

Drainage Works programme for 2021/22 and feedback on works undertaken in 2020/21

Summary

To consider the proposed drainage works programme for 2021/22 and to note the progress with flood prevention measures, including the new partnership working arrangements, flood relief schemes proposed and previous works undertaken during 2020/21.

Portfolio: Planning and People

Date signed off: 28 May 2021

Wards Affected: ALL

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to RESOLVE that

- (i) the proposed drainage works programme for 2021/22, as set out at Annex A to this report, be agreed, to be funded from the budget agreed by Full Council in February 2021;
- (ii) the remaining Department of Environment Farming and Rural Affairs grant be used for flood alleviation works within Chobham;
- (iii) the new working partnership arrangements with the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council be supported; and
- (iv) the outcome of the Environment Agency flood alleviation study for the Chobham (Bourne) catchment area be noted.

1. Key Issues

- 1.1 The Council provides a Land Drainage function through its drainage service and has a budget of £67,470 for works during 2021/22. The remit is primarily to undertake maintenance of and make improvements to watercourses and land drainage systems within the Council's own landholdings. The service also provides advice to planning applications to help mitigate flooding from new development and help improve general surface water management across the borough. The service works in partnership with other local authorities, organisations and landowners to help resolve drainage issues and work towards drainage improvements where the outcome is beneficial to residents or where external funding assistance can be obtained. The proposed drainage maintenance work for 2021/22, as set out at Annex A, would be met from the approved 2021/22 budget.

2. Resource Implications

- 2.1 Previously the Executive has allowed public funding to be used for works on land not owned by the Council either on a preferred outcome basis (beneficial to general flood resilience) or on a matched fund basis sourced from external contributions. The use of land or labour may also be undertaken in lieu of financial contribution by a third party, subject to agreement by all involved. Options to access land prior to commencement of third party work may also be undertaken if deemed beneficial to do so, or considered to be financially restrictive to undertake afterwards.
- 2.2 Work continues to be undertaken for the Chobham Flood Alleviation Scheme with an additional funding application (£65k) to complete the works programme currently being considered by the Environment Agency (EA).
- 2.3 The Council's Interim Head of Finance (the S151 Officer) has confirmed that the cost of the proposed drainage works programme for 2021/22 set out in Annex A of this report can be met from the budget agreed by Full Council in February 2021.

3. Options

- 3.1 The alternative options are :
- (i) That the proposed capital programme of £67,470 for the Councils drainage works programme in 2021/22 be approved; and
 - (ii) That the remaining Department of Environment Farming and Rural Affairs grant, and additional external funds, be used for flood alleviation works within Chobham; and
 - (iii) That the new working partnership arrangements with the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council be supported; and
 - (iv) That the outcome of the Environment Agency flood alleviation study for the Chobham (Bourne) catchment area be noted; and
 - (v) To agree or not agree to any of the above
- 3.2 To not agree to any drainage works in 2021/22 would increase flood risk as the failure to maintain the drainage network on the Councils land will result in failures of drainage channels and flood protection, in particular in Chobham where some works remain to be completed. Members are asked to agree options (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv).

4. Proposals

- 4.1 It is proposed that the capital works drainage programme for 2021/22 as set out in Annex A, be approved with the flexibility for amendments where covid restrictions affect works and that works on the flood alleviation works at Chobham continue. That a new approach to partnership working with the EA and SCC to deliver improvements be supported where additional partnership funding becomes available.

That through all of these approaches the Council continues to maintain and improve the overall operation of the land drainage network across the Borough in the interests of reducing flood risk to local communities.

- 4.2 Annexes A and B provide the work programme for 2020/21 as completed, and proposed 2021/22, respectively.

5. Supporting Information

- 5.1 Covid 19 Due to the changing covid restrictions, works throughout 2020/21 were either delayed during times of lockdown and furlough, or revised to suit distancing requirements. In addition, the normal seasonal working restrictions that apply to watercourse intrusions have hindered completion of some works. There have also been difficulties in obtaining construction supplies and general delayed deliveries being experienced throughout the year. This has led to increases to costs and delays on-site. As lockdown and restrictions have eased, there are some supplies that still prove difficult to source so the 2021/22 works schedule is shown with options to continue a flexible approach that allows for potential future working restrictions and supply delays.
- 5.2 In order to keep some momentum of work during 2020/21, some isolated sections of work were commenced where the materials were available and suitable distancing measures could be respected. This work included the bringing forward of projects that were envisaged as being undertaken over future years, in-particular, replacement of concrete bagwork headwalls and timber structures, with recycled plastic products. This work was undertaken at various SHBC owned locations, due to the maintained availability of recycled plastic products and the ability for contractors to work safely within restricted areas and away from members of the public.
- 5.3 As lockdown measures were eased in late 2020, the councils scheduled watercourse maintenance work was undertaken. With contractors generally being kept employed throughout the winter months to undertake this work, ongoing grill clearance and reactive maintenance was also completed as needed.
- 5.4 Work Schedule The annex tables differentiate between the works that are undertaken regularly as a maintenance responsibility and the project works that are more involved in both complexity and duration. Annex A shows the proposed project and maintenance schedule for 2021/22 and Annex B shows a summary of the work completed during 2020/21.
- 5.5 Maintenance All watercourse and surface water maintenance obligations within the councils land holdings have been met within 2020/21.
- 5.6 Resilience Measures During the winter of 2020/21 there were no reports of flooding that could be attributed to the Councils responsibility. All new flood defence and attenuation measures have

