

Environment Sub-Committee

6 September 2017

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)
Councillors G Bell, L Bell, D Cox, D Drummond,
E Hodson, M Huscroft, W Lott, D McMeekan, P Oliver,
A Percy and M Thirlaway.

E7/09/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors K Clark and G Madden.

E8/09/17 Substitute Members

In accordance with the Council's Constitution the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor P Oliver for Councillor K Clark

E9/09/17 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations reported.

E10/09/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2017 be confirmed.

E11/09/17 Flood Risk Management in North Tyneside

Consideration was given to a report which provided an overview of how the Authority managed the risk of surface water flooding in the borough and detailed the engineering schemes which had been designed and completed to address flooding risks.

It was explained that the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 placed a duty on local authorities to work with partner agencies, including the Environment Agency and the local water company, to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and infrastructure.

In 2012 the area suffered from a number of severe storm events which resulted in a large number of homes, businesses and infrastructure being flooded, some on several occasions. The event in June 2012, known as Thunder Thursday, caused flooding to around 600 properties.

Following the flooding events in 2012 the Authority had developed a Flood Risk Management Strategy and had identified 32 sites which would benefit from flood

protection works. Those schemes which reduced the risk of flooding to residential properties had been given the highest priority. It was explained that the Authority had invested around £4.7M in flood alleviation measures and additional funding had been secured from partner organisations which meant that around £6.7M had been invested in flood alleviation schemes since 2012. To date 52 schemes had been completed and the number of homes in the borough at risk of flooding had been reduced to 1060, down from 2900 and it was expected that this number would fall further following the completion of a number of ongoing schemes. It was also explained that there was a reserve list of schemes which would be undertaken if appropriate funding could be identified.

Details of the completed schemes were outlined together with a list of those still to be completed. It was explained that the type of work required varied depending on the individual circumstances of the site, some sites required large scale earth works to create surface water storage areas where as others only required the installation of new road gullies. Reference was also made to the monitoring of levels of silt in gully pots to identify those which needed to be emptied on a more regular basis.

In addition to hard landscaping and engineering solutions to flood alleviation the Authority had invested in two new gully cleansing vehicles which had been equipped with jetting equipment designed to clear blockages in gullies so that the gullies could deal with the extra surface water generated in storm events.

The Sub-committee was also advised that shortly after the flooding in 2012 the authority had improved and formalised its emergency flooding response procedures. In 2013 an Operational Flood Action Plan, designed to mitigate the impact of flooding to properties and to maintain key transport routes during severe storm events, had been introduced.

It was explained that reserves of equipment such as pumps, sandbags and road closed signs had been purchased. This equipment could be deployed either proactively in advance of a storm event or reactively during an unexpected event. Communication protocols had been developed which enabled two way communications between the highways operatives on the ground, the designated emergency response officer and the care call service.

Following a review of the plan a number of improvements had been made. As a result of the successful implementation of a number of flood alleviation schemes the number of priority response sites had been reduced from 32 to 20.

Reference was made to the works carried out around the Murton Gap to alleviate historic flooding events. It was explained that the scheme had been designed to alleviate a one in a hundred year flooding event with a bit of leeway built in. It was explained that any developer would need to identify if additional provision for dealing with surface water was needed before the site could be developed.

It was also explained that a sub group of the North Tyneside Surface Water and Drainage Partnership had been set up to ensure that communities across North Tyneside were better prepared to respond to flooding events. A series of engagement events had been held at various parts of the Borough to listen to the concerns of residents and to identify what they required in relation to information about flooding.

Three themes had emerged from the engagement events:

- Advice and information on what residents could take for themselves to manage the risk of flooding and to deal with it when it occurred;
- Information on what the Authority and its partners would be doing to manage the risk of flooding; and
- To understand who does what during an emergency incident.

A “Flood Ready, Flood Safe” brand was adopted by the Authority and its partners for all communication relating to flooding. Details of the various leaflets and magazine articles in relation to “Flood Ready, Flood Safe” were presented. These included information about the flood risk reduction schemes being installed and planned. In addition when schemes were being developed extensive community engagement events were arranged to allow residents the opportunity to meet with the Authority and its partners and to understand all aspects of the scheme.

A network of volunteer community flood wardens had been created. It was explained that there were currently 16 flood wardens in the borough who covered 8 of the priority areas for flooding. These wardens ensured that flood warning messages were given out in their areas and also provided local intelligence about what was happening in a flooding event to the emergency response team to enable the allocation of resources where most needed. Regular training was delivered to each flood warden including health and safety and lone working. A handbook had also been produced for the use of the flood wardens who were also provided with personal protective equipment for their use during flooding events.

Reference was made to the possibility of examining the introduction of corporate flood wardens to support those wardens on the ground and to fill in any gaps in areas covered. Several volunteers put their names forward.

Reference was also made to the regular flooding which occurred in the Briardene and clarification was sought on whether this might be as a result of a blocked outlet. It was explained that further investigation on this would be required to identify the cause.

The Chair thanked the officers for their report.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted