

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**7 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

**Yes**

### **RIVERS MEDWAY, TEISE AND BEULT FLOOD ALLEVIATION**

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Lead Director</b>	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Property & Procurement Manager
<b>Classification</b>	Public
<b>Wards affected</b>	Boughton Monchelsea, Bridge, Coxheath & Hunton, Headcorn, High Street, Marden & Yalding, Loose, Staplehurst, Sutton Valence & Langley

#### **This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:**

1. To agree the Council's position in relation to the Environment Agency's proposals to improve flood resilience in the Medway catchment area – the recommended option is at paragraph 3.3.
2. To support the Environment Agency's proposal and work with partners to develop property level and community resilience in the Medway catchment area.

#### **This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

Improving flood resilience impacts upon the character of the borough and supports making the borough an attractive place for all.

#### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy & Resources Committee	7 September 2016

# **RIVERS MEDWAY, TEISE AND BEULT FLOOD ALLEVIATION**

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on developments in relation to flood alleviation options since the last report was considered at its meeting on 29 June 2016.
  - 1.2 The Director of Finance & Business Improvement is the strategic lead officer for this council. To enable him and other officers to continue to play an effective role, it is necessary for the Committee to decide the approach and direction the Council wishes to take in relation to the Environment Agency's proposals for flood alleviation and improving flood resilience in the Medway catchment area.
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## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Council has engaged with the Environment Agency (EA), Kent County Council (KCC) and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) to consider a range of options to protect communities at risk of flooding along the Rivers Medway, Beult and Teise.
- 2.2 The Committee considered reports on progress at their meetings on 27 April 2016 and 29 June 2016 which broadly agreed to continue working with the Environment Agency through the Executive Board, to commence discussions with affected Parish Councils and to seek additional funding from DEFRA for flood defences. A further update on progress was requested for the September meeting.
- 2.3 The EA published a newsletter in July setting out its progress and its proposals and timescales.
- 2.4 The EA has completed its initial assessment for the Medway Flood Storage Areas project and considered the costs and benefits of increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area, flood storage on the Rivers Teise and Beult, flood protection walls around Yalding and increasing channel capacity by dredging the River Medway between Yalding and Maidstone.
- 2.5 The findings were:
  - increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area was feasible and will improve protection to Tonbridge and to a lesser extent other communities downstream. The scheme will reduce the flood risk to 1,543 properties, including 153 properties in Maidstone at a cost of £17.1 million.
  - flood storage on the Rivers Beult and Teise would help to reduce flood levels in communities around Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford, but there is not enough space in the catchment to build reservoirs that would make a meaningful difference to flood levels.

The studies found that the risk of flooding would be reduced to 128 properties at an estimated cost of £16.6 million which the EA advised does not meet the economic criteria for funding.

- Walls around Yalding and dredging of the River Medway were rejected on technical and economic grounds.

- 2.6 The EA concluded that the communities at risk in Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford would be better served by more localised flood defences and property and community level resilience improvements which can be targeted to the properties at greater risk.
- 2.7 The EA will be preparing a business case to DEFRA for funding of the Leigh Flood Storage Area in partnership with KCC and TMBC together with private sector contributions which, if successful, would be constructed between 2020 and 2022. A bid has also been made to government via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership for local growth funding for specific business related elements of this scheme.
- 2.8 The EA is also proposing to take the lead on working with the communities around Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford to explain the background, the options and the findings and to explain property and community resilience and to identify specific steps to make their homes and communities more resilient to flooding. Once a feasible scheme has been developed the EA will be able to bid for DEFRA funding. KCC has agreed to contribute £1.5m. The timescales are similar to those for the Leigh Flood Storage Area .
- 2.9 Property level resilience relates to measures that are taken to individual or small groups of properties to reduce the risk of water entry from river flooding. Community level resilience helps to mitigate the effects of flooding to enable the community to function better during and after a flood, and potentially speeds recovery. Such measures include adapting power and water supplies and foul and surface water drainage systems to withstand flooding and implementing road closures to prevent flooding through road wash. The EA is planning to bring together Category 1 and Category 2 emergency responders; i.e. local authorities, emergency services, transport providers and utility companies, to identify and seek means to mitigate risks.
- 2.10 The EA will be briefing communities at poster exhibitions in Collier Street and Yalding in October 2016. These will be followed by community workshops in Collier Street and Yalding in November, all of which is intended to help identify the specific steps needed to make homes and communities resilient to flooding.
- 2.11 Whilst the work to date has concentrated on the confluence of the Rivers Medway, Teise and Beult, and the EA is recommending property level resilience rather than flood storage, it is asking whether such property level resilience should be extended to a wider area through the whole of the Medway catchment where other properties are at risk; and whether these areas should be funded solely by DEFRA or by all partners.

- 2.12 In 2016/17 the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy includes £95,280 which is the balance of an initial £100,000 budget for flood resilience. This resource has been set aside for feasibility work and the balance of this money will be used for further work should the committee agree to work with partners on property level and community resilience proposals. A further £50,000 per annum has been set aside for the next four years; i.e. with current planning assumptions in the council's capital programme a total of £200,000 is potentially available for the Council to support capital investment in flood protection measures. The capital programme will be reviewed as part of the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy in the period to December 2016 which is reported elsewhere on this agenda.
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 **Option 1:** To continue to work with the EA and KCC as part of the executive group and with local communities to develop property level and community resilience in the Medway, Beult and Teise confluence.

With the support of the KCC and others, this option has the potential to significantly increase the level of funding for each property from the standard DEFRA grant per property of £5,500 if a property is at risk from 1 in 20 year flooding. KCC have agreed to contribute £1.5million and any additional resources may assist in targeting properties within the 1 in 40 year flood outline.

However, it is possible that the communities at risk may reject these proposals as inadequate. That response will not be forthcoming until the EA has completed its briefing sessions and workshops in November.

- 3.2 **Option 2:** As Option 1 but in a wider Medway catchment area and funded by all partners.

The consequences of this option are similar to Option 1 except that the pro-rata level of funding for each property may be diluted.

- 3.3 **Option 3:** As Option 2 with DEFRA funding only to properties outside the Medway, Beult and Teise confluence.

A compromise between Options 1 and 2 whereby the properties at greater risk in the confluence may receive funding from the additional partner resources and those outside receive the standard grant of £5,500 if their property is at risk of 1 in 20 year flooding.

- 3.4 **Option 4:** To challenge the EA's proposals and pursue flood storage solutions on the Teise and Beult.

If the communities at risk are not persuaded by the EA's briefing sessions and workshops to accept that flood storage areas are not viable and prefer to pursue these or other options, it is unlikely that this will be supported by the EA or KCC and that funding beyond DEFRA funding of £5,500 per

property at risk of 1 in 20 year flooding will be available. Should the Council wish to undertake construction of the storage areas on the Teise and the Beult, it is estimated to cost £13.2 million, which through prudential borrowing would cost £748,000 per annum over 25 years. In addition any storage areas completed would require long term management and maintenance which would be a cost to this Council.

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#### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 The preferred option is Option 3 as this is the most likely option to deliver increased flood resilience to those at highest risk and will be fully supported by the EA and KCC.
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#### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The EA will be engaging with residents in the Medway, Teise and Beult confluence in October and November on its chosen option. As the Council should be ready to engage with and respond to residents, it would be preferable if the Council had an agreed position.
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#### **6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION**

- 6.1 The EA will deliver the outcome of its review and how it intends to proceed at briefings and workshops in October and November. The Outline Business Case will be submitted to DEFRA in October 2017 which, if approved, will lead to a Full Business Case submission in March 2018, followed by commencement of detailed design in November 2018 and construction between 2020 and 2022.
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#### **7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Impact on Corporate Priorities</b>	The decision will impact upon the protection of the character of the borough as there will be implications for the villages and homes within the flood area.  Resilience against flooding supports making the borough an attractive place for all.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Risk Management</b>	Matching resources to priorities in the context of the significant	Head of Finance &

	<p>pressure on the Council's resources is a major strategic risk</p> <p>It is essential that the Council works with other funding partners if the scheme is to be delivered effectively.</p>	Resources
<b>Financial</b>	These are covered in the report.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Staffing</b>	Staff resources will be required for community engagement and ongoing liaison with partners until completion of the project.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Legal</b>	There may be a requirement for a tri-partite funding agreement.	Legal Team
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	The proposed solution could be delivered flexibly, while adjustments are possible to ensure equality. In some cases the level of benefit is dependent upon the type of property and not the resident's circumstances	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	The proposed solution contributes to sustainable communities.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Community Safety</b>	The flooding risk has an impact on community safety. Part of the proposed solution is increased community resilience and reducing the risk to health and safety during incidences of flooding.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	No specific impact	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Procurement</b>	Procurement of property flooding resilience will comply with the Council's constitution.	Head of Finance & Resources
<b>Asset Management</b>	No specific impact	Head of Finance & Resources

## 8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report: None

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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None