) That approval is given to the Head of Operations in consultation with the Lead Member for Highways & Streetcare to develop a Flood Forum as outlined in the report.**
- iii) That approval is given to report to July 2009 Cabinet, details of the draft Water Bill and the Pitt Report and progress on recommendations i & ii above.**
- iv) The Lead Member for Highways & Streetcare and the Director of Environment will meet with Officers on all flood related matters.**
- v) The Lead Member for Highways & Streetcare will write to the Government demanding that the EA receive funding for the dredging of the River Thames.**

What will be different for residents as a result of this decision?
Residents will be made aware of the Council's actions on all aspects of flooding and will benefit from the actions completed and in progress as detailed in the report.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

- 3.1 A draft Floods and Water Bill designed to update and simplify legislation is expected to be published in late April 2009. The Bill will then be included in the Queen's speech in November. The Local Government Association are currently developing a range of tool kits to help local authorities in taking the new roles.
- 3.2 The Pitt Report made 92 separate recommendations following the floods of 2007. Of these approximately one third place a duty on Local Authorities to carry out various functions. Generally, these are to coordinate actions between all parties involved in the prevention of flooding. There are a number of specific recommendations that call upon local authorities to prepare Strategic Flood Plans and play a more pivotal role in terms of planning.
- 3.3 Following consultations with the Environment Agency (EA) it was suggested that local authorities should initially concentrate on the preparation of Surface Water Mapping and Flood Plans. Nationally, five local authorities have been chosen to develop such plans and report back to the EA as to their suitability. These trial formats will then be developed to format a template to be used by all local authorities. This work is currently in progress and the implications in both time and cost of preparing these plans are not yet known.
- 3.4 In preparation of the requirement to develop strategic partnerships, the EA recently published a consultation document proposing a new Lower Thames Flood Forum involving nine Local Authority areas. Only the Royal Borough and one other local authority responded, both agreeing to these proposals. As a result the EA have decided not to pursue the proposal. However, the Council acknowledges the need for continued dialogue with the EA and fully supports ongoing arrangements. As such council officers have met with the EA to discuss a positive way forward. It is proposed that this should include an officer Flood Working Group including representation from the EA and Thames Water. In addition it is proposed to create a Local Flood Forum including Parish Councils and Ward Members from riverside areas. Issues relating to the Forum could be included in the six monthly Flood Monitoring Report.
- 3.5 In November 2007, the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Royal Borough was approved by the Council's Cabinet for development control purposes, and to inform the Local Development Framework. The SFRA brings together recommendations for drainage, emergency planning and development control and sets out recommendations for the development of policy within the Local Development Framework.
- 3.6 During 2008, the SFRA has been subject to a comprehensive review to take account of the revised PPS25 Practice Guide (June 2008); the publication of the Pitt Review (June 2008); the release of updated flood zones for the River Thames (Environment Agency) and surface water flooding experience in the Borough. The review has also incorporated further detailed flood modeling work. The SFRA has now been agreed by the Environment Agency and it is anticipated that the document will be published

in May 2009. The detailed nature of this review has also prompted the EA to indicate that it does not consider that the document needs further reviewing during 2009.

- 3.7 Officers have also been recently involved with progress of the Lower Thames Strategy (this was launched in response to the flooding of January 2003 and has examined the flood risks in Reach 3 (Datchet to Walton Bridge)) and will be attending various stakeholder events over the next few weeks.
- 3.8 Continued liaison with Thames Water has resulted in there being further investigation into the causes of flooding at Wootton Way, Maidenhead and Basford Way Windsor. The results of these investigations have not yet been completed. Thames Water is due to publish specific proposals for each local authority area as part of their Five Year Plan. As a result Thames Water have been asked to attend the Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel on 6th July 2009 to discuss these proposals.
- 3.9 The Community Flood Plan template and guidance have been published on the Council's website. All Parish Councils have been invited to attend workshops being held to help develop these plans and raise awareness and preparedness for the local community and to encourage local resilience in the event of flooding. The Community Flood Plan complies with recommendations contained in the Pitt Report.
- 3.10 The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum have completed their Strategic Flood Plan and a link to this document will be put on the Council's own website. This plan covers the arrangements in response to a major flooding incident across the Thames Valley.
- 3.11 The EA have recently undertaken a consultation survey relating to their Flood Warning signage and information boards. The Council ensured that all Flood Wardens were given the opportunity to submit their thoughts and ideas, as they are key people in updating and disseminating this information in their local communities.
- 3.12 As a result of inclement weather in February a ditch at Burfield Road, Old Windsor became blocked due to two fallen trees, which caused flooding in Kingsbury Drive. This ditch is Main River and therefore is the responsibility of the Environment Agency. However, the Council attended and cleared the majority of the debris to alleviate the flooding. A clean up of the area was organised and the drainage system inspected for any resulting problems. The EA attended removed the trees and will continue to monitor the ditch.
- 3.13 At the same time as the above incident Stanwell Road Horton J/W Coppermill Road became flooded as a result of the erosion of the riverbank at a development in Colnbrook. This caused neighbouring ditches to fill up and become inundated which required Stanwell Road to be closed for some time. Slough BC is considering action against the property owner and the Council will seek to recover its costs as part of this action.
- 3.14 The Council's Capital Programme has seen the completion of Phase one of the flood alleviation scheme at Pine Vets, Bath Road Maidenhead. Phase two will start and be completed in the financial year 09/10 and will see the protection extended to the

properties in the Wavell Road area in Maidenhead. Works have also been completed at Horton Road Datchet.

4. OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Options

	Option	Comments	Financial Implications
1.	Do nothing	Failure to comply with the requirements of the Pitt Report.	Revenue: None Capital: None
2.	Approve the recommendations contained in the report.	This would enable a range of measures to be progressed to implement the findings of the Pitt Report.	Revenue: Officer time Capital: None

4.2 Risk assessment

4.2.1 There are no risks associated with this report however there is a general risk of flooding.

5. CONSULTATIONS CARRIED OUT

5.1 The Environment Agency and Thames Water have been consulted on the Flood Forum Proposals. The Lead Member for Highways & Streetcare has been in correspondence with local residents and groups.

6. COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

6.1 To be inserted following the Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting on 6th May 2009.

7. IMPLICATIONS

The following implications have been addressed where indicated below.

Financial	Legal	Human Rights Act	Planning	Sustainable Development	Diversity & Equality
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Background Papers: None