

INFORMATION UPDATE ON FLOODING

Committee name	Residents, Education and Environmental Services Policy Overview Committee
Officer reporting	Victoria Boorman
Papers with report	None
Ward	All

HEADLINES

The Committee has requested an update on a broad range of flooding incidents and actions taken. This report covers the following subjects:

Flooding:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Actions during a major flood event
- Council learning from previous major flood events

RECOMMENDATIONS:

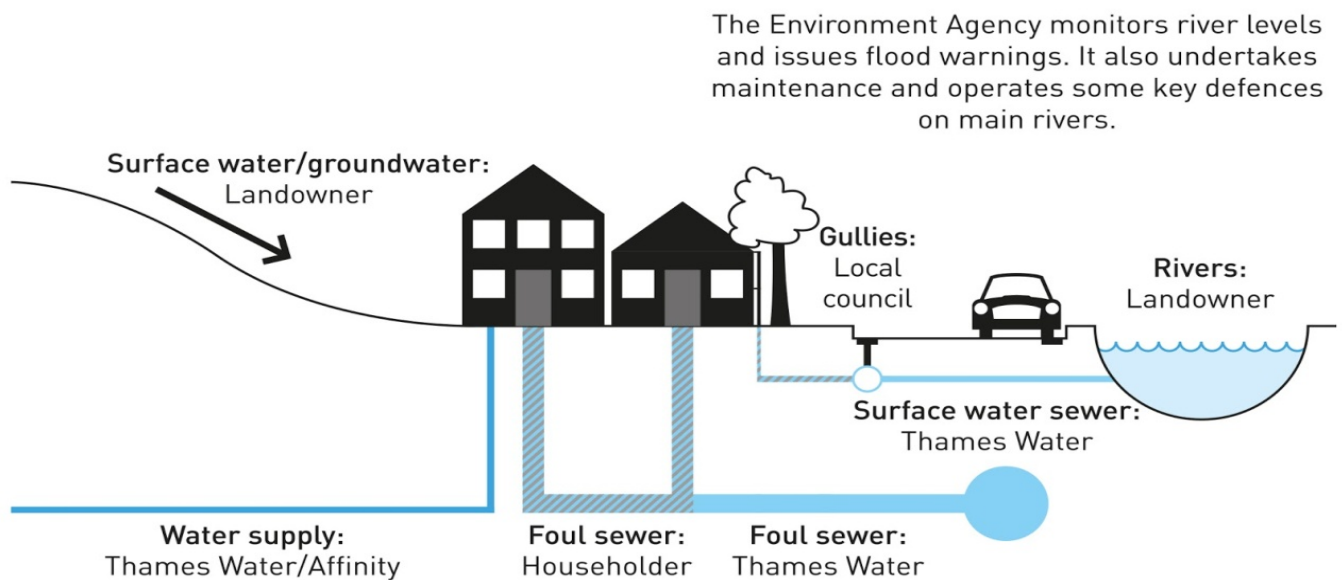
That the Committee notes the information presented in the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Flooding

Roles and Responsibilities

The Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood and Water Management Act has the lead on 'local' flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. The Environment Agency has the lead on main rivers, reservoir flooding and a strategic overview. Thames Water have responsibility for surface and foul water sewers, and Riparian Owners have responsibility for the stretch of river, stream or ditch next to their land or property.



Although the organisations have the lead on these issues, they do not have the responsibility or the ability to solve all flooding issues, the primary responsibility remains with the landowner.

Gullies

Most common highway drainage feature is a gully. This consists of a concrete pot positioned under the road surface with an iron grate visible from the road. The water collects in the concrete pot and is then channelled via a pipe before connecting into the surface water sewer network or to a soak away.

Sometimes these pots and pipes become blocked with soil, dead leaves and rubbish, preventing the free flow of water to the main surface water sewer. Hillingdon Council has over 32,000 road gullies across the borough. Gullies are normally cleaned by lifting the metal grating or cover and sucking all the dirt out using a gully sucker machine. High pressure jetting is required to remove some obstructions.

The Council has an annual cyclical gully cleansing programme whereby gullies in residential roads are cleansed once per year; A-roads twice per year; B & C-roads once per year. 400 No 'critical gullies' have also been identified in locations that require more frequent cleansing and are cleansed four times per year.

Gullies on the Transport for London Road Network are the responsibility of Transport for London. There are also private roads which have gullies or other road drainage infrastructure which are the responsibility of those residents to maintain.

Surface water sewers

Highway run-off flows from a gully into a surface water sewer main. Often flooding can occur even where the gully is clear. This can be because there is a blockage within the surface water sewer, for example because of tree roots or silt build up, a blockage at the outfall or as a result of the river levels being high.

Surface water sewers are the responsibility of the utility companies, and in Hillingdon, this is Thames Water. The utility company will investigate and determine if there is an issue and take appropriate action to clear it. If a water main is overwhelmed simply because a great deal of rain has fallen, a utility company is not required to undertake works to increase the size and capacity.

Flooding on roads

New roads include designed drainage systems intended to remove water efficiently from the surface of the highway to provide a safe passage for all vehicles and pedestrians. Older roads may have less sophisticated drainage, but all have features designed to take the water away from the road surface as quickly as possible. In some rural areas or on very minor roads, this may simply be a ditch leading to a watercourse.

When there is very heavy rainfall on the highway in a short period, it can often be greater than the capacity of the drainage facilities designed to take it away, so it should be expected to see some water on a road after very heavy rain and water can remain for a while in low spots in the road even where the drainage system is working. Roads are designed to contain this water on the road by keeping it within the kerbs.

However, if the water remains after a number of hours, the gullies and the sewers may need to be investigated by the different organisations in order to determine if there is a problem or if the drainage system has sufficient capacity.

Actions during a major flood event

If the Environment Agency issues a Severe Flood Warning for a river in or upstream of Hillingdon, the Councils emergency Flood Plan would be activated which would initiate a coordinated Hillingdon response.

Some of the key service areas involved the planning, preparation response or recovery may include Highways, Green Spaces, Planning, Corporate Communications, Social Services, Corporate Property, Flood & Water Management, and Emergency Management & Response Service. Each service would follow internal service procedures alongside the Flood Plan to ensure a suitable response.

Key strategic actions include determining those most at risk, critical local infrastructure and evacuation and shelter requirements.

During a major flooding incident an Emergency Response Officer would attend the scene as the Local Authority Liaison Officer (LALO). The role of the LALO at the scene is to receive a situation report from the emergency services and to make a note of any requests made with regard to providing an emergency rest shelter, and if other council departments also need to be contacted such as Housing, Highways and Social Care - to ascertain if there are any vulnerable adults who may have been affected.

The LALO is the Councils representative at the scene of the emergency event, and as such would need to liaise with the emergency services, provide regular updates, and send regular situation reports to the Borough Emergency Control Room. Any requests for Council departments to attend the scene would need to be escalated to Council Silver, who would contact the relevant departments. If an emergency rest shelter is required, then Council Silver would activate this and make contact with the rest centre managers and officers.

Council learning from previous major flood events

As a Lead Local Flood Authority, the Council also has a duty to investigate significant flooding events. This tries to identify the organisations involved, and what action they are taking to alleviate flooding. It is dependent on the cooperation of these other organisations. The writing of the investigation does not mean the Council is responsible for the flooding or to provide a solution. However, it is hoped that by making the process more transparent, other organisations and stakeholders can be more easily held to account for their actions.

Investigation

Reports of flooding to the council are collated and recorded, and significant flooding (where properties or business have been flooded internally) trigger a Section 19 investigation, which will be published.

Any investigation takes time to prepare, but particularly in Hillingdon as often the places affected are so disparate across the borough. Each significant report is investigated by the Flood and Water Officer, further information collected, reviewed, and referred to other organisations such as Thames Water where necessary for feedback. Often there are a number of organisations involved with responsibility for different parts of the drainage system. For example, where gullies on the road, which the council are responsible for, drain to a Thames Water Sewer, which in turn flows into a main river for which the Environment Agency has responsibility.

The Council understands the concerns of residents who wish to see action taken quickly, but it is important that the Council prioritises resources and funding to those affected most. The Council must also ensure that works do not make the situation worse for others. The Council has published flood investigation reports on the Council website on following significant flood events in December 2013, July 2014 and June 2016. These reports and the actions taken can be found on the Council webpages [Flooding - Hillingdon Council](#). The flooding team have finalised a draft of October 2019 ready to submit for cabinet approval to publish. It is working on a further report combining the events of October 2020 and Jan 2021.

Actions

In the long-term finalised opportunities to alleviate issues on reported flooding sites, will be incorporated into an update of Hillingdon's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to be published later in 2021 as sites where further investigation will be required to seek solutions for. These will be prioritised in accordance with the consequences of the flood and the numbers affected against those already on the Action Plan being taken forward.

Where possible, the most affected sites will be the subject of applications for external funding by the relevant service area. This will allow the Council to do more detailed studies of the area and assess options for solutions to determine if there is a future scheme to alleviate flooding. This will often need the cooperation of other organisations with responsible for different parts of the drainage system.

The Council have a long list of projects that the Council flooding team are leading on and working with the Environment Agency to identify opportunities for ways to reduce flood risk to residents.

The following is a list of some of the key projects that the flooding team are working on with the Environment Agency and other organisations such as Thames Water.

Project	Issues	Actions
Bessingby Park (LBH land)	1.Thames Water drainage/ sewer overflows. 2.Surface water ponding. 3.Risk of properties flooding. x4 properties flooded in 2021. Park flooded x5 times in January 2021.	Flooding team are working with Thames Water to ensure they investigate the issues properly and feedback actions taken to the Council and residents. A clean up has taken place April 2021
Riverside Caravan Park, West Drayton (private land)	Flooding from adjacent River Colne – overtopping the bank. Flooded 20 plus residents in October 2020 and they had to be evacuated. They were surrounded by water in Jan 2021.	Currently temporary Sandbag wall in place to protect residents. The Flooding team are working with the EA to ensure they put in place a longer-term solution. The EA are working to understand the complex interactions in this area better as well as maintain the river.
Donkey Lane, Bigley Ditch, West Drayton (private land)	Flooding to 5-6 properties and water surrounding others in 2016, 2020 and 2021.	River Maintenance works along the River Colne identified and being undertaken.
Park Woods / Pinn Meadows (LBH land)	Flooded in 2016 in two key areas – in Brook Drive and Park and Broadwood Avenue.	Quick wins phase 1 completed by the Council in Feb 2021 to create more space for water along the River Pinn for water and enhance the park. The flooding team are working with residents and the Environment Agency to identify longer term options.
Cannon-Brook, Pinn	Risk of properties flooding. In 2016 x6 properties flooded at Wallington Close. Previously x100 flooded in 1977.	Property Level protection works at Wallington Close as well as upstream Wetland works designed near Bury Street to slow the flow of water to areas at risk.
Joel Street, River Pinn	Eastcote Tennis Club and a number of local residents in the surrounding area were affected by flooding in 2016 and 2019.	Works at Haydon Drive identified and now designed to slow the flow water entering the Joel Street ditch. Some funding secured though the Better Neighbourhood fund match funding to be sought from the EA by the flooding team.
Copthall, River Pinn	Risk of properties flooding. x116 potentially at risk from flooding	Designs developed to hold back water on area that HS2 have identified as.

Ruislip Manor, River Crane	Risk of properties flooding. In 2016 x13 businesses affected. Tube station closed multiple times since then.	TFL committed funding to look at Options but with Covid the funding has not yet been provided. A gauge to provide warning of the issues developing is to be installed.
Victoria Road, River Crane	Risk of properties flooding. In 2016 Victoria Road closed. In 2021 at Deane Park flooded gardens – existing defence not working. Potential for hundreds of residents and Stonefield Industrial Park to be affected.	Consultants developing options that could be considered to alleviate flooding.
Eastcote Town Centre	In 2016 and 2020 Businesses along Eastcote High Street flooded.	An extension to the Raingardens identified. Parking Changes identified needed. Consultation on these highway changes imminent.
Elephant Park (LBH land)	Risk of flooding to properties. 2014 flooding of residents on Regent Avenue.	Design developed, Tender for contractors being developed, works to start this summer to reintroduce a river through the park.
Charville	Risk of flooding to residential properties. 0 properties flooded internally but over 40 properties experienced disruption to their electrical supplies.	Options identified but private landowner consent needed to be delivered. Ongoing discussions being held.
A40, River Crane	Episodes of flooding leading to sections of the A40 being reduced to x1 lane / reduced flow of traffic.	Consultants being commissioned to review options.
River Crane - Cranford Park	No previous reports of flooding, but large numbers of properties modelled to be at risk.	Detailed design of Wetland Options within Cranford Park being developed as outlines on Cranford Park Masterplan for Heritage Lottery Fund project.

Implications on related Council policies

A role of the Policy Overview Committees is to make recommendations on service changes and improvements to the Cabinet who are responsible for the Council's policy and direction.

How this report benefits Hillingdon residents

Policy Overview Committees directly engage residents in shaping policy and recommendations from the Committees seek to improve the way the Council provides services to residents.

Financial Implications

None at this stage.

Legal Implications

None at this stage.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL.