

Agenda Item 8

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Ward (s) affected	All	Key Decision	No
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Subject	Thames River Basin draft Flood Risk Management Plan
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RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive approves the proposed response to the draft Flood Risk Management Plan set out in the appendix to this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to summarise the content of the draft Flood Risk Management Plan insofar as it relates to the River Mole catchment both within and adjoining Mole Valley.

The report sets out the on-going, agreed and proposed actions of the Environment Agency in relation to this catchment area and recommends that the Executive approves the Council's response to the draft Flood Risk Management Plan in order for it to be submitted before the consultation closes on 31st January 2015.

CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

ACCESS TO SERVICES – Helping residents to access the services they need.

Work with our partners to provide the right services to our local residents. This consultation highlights a number of areas where the Environment Agency (EA) expects to work with Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) on matters relating to flood risk, in particular this would be through the preparation of the Local Plan (which would require the preparation of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and include planning policies relating to the management of flood risk), emergency planning and supporting community resilience.

ENVIRONMENT - Maintaining the character and environment of Mole Valley

Work with our partners and residents to respond to the impact of flooding on communities. This Flood Risk Management Plan is a key mechanism through which continued working with the EA on matters relating to the River Mole Catchment can be

achieved. It sets out the on-going, agreed (but not started) and proposed actions that the EA intends to undertake, often in partnership with MVDC and local communities.

The Executive has the authority to determine the Recommendation

1. Background

Thames River Basin District – Consultation on the draft Flood Risk Management Plan

- 1.1 Flood risk management plans (FRMPs) highlight the hazards and risks from rivers, surface water, groundwater and reservoirs and set out how the relevant authorities will work together with communities to manage flood risk.
- 1.2 The Environment Agency (EA) is required to prepare a FRMP for all of England covering flooding from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs. The EA has therefore prepared and is consulting on the FRMP for the Thames River Basin District, which includes the River Mole catchment. The EA will report progress on the plan annually and review it every 6 years.

2. The Mole Catchment

- 2.1 The Mole catchment extends from the south of Crawley through the Surrey / Sussex Border to the River Thames at Molesey and includes two tributaries of the River Thames, the River Mole and The Rytte which rises near Oxshott.
- 2.2 The River Mole is approximately 79km long and drains a 479km² catchment. It flows from the south of Crawley, through Gatwick (under the airport runway) and the towns of Horley, Reigate, Dorking, Leatherhead, Cobham and Esher before it meets with the River Thames at Molesey.
- 2.3 Just over 384,000 people live in the river basin area.
- 2.4 The area known as the 'Middle Mole' is of most interest to Mole Valley and is the segment that flows from Horley to Cobham. The Upper Mole that flows from south of Crawley to Horley is also of interest. The Middle Mole contains mainly natural floodplain, with market towns and villages. 90% of the Middle Mole catchment is rural.

3. The Objectives for the River Mole Catchment

- 3.1 The EA states within the area covered by the FRMP that it will not be possible to reduce the probability of flooding everywhere but there are measures in place to manage the flood risk in the Mole Catchment.
- 3.2 The EA has defined objectives in three key areas – Social, Economic and Environmental and these include the following:

(a) Social

- Reduce the risk of flooding to communities
- Improve community resilience and resistance to flooding and preparedness to act on receipt of flood warning information
- Raise awareness of riparian responsibility and residual risk given climate change impacts

(b) Economic

- Provide strategic and site-specific flood risk advice in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and sustainable development
- Make best use of development opportunities to reduce flood risk to neighbouring communities
- Improve evidence-base through upgrades and improvements to modelling datasets, asset inspection information and observed flood data
- Use all available evidence and data to prioritise spending on maintenance activity
- Operate flood warning service throughout the Mole Catchment

(c) Environmental

- Make best use of development opportunities to improve the environment
- Safeguard natural floodplains

On-going measures across the Mole Catchment

3.3 Across the Mole catchment there are 12 on-going measures to manage flood risk. These are measures that are already in place and the benefits have been / are being or will be felt. In summary these are:

- **Preventing risk** - There are currently 5 measures already in place across the Mole catchment to prevent flood risk. These measures are primarily concerned with continuing to work closely with the local planning authorities within the catchment to influence spatial planning, and supporting them with regular updates to strategic flood risk assessments and local development plans.
- **Preparing for risk** - There are currently 4 measures already in place across the Mole Catchment to prepare for flood risk. These measures are primarily concerned with continuing to provide flood warnings and refine the flood warning service where necessary, and supporting local authorities and communities in improving preparedness through emergency planning and community flood plans.
- **Protecting from risk** - There are currently 3 measures already in place across the Mole catchment to protect from flood risk. These measures are primarily concerned with on-going asset management and targeted maintenance to ensure that existing schemes continue to operate effectively. The Upper Mole Flood Alleviation Scheme is an on-going project in the Crawley area and will provide flood storage areas to protect the local communities from flood risk.

There are also measures to identify potential third party contributors to future flood risk management schemes through strategic planning.

Agreed measures across the Mole Catchment

- 3.4 Across the Mole catchment there are 2 measures agreed to manage flood risk. These measures have funding in place but have not yet been implemented. They are:
- **Redhill Flood Alleviation Scheme:** This scheme aims to reduce the risk of flooding to communities along the Redhill Brook in Redhill and Earlswood. It will formalise storage already provided at wetland sites through working with landowners.
 - **Ifield Flood Alleviation Scheme:** This scheme will focus on local scale measures to reduce the risk of flooding to residential properties, a nursing home and an important road route through Ifield Green. Other risk management authorities will be contributing to the scheme, and further contributions will be sought from other potential beneficiaries.

Proposed measures across the Mole Catchment

- 3.5 This current consultation asks us to consider primarily the proposed measures across the Mole Catchment. These are measures that the EA think should be progressed in the future. There is 1 project that specifically relates to Mole Valley.
- **Leatherhead and Middle Mole:** A wide range of options will be identified for a flood risk management scheme to provide an improved standard of protection to communities throughout the Middle Mole catchment and achieve greater outcome measures. Potential contributions from partner local authorities and potential beneficiaries will be established.
- 3.6 Further details of the on-going, agreed and proposed schemes of relevance to MVDC are set out in the table extracted from the consultation document – See Appendix. The final column contains MVDCs proposed response to the consultation in relation to each scheme.
- 3.7 In summary the main concerns are:
- The priority afforded the various schemes
 - The objectives that the schemes are considered to support.
- 3.8 Finally it should be noted that there is no reference in this FRMP to works in relation to any expansion of Gatwick Airport. Members should note that the Airports Commission consultation papers include a flood risk assessment of the scheme and it is anticipated that if the proposal is given the go ahead, works would be included in later revisions of the FRMP.

4. **Next Steps**

- 4.1 If agreed, MVDC's response to this consultation will be submitted to the Environment Agency. Analysis of all responses received is expected to be completed by July 2015 with a view to the final FRMP being published by December 2015.

5. **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 No financial implications are identified as a result of this report but very initial and early discussions have been held with the Environment Agency in relation to the Leatherhead and Middle Mole studies. The EA inform us that they may at some point in the future be looking to secure additional funding in order to bring forward schemes identified as part of this work. Further information will be brought to Members as the project progresses.

6. **Legal Implications** – No legal implications are identified as a result of this report.

7. **OPTIONS**

Option 1 – Approve the Council's proposed response to the consultation taking account of additional comments by Members.

This would ensure that the views of MVDC are taken into consideration as the EA finalise the Flood Risk Management Plan.

No other reasonable alternatives are available.

8. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

Monitoring Officer commentary: The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that all legal implications have been considered

S151 Commentary: The s151 Officer confirms that all relevant financial risks and implications have been considered in this report.

Risk Implications – In responding to this consultation the Council is ensuring that its views are taken into account as the EA finalise their Flood Risk Management Plan. This will enhance the reputation of MVDC with the EA and goes a small way to demonstrate to residents of the District the importance the Council places on doing all it can to respond to the impact of flooding.

Equalities Implications – No equalities implications are identified as a result of this report.

Sustainability Issues – The EA has prepared a Strategic Environmental Assessment in support of their plan.

Consultation – This report will also be considered by the Scrutiny Committee.

Communications – N/A

BACKGROUND PAPERS

A copy of the draft Flood Risk Management Plan has been placed in the Members Room. Pages 195 – 209 specifically refer to that element which falls within Mole Valley.

Appendix - Schemes for the River Mole Catchment of relevance to MVDC

Category of objective			Objectives	Priority	Statutory or voluntary	Status	Mole Valley District Councils Response
Social	Environment	Economic		Critical, Very High, High, Moderate, Low	Statutory or voluntary measure	On-going, agreed or proposed	
Development planning and adaption (MM1) - Manage the impacts of flooding in the Middle Mole Catchment through land use planning to minimise flood-related risks to the local population.							
Y	N	N	Provide strategic and site-specific flood risk advice to local planning authorities (LPAs) in the Middle Mole Catchment (Elmbridge Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council) to allow sustainable development in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, making best use of development opportunities to reduce flood risk to neighbouring communities and improve the environment. Through spatial planning (prevention) and community engagement initiatives to improve awareness of riparian owner responsibilities and residual risk given climate change impacts (preparedness). New development should be adaptive and resilient to flood risk reducing reliance on traditional flood defences. Continue to work with LPAs to ensure spatial and emergency planning	Low	Statutory	On-going	<p>The strategic and site specific flood risk advice given to the Council as the Local Planning Authority is considered vital and its on-going provision is strongly supported. MVDC welcomes the support and assistance that has already been provided by the EA in the preparation of its Local Plan.</p> <p>MVDC considers that this serves all three objectives, not just social ones.</p> <p>MVDC recommends that the priority rating be increased to high in line with elsewhere in the catchment.</p>

