

Environment Sub Committee

Tuesday, 10 March 2020

Present: Councillor B Burdis (Chair)
Councillors L Bell, J Cruddas, J Harrison, J Mole and
S Phillips

Apologies: Councillors G Madden, K Osborne, E Parker-Leonard
and A Percy

E20/20 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members reported.

E21/20 Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest or Dispensations reported.

E22/20 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 January 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

E23/20 Surface Water and Drainage Works in the Borough - Update

Consideration was given to a presentation which provided an update on the works undertaken in relation to the management of surface water following the severe flooding events in the Borough during 2012.

It was explained that the North Tyneside Surface Water and Drainage Partnership had been established in March 2013 and had brought the various partners and stakeholders together to direct and influence works which would reduce the impact of such events in the future. The Partnership also provided a forum for the exchange of ideas and good practice.

A Local Flood Risk Management Strategy had been developed in 2014 with a number of key objectives, including the encouragement of direct involvement in decision making, the targeting of resources where they would have the greatest effect through the adoption of a risk based approach, the encouragement of sustainable solutions to the management of local flood risk, the provision of encouragement and support for communities and landowners to take action and to contribute to flood risk reduction and to have emergency plans in place and effective responses to incidents of flooding. It was explained that a list of over 30 sites had been identified as a priority for works to be undertaken. There had been a strategy to reduce the reliance on major drainage infrastructure works to address flooding issues by making better use of natural solutions such as watercourses and holding ponds to deal with the excess water. At

Green Lane, Dudley, for example, a local watercourse had been diverted away from housing to provide flood protection. Phase one of the drainage improvements at Murton Village had included improved drainage from the highway, the increased storage capacity of the adjacent ditch and a reduction in vehicle speeds through the installation of road humps, all of which contributed to the protection of individual properties. In Woodburn Drive gabion baskets had been installed as a flood barrier. Excess surface water was then held within the bridleway and channelled via a filter drain to a nearby culvert and then out to sea. At Fairfield Green three large dry storage basins, connected by a series of ditches, had been constructed and this allowed excess water to be discharged in a controlled manner.

Several case studies were outlined which demonstrated partnership working to address a particular issue. For example, the Killingworth and Longbenton Sustainable Sewerage Project involved Northumbrian Water, the Environment Agency and the Local Authority, along with other organisations and individuals including landowners, developers and the local community. As a result, flood alleviation schemes of around £20m had been delivered and hundreds of properties in the area had been better protected. All priority sites in the area had been dealt with. Local emergency response plans had been improved and local residents were better informed as well as having a local flood warden scheme in place.

It was explained that the main objectives of the existing Strategy had been achieved and although the formal partnership had been dissolved the Authority and its partners continued to work together. The current Local Flood Risk Strategy was currently being refreshed and it was anticipated that, as a result of the lessons learned from the existing strategy, the new document was likely to have a less technical feel. Clarification was sought on what areas for flooding works remained to be undertaken. It was explained that there was a current list of over 50 locations in the borough which required works but identifying funding for the completion of the works had been an issue. There had also been several sites which had been classed as near misses and which required further investigation. It was also explained that the impact of climate change needed to be considered when designing and developing schemes in the future.

Reference was made to the need to put systems in place to harvest rainfall so that it could be reused. It was suggested that this was something which might be included in the new flood risk management strategy. It was also suggested that it might be time to re-evaluate the risk assessments based on what we now know and perhaps take a north of Tyne approach to the management of flood risk. Clarification was sought on the need for maintenance of flood alleviation schemes, such as the drainage ditches in Shiremoor, where vegetation seemed to be growing in the drainage ditches. It was explained that the scheme had been created to be low maintenance and vegetation growth was as expected and not detrimental to the efficiency of the scheme.

Members referred to the proposed new housing at the Killingworth Moor and Murton Gap development sites and sought assurances in relation to the steps that would be taken to address flooding concerns. It was explained that the Authority has drainage models for both sites and work was ongoing to identify where any additional works were required.

Members considered the work to update the flooding strategy and suggested that consideration be given to including water harvesting, climate change including rising water levels along with the impact of new development in the borough.

The Chair thanked the officer for his presentation.

It was **agreed** that (1) the presentation be noted; and
(2) a further update be provided to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.