

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**PLANNING and TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD**

**18 November 2014**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision (Decision may be taken by the Cabinet Member)**

**1 FLOODING UPDATE**

**This is a progress report on flood recovery within our borough following the events over the Christmas/New Year period and presents the Newsletter prepared for residents of these affected communities.**

**1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 This report provides an update on the aspects and issues relevant to our involvement in the flood recovery and attached to the report is the multi-agency Technical Group Newsletter which is being distributed to residents across the flood affected areas of the borough.

**1.2 Multi-Agency Recovery Strategy**

- 1.2.1 Members will be aware that we have been participating in the county-wide Strategic and Tactical Recovery Coordinating Groups throughout the year which are chaired by Kent County Council. The aim of these groups is to work in partnership to support affected individuals, communities and organisations to recover from the floods and to return to a state of normality. Many of our residents are now back in their homes however at the start of this month there were still 32 properties where extensive repairs have been needed following the flood damage and are still not complete. These houses remain unoccupied.

**1.3 The Multi-Agency Technical Working Group**

- 1.3.1 The Technical Working Group was set up in February following the various public engagement meetings across the Borough. It consists of representatives from the organisations with an involvement in flood risk management and has been working consistently throughout the year to ensure that existing flood defence systems are sound and the sewer systems and drains are as functioning as intended.
- 1.3.2 In addition to this the Environment Agency is working on some key flood defence projects and we have been liaison closely on a range of design matters with them.

When implemented these measures will provide increased protection for local residents and businesses. The schemes are:

- Avebury Avenue, Tonbridge flood defence – this project is in the planning stages and the Environment Agency hope to start construction in early 2015
- Hildenborough flood defence – construction is planned to take place in the summer of 2015
- East Peckham and Little Mill – the Environment Agency hope to be able to progress this project in 2015/16
- Leigh Flood Storage Area – there will be a partnership approach to developing this project which will increase the capacity within the Leigh Flood Storage Area. This will be formed of the Environment Agency, KCC and TMBC. TMBC has agreed to contribute £100k from the “Flood Recovery and Defence” reserve we set up at the end of last year for an assessment of the options and the delivery of an outline design. Maidstone Borough Council will also participate in this project with a view to reducing flood risk at Yalding. We are working on a legal agreement to formalise this approach. The Borough Council will also be party to a bid to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for capital funding towards this project to ensure that it is constructed as soon as possible.

1.3.3 Further information relating to each of these projects can be found in the Technical Newsletter in **Annex 1**.

## **1.4 Flood Wardens**

1.4.1 A second training session for Flood Wardens was held at Kings Hill on 18 October. This has reinforced the Flood Warden numbers in Hildenborough and East Peckham and we now have six trained Flood Wardens in Tonbridge.

1.4.2 The Wardens for Hildenborough and East Peckham will operate under the parish flood/emergency plans and these are being updated with assistance from the Environment Agency and the Kent Resilience Team as necessary. In Tonbridge we are working closely with the Environment Agency and KCC Emergency Planning to develop a Community Plan for the Tonbridge area. An initial scoping meeting to develop this plan has been held with some of the Tonbridge Flood Wardens and we hope to have firm arrangements in place shortly to ensure that the Flood Wardens operate effectively and in a coordinated way in liaison with our staff and other agencies as appropriate.

1.4.3 All Flood Wardens are provided with a Flood Warden Handbook and basic equipment appropriate for the role.

## **1.5 Legal Implications**

- 1.5.1 A legal agreement will be prepared for our involvement in the Leigh Flood Storage Area project.

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

- 1.6.1 A contribution of £100k will be made to the Environment Agency who are leading on the Leigh Flood Storage Area scheme.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

- 1.7.1 Not required.

## **1.8 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.8.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

## **1.9 Policy Considerations**

- 1.9.1 Community

## **1.10 Recommendations**

- 1.10.1 Members are asked **TO NOTE** and **ENDORSE** the position set out in the report, including a contribution of £100k from the Flood Recovery and Defence reserve towards an assessment of the options and the delivery of an outline design for the Leigh Flood Storage Area scheme.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

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Nil

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