			policies promote the inclusion of resilience and adaptive measures within new development (preparedness).				
Asset management and maintenance (MM2) - Efficient and effective targeting of maintenance activities to manage the economic impacts of flooding on property, minimise flood related risks to the population and ensure future investment in the catchment is proportional to the risk							
Y	N	N	Use all available evidence and data to prioritise spending on maintenance activity within the Middle Mole catchment to provide the most effective and efficient reduction in flood risk. Improve evidence-base where possible through upgrades/improvements to modelling datasets, asset inspection information and observed flood data. Work with riparian landowners to raise awareness of riparian responsibility and support riparian owners in undertaken maintenance they are responsible for, particularly where there may not be wider benefits to surrounding communities	Low	Statutory	On-going	MVDC considers that this action which sets out to target maintenance activities to manage the economic impacts of flooding fulfils economic objectives as well as social ones. MVDC is concerned that this is considered to be a low priority and recommends that the priority rating be increased to moderate or high.
Flood forecasting, warning and response (MM3) - Manage the economic impacts of flooding on property and minimise flood related risks to the population in the Middle Mole Catchment through provision of appropriate levels of flood warning service. Regularly review the level of flood warning provision and act to increase numbers of properties signed up to receive warnings in risk areas. Support local authorities (Elmbridge Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council) in raising preparedness through emergency planning							
Y	N	N	Operate flood warning service throughout the Middle Mole catchment, informed by maintained and serviced telemetry network. Provide data and support to local council emergency planning teams as they strengthen emergency responses following	Low	Statutory	On-going	MVDC recommends that this be a high priority. Supporting local groups and residents at this stage will be more effective due to its timeliness and the opportunity it provides to build on learning points arising from the flood events that took place earlier in 2014.

			recent floods. Support local flood groups and residents to improve resilience to flooding and preparedness to act on receipt of flood warning information.				
Development planning and adaptation (MM4) - Manage the economic impacts of flooding on property by investigating flood proofing and flood resilience to existing properties where traditional flood defences may be economically or technically difficult to achieve.							
Y	N	N	Target key communities that are currently within areas of significant risk where economic deliverability of traditional flood defences may be difficult to achieve. Use community flood groups as a vehicle to enhance community initiatives to improve resilience and resistance to flooding. Targeted threshold surveys to provide a basis for collaborative projects	Low	Statutory	Not started – proposed	<p>MVDC considers that the proposed action would meet economic objectives as well as social ones.</p> <p>MVDC is concerned that this action has been ranked as a low priority and suggests this be rescored.</p> <p>The inclusion of further information would be helpful. For example details of key communities and community flood groups.</p> <p>MVDC queries whether the proposal has been given the correct status. This is understood to be an on-going project.</p>
Leatherhead and Middle Mole - Appraise flood risk management options in the Middle Mole catchment following the flooding of winter 2013/14. Update Middle Mole modelling to provide a tool for use in option appraisal. Identify a wide range of options and appraise these for technical, economic and environmental constraints. Present a suite of options, including information on likely funding and necessary third party contributions. Produce a document which can be used to rapidly populate business case / project appraisal reports for the future selected option(s)							
Y	N	N	Develop a flood risk management scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to communities throughout the Middle Mole	Very High	Statutory	On-going	MVDC supports the Leatherhead and Middle Mole project and would suggest that it fulfils all three objectives (not just social ones).

			catchment following the floods of winter 2013/14.				MVDC would find it helpful if further information on the timetable this work is to follow was included.
Redhill Flood Alleviation Scheme - Develop a formal flood alleviation scheme on the site of the Moors Nature Reserve to reduce the risk of flooding to properties in Redhill and Earlswood.							
Y	N	N	Develop a flood risk management scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to communities along the Redhill Brook in Redhill and Earlswood, working with landowners to formalise storage already provided at wetland sites upstream.	High	Statutory	Not started - agreed	This project is noted. It should contribute to reducing flood risk down stream.
Ifield Flood Alleviation Scheme - Develop a local-scale flood alleviation scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to properties in Ifield Green							
Y	N	N	Local scale measures will reduce the risk of flooding to residential properties, a nursing home and an important road route through Ifield Green, following repeat flooding occurring in the winter of 2013/14.	High	Statutory	Not started - agreed	This project is noted. It should contribute to reducing flood risk down stream.