

Cabinet Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Impact of Flooding in the District

Introduction

At the Cabinet meeting on 7th July 2021, consideration was given to the report of the Impact of Flooding in the District. The Leader welcomed Councillor R. Hunter, who joined the meeting remotely as Chairman of the Task Group, and thanked him for being present to provide clarification on any matters raised by Cabinet Members. Councillor Hunter outlined the work which had been undertaken by the Task Group and thanked Members and officers for their contributions.

The Cabinet then discussed and considered each of the recommendations of the Task Group in detail.

Response to recommendations

Please find below responses to the recommendations contained within the scrutiny report:

Recommendation 1

That consideration be given to the appointment of two full-time specialist land drainage operatives for Bromsgrove and that a business case be undertaken.

Cabinet Response

Officers are currently in the process of preparing a maintenance plan of both Council owned assets and partner owned assets. It is anticipated that this plan will provide accurate information about the resources required to manage assets in the District in the future. The Council and the North Worcestershire Water Management Team (NWWM) will be communicating with other organisations that own assets within the District, including Worcestershire County Council and BDHT to establish how those organisations plan to maintain their responsibilities of assets in the District. Opportunities to work in partnership will be discussed as part of this process.

This work has been undertaken for the past 18 months and it is anticipated that it will be completed by the end of September 2021.

As this work has not yet been completed but has implications on the subject of this recommendation Cabinet feels that they cannot approve this recommendation at this time.

This recommendation was rejected.

Recommendation 2

That a publicity campaign within the local community to raise the profile of North Worcestershire Water Management be carried out.

Cabinet Response

Responsibility for land drainage is shared between a number of organisations. This included Worcestershire County Council (WCC), the NWWM service, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water.

In this context Cabinet has concluded that a publicity campaign on the NWWN service would only provide partial overview of the service provided. For this reason, the recommendation was rejected.

However, Cabinet is proposing that the Council should work with the NWWM team to make sure that the Council's website provides clarification of responsibilities in respect of flooding and accurate contact details.

This recommendation was rejected.

Recommendation 3

That the responsible authority(ies) publish a timetable of road sweeping and gully cleaning across the district.

Cabinet Response

Whilst Bromsgrove District Council is responsible for road sweeping, WCC is responsible for gully-cleaning. Road-sweeping is undertaken on a continuous basis, and it would be difficult to publish a timetable as timeframes could be impacted as a result of a variety of factors such as, machinery break downs, staff sickness absence and inclement weather conditions. For these reasons the recommendation was rejected.

This recommendation was rejected.

Recommendation 4

That an annual item in respect of flooding be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme.

Cabinet Response

The Overview and Scrutiny Board has the power to determine items placed on the scrutiny work programme therefore it is not appropriate for Cabinet to make a decision on this recommendation.

Recommendation 5

1. **RECOMMENDED that**
 - a) **as part of the review of Bromsgrove's local plan, adopt strict new planning policies requiring all new developments to consider the use of sustainable drainage facilities should be adopted; and**
 - b) **this should include measures for watercourse enhancement and flood alleviation where necessary; and**
 - c) **the Council will, subject to S106 funding, adopt land featuring watercourses and SuDS features on new developments.**

Cabinet Response

In respect of recommendations of 5 a and b as these proposals relate to Planning issues they need to be considered through the Planning process.

Whilst the Council can seek to adopt land this would be subject to agreeing a commuted sum for the maintenance of that land. Furthermore, Developers are under no obligation to transfer land or assets to the Council. There is due to be a report in respect of the Adoption of Land Assets which will be considered by Cabinet in September 2021 and there may be further opportunities to discuss this subject then. In this context the recommendation was rejected.

This recommendation was rejected.

Councillor M. Sherrey – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services.