performed as intended with only very minor problems being reported within the Borough.

- 5.7 Sand Bag Containers these are sited at Lightwater Country Park and Chobham Fire Station, the containers have provided sufficient sandbag stocks to provide protection for properties since installation. Both containers offer a greater quantity of sandbags to be stored safely and in a protected environment to prolong life, ready for use close to vulnerable locations. The feasibility of locating a third sandbag store at Frimley Lodge Park, to serve the western side of the Borough, is currently being considered.
- 5.8 EA Chobham Flood Alleviation Study The results of the Bournes catchment study have been discussed within joint meetings between this Council and Surrey County Council (SCC). The study concluded that they would be following the approach previously taken by this Council to consider a range of smaller catchment wide flood alleviation works that will reduce flows into the Bourne main-river.
- 5.9 Department of Environment Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) funded Chobham Flood Alleviation Works Discussions are ongoing with the EA regarding the provision of further funding to enable completion of the previously identified flood defence works. Work was identified at 5 areas around Chobham village centre that would either detain or expedite surface water flows to help protect property. However, these schemes were bought forward to suit the EA 6-year schedule and, due to the speed of design, there were additional works and cost increases that hadn't been fully considered. There was a contingency sum attached to the works and additional funds from this sum are expected to be provided through the EA during 2021/22, for completion of all the scheme areas identified.
- 5.10 Staple Hill Pond (James Osbourn Pond) the work was undertaken by the Council and substantially completed in 2020/21 utilising DEFRA funding with EA support, and located on SCC land. Some delays were encountered with supplies and deliveries during the covid restrictions which added to contractor time on site. Additional work was also undertaken with the installation of a plastic sheet pile line through the pond attenuation embankment to ensure the future stability of the structure. Final works including surfacing of the access path and bridleway route is expected to be undertaken during the Summer of 2021 and the asset will then be handed-over to SCC (as landowner).
- 5.11 Broadford Lane Work has been completed with the upgrade of the open watercourse and culvert crossings to improve flows to main-river from the Station Road junction, highway drainage systems and roadside watercourse.
- 5.12 Philpot Lane Work has commenced with the clearance of boundary watercourses, restoration of connections to improve flows and the lowering of verge areas to off-set the highway flooding. Further work will be undertaken during winter 2021/22 to provide further ability for the verge areas to displace and attenuate surface water.

- 5.13 Emmetts Mill Work has commenced with the upgrade of the open watercourse and culvert crossings. An additional watercourse route is to be upgraded in partnership with the private landowner, including the replacement of a bridleway culvert (by the Council) and 4 field access culverts (by the landowner). This work will reduce flood risk to property and highway by improving surface water flow options to main-river.
- 5.14 Castle Grove Road This is the last project area is and still to commence, expected to start summer 2021. The Castle Grove Road scheme is dependent upon additional funding (£65k) being agreed by the EA and the ability to implement works with distancing measures due to close proximity of, and working within, residential property. The work includes width restriction to a public footpath during construction.
- 5.15 New SHBC, EA and SCC Partnership Working Following the EA flood study around Chobham and the upstream villages of Bagshot, Lightwater and Windlesham, the EA has proposed a joint working arrangement with SHBC and SCC to progress various small scale flood alleviation schemes. This proposal has been agreed to extend to flood alleviation works throughout the borough. The SHBC Engineer is providing details to the EA and SCC of various potential areas for consideration and discussions have commenced to investigate where surface water can be detained to off-set minor flooding issues, reduce pressure on existing drainage networks, and/or reduce the uncontrolled discharge to rivers.
- 5.16 Partnership Funding Both the EA and SCC have confirmed they have funding streams available to undertake works during 2021/22 and it is proposed that SHBC utilises surplus funding from the Land Drainage budget to assist with the delivery of small scale projects, where it is considered appropriate for SHBC to make a contribution. Additional capital funds from the Drainage Reserve funds which currently stand at £383,750 may also be considered for larger scale works, subject to suitably matched contributions from land, labour or funds. Where such works are identified these will be the subject of a separate report to the Executive for approval of the capital expenditure.
- 5.17 Pennypot Lane Flood Alleviation Funding has been received from a developer upstream of Pennypot Lane to help alleviate flooding of highway and properties. An additional £40,000 of funding was previously approved by Executive to enable completion of work through private land. The proposal has subsequently been abandoned. This is because, following a change of landownership, it has not been possible to obtain approval for the works from the new landowner. Work has commenced with restoration of a section of watercourse and a new scheme is being considered to connect to this watercourse. The revised scheme involves work to main-river and a new highway culvert so it will seek to utilise funds from EA and SCC to supplement the developer contribution.
- 5.18 Lightwater Flood Alleviation There is one area of flood alleviation work that remains to be undertaken to help reduce risk to properties in

Ambleside Road. The installation of a new highway drainage connection is proposed and works are being discussed with SCC alongside potential funding options.

- 5.19 Lightwater Country Park Following success in defending the Council against court proceedings taken by an adjacent landowner, flow control structures within the Tomlin Order watercourse have now been replaced. Recycled plastic control structures have been installed that will be more effective, offer a much longer lifespan and have an appearance more in-keeping with the surrounding country park.

6. Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities

- 6.1 Implementation of studies and flood improvement schemes, along with on-going maintenance of the borough watercourses, contributes to mitigating flood risk and helps the Council meet its Corporate Objective 1 of making Surrey Heath an even better place to live.

7. Policy Framework

- 7.1 The Executive approved a Land Drainage and Flood Prevention Strategy in 2007/08 which, with subsequent adjustments, focuses the Council's limited resources primarily on maintaining and improving drainage on the Council's own land and examination of proposed drainage solutions submitted through the planning process. Thereafter, the engineer is charged with working in partnership with other agencies and landowners to try and secure external or partnership funding for needed schemes of improvement.

8. Legal Issues

- 8.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 brought in new legal duties for SCC LLFA (Lead Local Flood Authority) and changed working relationships with SHBC. The SHBC Engineer provides comments for smaller development SUDS systems as required, while SUDS approval for larger developments is a SCC responsibility. The SHBC Engineer advises and corresponds with SCC upon some larger developments, within areas of concern or where flood risk appears to be affected. However, this is an informal partnership and remains an advisory role. A similar arrangement exists for development with EA affected main-river planning application comments.

9. Governance

- 9.1 No matters arising.

10. Risk Management

- 10.1 Through investigation of flooding issues and devising drainage improvements the engineer assesses the risks within any course of action to be taken.

- 10.2 The risk of flood to land and property will increase with any reduction in maintenance and improvement programmes. Although serious flooding to homes has continued to be avoided during periods of wet winter, flood alleviation work has not been completed and some homes could be better protected. With the effects of climate change, the new EA and SCC partnership working and shared funding possibilities, it is suggested that flood alleviation works should be continue to be undertaken to help improve flood resilience throughout the SHBC area.
- 10.3 Drainage maintenance and improvements will decrease the risk to community safety which could arise from the more severe flooding events, although it is not possible to prevent all flooding. The Chobham flood relief work will deliver a significant improvement to the drainage network around Chobham and further reduce the risk to persons and property, with an associated reduction in the number of internally flood affected dwellings. The Lightwater flood relief work offers the same beneficial results to residents; and the new partnership funding and working arrangements will help to speed up the design and implementation of flood alleviation schemes throughout the Borough.

11. Equalities Impact

- 11.1 No matters arising

12. Human Rights

- 12.1 No matters arising.

13. Environmental Impact

- 13.1 Continued maintenance and borough wide improvements to the surface water drainage systems and management have been aimed at securing a more sustainable drainage system. Flood alleviation schemes are being considered around the borough that will further improve water quality with restoration of lost ponds and implementation of sustainable flow retention schemes, creating new wetland areas and encouraging bio-diversity.

14. Consultation

- 14.1 Consultation will be undertaken with any affected parties prior to implementing approved drainage schemes. Larger scale flood alleviation schemes that require funding from the Drainage Reserve will be reported to the Executive for approval; and reported to Full Council in (the unlikely) event of an alleviation scheme exceeding £100,000 SHBC contribution.

15. PR And Marketing

- 15.1 No matters arising.

16. Officer Comments

16.1

Annexes	Annex A –Proposed drainage programme for 2021/22 Annex B - summary of the work completed during 2020/21
Background Papers	None
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