

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD

18 November 2009

**Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure
and the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation**

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 AYLESFORD FLOOD ALLEVIATION PARTNERSHIP

Summary

This report updates members on progress of the Partnership and the next steps towards implementing the project.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 At the May meeting of this Board, I reported to members upon recent flooding events in the village and the outcome of a public meeting. Members endorsed the Council's continuing involvement in reducing flood risk and our role in the Flood Alleviation Partnership for Aylesford.
- 1.1.2 Since then, the project has gathered momentum with a further Steering Group being held in October to review progress and review the way forward. Residents have been kept informed by a newsletter distributed in June and engaged by a further public meeting in October.
- 1.1.3 The partnership comprises the Parish Council and local residents and its role is to share awareness and understanding locally as well as pursue physical improvements to achieve flood mitigation.

1.2 Recent Work

- 1.2.1 The last significant flood occurred in April. This extraordinary flood resulted from rainfall runoff alone without the stream coming out of banks and this highlighted the need for the highway drainage system to be traced and checked. Kent Highway Services (KHS) therefore deployed plant and labour through the period from May to July tracing drainage and making repairs to the system.
- 1.2.2 A further weakness became apparent during this process in that the highway drainage system and the land drainage pumping station had no direct drainage path to the Medway and were prone to silting up. To rectify this problem, a new channel was dug across the Borough Council's land linking the outfalls directly with the river. The cost of this work was split equally between KHS and TMBC.

- 1.2.3 During October and November, the Environment Agency (EA) has been clearing silt and weed from the stream and surveying all the culverts. It is intended that this will set the standard for future maintenance by the individual riparian owners.
- 1.2.4 The continuation of all these efforts illustrates well the benefits of partnership working and the momentum it can bring to delivering a very constructive and practical approach to local problems by all concerned.
- 1.2.5 One of the achievements of the partnership has been to develop the Local Flood Plan. This deals with very practical steps to be followed at times of flood and is the product of the work of local residents with the EA and the Borough Council.

1.3 Progress on the Main Scheme

- 1.3.1 The project to find ongoing solutions to the history of flooding in the village is at a stage now where the computer model of the stream has been produced and adjusted in the light of information from the last flood. The recent work carried out by the EA has revisited all the scheme options to determine a preferred option which can be tested in the model and examined for viability. The preferred option will be a 'storage' scheme but further work is needed to determine where the flood water will be stored in times of flood.
- 1.3.2 The EA has appointed Halcrow to develop the preferred option through outline design and economic analysis stage. Halcrow has an eight month programme for this stage.
- 1.3.3 It is important to note that funding for the scheme is not yet secured and will need to be bid for at the end of Halcrow's commission. The primary funding source will be Defra's Flood Defence Grant in Aid which will be required to meet cost/benefit tests. Funding may also be available via the local levy. Having secured funding, the next step would be to build the scheme via 'design and build' procurement. The partners are optimistic that a case can be prepared to make a successful funding 'bid'.
- 1.3.4 The EA estimate that the scheme could be completed in approximately three years.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 None.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 No further financial implications for the Council are anticipated.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 Not applicable.

Background papers:

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Nil

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