

<h1>BRIEFING</h1>	<b>TO:</b>	Improving Places Select Commission
	<b>DATE:</b>	8 December 2020
	<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	Katherine Harclerode Governance Advisor Assistant Chief Executive's Directorate 01709 254352
	<b>TITLE:</b>	Outcomes of Workshop on Flood Alleviation (30 November 2020)
<b>1. Background</b>		
<b>1.1</b>	<b>Present:</b>	Cllrs Sheppard (Chair), Jepson, McNeely, Reeder, Sansome, Wyatt
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Apologies:</b>	Cllr Mallinder
<b>1.3</b>	<b>Attendees:</b>	Richard Jackson – Manager, Community Safety and Street Scene  Ian Danks – Engineer, Drainage Team
<b>1.4</b>	<b>Purpose of the session</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To receive the latest information in respect of Flood Alleviation works and plans.</li> <li>2. To assess progress toward previous recommendations and develop any additional recommendations.</li> </ol>
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Scope</b>	A presentation set forth information about the impacts of November 2019 floods, 'Section 19' report on November 2019 floods, Property Flood Resilience (PFR) grant process, borough-wide remedial works, longer-term recovery funding needs, proposed flood alleviation scheme projects, several case studies of works where external funding has been secured, and a summary of progress since November 2019.
<b>2. Key Issues</b>		
<b>2.1</b>	<b>Presentation:</b>	<p>Small and medium works have been undertaken at approximately 50 sites. This work will continue for the next 15 months. It can take time to negotiate with private landowners and gain their approval to make these changes to individual sites that can have a great mitigating effect. Connecting gullies to a watercourse, a step that sounds relatively small, can actually protect a lot of properties.</p> <p>Photographs were displayed of the debris and blockages that were extracted from the drainage pipes. CCTV has also been deployed to monitor the watercourses.</p>

Case studies were presented to illustrate the flood relief works that have been undertaken.

Prioritised schemes for South Yorkshire have been submitted to Government. Works are taking place using the moneys that have already been awarded. Further moneys have been requested. Many of these are targeted at reducing the risk from the River Don. It is needed that we prioritise all six projects outlined in the presentation, so that no community is left out:-

- A. Rotherham to Kilnhurst FAS (£24m) Note that this scheme has been included within the 6th November 2020 MCA request to Defra SoS – £6m has already been secured in 2018/2019, hence new request is for £18m)
- B. Parkgate & Rawmarsh FAS (£14m)
- C. Whiston Brook FAS at Whiston (£4m)
- D. Eel Mires Dike FAS at Laughton Common (£3m)
- E. Catcliffe permanent pumping station (£5m)
- F. Culvert renewal programme (£2m) – this project has been added since February 2020.

Support has also been strong from Network Rail and other third parties to design flood reduction schemes. The existing funding framework is not far-reaching enough to encompass the kinds of large scale works the Borough needs. Therefore, following example of Leeds and others who have succeeded in garnering the needed funding, it is necessary to avail every available avenue of funding. Further explanation was provided as to the Rotherham contribution to the upcoming bid from the South Yorkshire Combined Authority.

## 2.2

**Discussion:** Members requested more information around how many individuals and businesses affected were insured, and what support was available for those who were uninsured. The Neighbourhoods Team are the ones who can provide this information specifically. It was noted that alterations and modifications have been undertaken by some landlords in the rental properties that flooded in November 2019, but no displaced families or business owners are still waiting to return to their properties. Some individuals have permanently moved. Advice and grants are still available for property owners who want to do resilience works to their properties, both of which will be available until December of next year.

Members wished to know the reasoning behind providing money to individuals and businesses to hire contractors rather than the Council paying these contractors directly for their services. The response illustrated that the surveys and recommendations for works are made by the survey team, and based on the checks and balances in place, payment is made after the work is completed. The grant is made to the property or house holder because to hire contractors directly creates a huge procurement hindrance. Giving the money to residents allows them to pay the contractors after a robust process that involves invoices, inspections and signoffs before the money changes hands.

Members complimented the effective information design regarding PFR and requested to know whether the information was provided to residents. It was agreed that various strategies can be implemented by contractors that improve flood resiliency of buildings, such as implementing electricity sources upstairs as well as downstairs. Residents were also advised that their most treasured possessions could be more safely stored upstairs than downstairs.

Members requested assurances that the gullies near these works are well maintained and that checks are made to ensure that gullies are kept free from

debris. The response affirmed that teams would be instructed to be doubly vigilant in this area to keep debris from merely being swept off into the gullies to be cleared as part of their gully clearing works programme.

Members emphasised the difficulty presented by not knowing who owns what drain. Members requested assurances that in future clarity around this could be achieved. The response noted that some drains are the responsibility of Yorkshire Water, and while it was possible that perhaps their initial response following the floods was not good, it should be noted that the Council has made significant efforts to develop the relationship with Yorkshire Water, such that confidence is now growing that Yorkshire Water will fulfil their responsibilities and demonstrate a more robust response in the event of future incidents. One of the learning items has certainly been to determine who owns what part of the drainage landscape. It was noted that there had been three elements to the flooding in Kilnhurst: a blocked major sewer line, water courses, and the river. There are three distinct reasons why properties in this area flooded. The teams now have detailed knowledge of what the mechanics of the flooding were, and it is of note to add that all the obstructions were removed.

Members also emphasised coordination efforts involving parish councillors. It was observed that the sandbags scheme was good at first, but people later found the sandbags to be a burden when it was time to refresh the sandbags, so there were other types of sandbags that were being explored. It has been proposed that some of these sandbags be stored and distributed locally in order to facilitate more rapid deployment, this and similar schemes are under consideration.

### **3.0 Recommendation**

#### **3.1 1. That the presentation be noted.**