

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**14 June 2011**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Transport and Leisure**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Information**

**1 FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Summary**

**This paper provides an update on the Borough Council's efforts to advocate flood risk management schemes at Little Mill, East Peckham and Rochester Road, Aylesford.**

**1.1 Little Mill, East Peckham**

- 1.1.1 At its last meeting in February the Board considered a number of flood risk management matters. It approved responses to a series of government consultations including flood risk management strategy and future funding.
- 1.1.2 It also noted that the Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC) was considering its budget for this year and that the Rt Hon Sir John Stanley MP had alerted the Borough Council to the fact that the flood alleviation project at Little Mill, East Peckham, was a potential candidate for inclusion in the forward works programme.
- 1.1.3 As a result of this, the Board resolved that I should write to the RFDC, now reconstituted as the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC), to express this Council's support for the flood alleviation scheme at Little Mill so that this could be taken into consideration when the Committee met in April to consider its programme in detail.
- 1.1.4 I duly wrote to the Committee and the result of its consideration of its programme is that the Little Mill scheme has now secured a place within its schedule of schemes together with an indicative budget for the next three years. This is excellent news for the local community which has been waiting for many years for this work to come forward. That said, the situation is not absolutely definitive. This is but the first stage in a process of scheme development and the funding for years two and three is contingent on feasibility, cost benefit, assessed priority and other such factors so that its priority can be considered in comparison with a range of other competing schemes across the south east of England.

- 1.1.5 Nevertheless it is a significant step and the year one funding will provide for the essential modelling of options and preparation of the scheme design. Borough officers will shortly be meeting the Environment Agency (EA) to discuss the project and this will give us an opportunity to learn more about the likely programme of work and the arrangements for progressing the overall project.
- 1.1.6 There is an active, well organised and informed Flood Group in East Peckham. It was very influential in promoting the major flood storage scheme on the Colt Stream completed a few years ago and it is already focusing on the Little Mill project. It will also be meeting the EA a few days before the Board and we have been invited to attend, giving us a further opportunity of learning in more detail how the EA sees the project developing. I will provide an oral update on these meetings to the Board.

## **1.2 Aylesford Flood Alleviation Scheme**

- 1.2.1 The previous meeting of the Board also included a resolution that the RFCC be written to support the other Borough Council's other major aspiration for a flood alleviation at Aylesford where there have been chronic and frequent flooding problems in the centre of the village around the Rochester Road and Forstal Road junction.
- 1.2.2 The problems here are well acknowledged by the EA which has been working on a scheme for some years now. The scheme has also been reflected by the RFCC within its forward programme but the pressures on funding are such that it has to be a provisional scheduling for the period following 2013/14.
- 1.2.3 The Borough Council should continue to advocate for this scheme to proceed as early as possible through the local flood partnership that has been formed but the realistic outlook is that implementation of the work is unlikely to take place in the near future, especially given the current difficult funding climate. This makes it all the more essential that we continue to promote readily achievable improvements in the Aylesford stream to ensure its conveyance properties are as good as they can be in the interim.

## **1.3 Town Lock, Tonbridge**

- 1.3.1 Though strictly speaking not a flood alleviation scheme, the Town Lock enhancement scheme is another important aspiration of the Borough Council that we are working on jointly with the EA. The scheme involves improvement of the river wall and bank area and environmental enhancement alongside Town Lock. It is currently listed as a potential initiative in our Capital Plan, List B, with some additional funding coming from an ear-marked reserve and development contributions received through the planning system.
- 1.3.2 The EA also has funding identified in the current financial year for detailed design and, subject to some further discussion with the Agency on how this would best be procured and project managed, I would hope to be reporting to a forthcoming

meeting of the Board with detailed information to support a recommendation to promote this onto List A of the Capital Plan.

#### **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 None directly at this stage for the Borough Council.

#### **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 It is not yet clear how the government intends to respond to the consultation it recently conducted on its future plans for flood risk funding set out in "Payment for Outcomes". This could have potential financial implications for the Borough Council and, if this is the case, they will be included as part of future reports to the Board.

#### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 The ultimate aim of promoting the schemes at Little Mill and Rochester Road is to reduce risk to the properties in each of those areas.

#### **1.7 Equality Impact Assessment**

1.7.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report.

#### **1.8 Policy Considerations**

1.8.1 Community.

Background papers:

contact: Michael McCulloch

Nil

Steve Humphrey

Director of Planning, Transport & Leisure

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	

<b>Screening for equality impacts:</b>		
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>	<b>Explanation of impacts</b>
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	N/A	
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

*In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.*