



**Cabinet**  
16 November 2015

## **Report from the Chief Operating Officer**

For Action

Wards Affected:  
ALL

### **Flood Risk Strategy**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 introduced duties onto Local Lead Flood Authorities (LLFAs) including the requirement to prepare a Flood Risk Strategy.
- 1.2 The Flood Risk Strategy details actions the Council and other key stakeholders are taking to manage flood risk in Brent, and has five objectives:
  - Improving the understanding of flooding risks In Brent.
  - Reducing the risk of flooding for people and businesses in Brent.
  - Providing clear information on the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in flood risk management in Brent.
  - Ensuring that emergency plans and responses to flood incidents in Brent are effective.
  - To take a sustainable and holistic approach to flood management, seeking to deliver wider environmental and social benefits
- 1.3 A Flood Risk Strategy has been drafted and a consultation has taken place with key stakeholders, including local residents/businesses, neighbouring boroughs, Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The Strategy has been amended to take on board the feedback provided during the consultation.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Cabinet approves the Flood Risk Strategy for Brent as described in Section 3 and appended as background papers to this report.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following extensive flooding in 2007, the Government gave powers and responsibilities to local authorities enabling them to manage flood risk more effectively. The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, have increased the statutory responsibilities of unitary authorities such as Brent Council, which has a new role as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the borough
- 3.2 The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 introduced duties onto Local Lead Flood Authorities (LLFAs) to prepare preliminary assessment reports, to identify Flood Risk Areas and to prepare a Flood Risk Strategy. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 aims to provide better, more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses. It identifies “risk management authorities”; bodies with an interest in flood risk management. The Act outlines the responsibility of the lead local flood authority to “develop, maintain, apply and monitor” a strategy for local flood risk management.
- 3.3 This strategy builds on the work already carried out in the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Surface Water Management Plans, and details actions the Council and other key stakeholders are taking to manage flood risk in Brent. The Strategy has five objectives:

#### **3.4 Improving the Understanding of Flooding Risks in Brent**

The Strategy sets out the flood risk to Brent, by discussing the flooding history, the geography of Brent, likely sources of floods and the overall risk of flooding for Brent.

From the historical incidence of flooding, Brent has a low to moderate flood risk. The key flood risk to Brent is from surface water flooding. This occurs when the volume and intensity of a rainfall event exceeds the capacity of the drainage system, the responsibility for which lies with Thames Water. Brent also has a small risk of groundwater flooding which occurs when the water table rises to ground level and inundates low lying areas, though more work may be required to understand this.

Getting a better understanding of flood risk will involve more studies modelling the risk posed by surface water, and from information gathered by investigations into flooding events.

#### **3.5 Reducing the Risk of Flooding for People and Businesses in Brent**

The strategy details what is already being done towards managing the flood risk in Brent; including systems set up to investigate Flooding Incidents and the register of “Flood Risk Assets” - structures or physical features that have an effect on flood risk in Brent. If a rainfall event is severe enough, maintenance alone will not stop flooding, however maintaining existing assets is important in alleviating the effects of flooding.

The Strategy includes a summary of the actions that Brent Council and the risk management authorities in Brent will be undertaking to deliver the objectives of the Strategy

#### **3.6 Providing clear information on the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in flood risk management in Brent**

This Flood Risk Management Strategy heralds a more coordinated approach to work in this important area, and will draw together the work of other risk management authorities within the borough, such as water companies and the Environment Agency. This document is a first step in explaining how all the relevant organisations plan to work together, and who is responsible for what.

Communicating with the Public about Flood Risk is important. The key messages are:

- Flooding is rare in Brent but when it does occur the impact could be severe and it is important that everybody is prepared for it.
- It is important that we increase our knowledge of where there is a risk of flooding so that we can look to reduce that risk. Without this knowledge we cannot act.
- It is important to report flood incidents because it adds to our knowledge on areas at risk and frequency of incidents. This information informs how activities are prioritised.
- We can never be sure down to the level of individual properties where will be affected by flooding.
- The council has a programme of work to improve flood risk where practical affordable solutions can be found.

Publically consulting on this strategy will be first step in engaging with residents about flood risk.

### **3.7 Ensuring that emergency plans and responses to flood incidents in Brent are effective**

Flooding comes in a variety of forms with varying levels of seriousness ranging from ponding to damaging or dangerous flooding. The strategy sets out the Council's response in each case.

### **3.8 To take a sustainable and holistic approach to flood management, seeking to deliver wider environmental and social benefits**

Flood risk management is an environmental activity and the strategy needs to support both local and national plans for sustainable development It does this by considering key national plans such as the Water Framework Directive and the Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) directive, as well as local plans such as Brent's planning framework

## **4.0 Consultation**

4.1 The draft Flood Risk Strategy underwent a consultation that started on 17th August 2015 and was kept open until 23rd September 2015. The strategy was put on the consultation portal and was signposted with links from various places on the Council Website. Additionally stakeholders were asked to comment, including the Environment Agency, Thames Water, TfL and adjacent boroughs. Members' attention was brought to the Strategy via Members' Briefing.

4.2 Along with the draft strategy, three questions were asked

1. To what extent do you agree that the draft Flood Risk Strategy adequately addresses flood risks?
2. If you disagree, what other suggestions do you have to adequately address flood risks in Brent?

3. Please provide any other comments you may have on Brent's draft Flood Risk Strategy.

Equalities monitoring questions on the respondents was also included

- 4.3 The detailed feedback from the consultation is included in Appendix A, but a summary of the comments and responses to those comments are below.
- 4.4 In response to the question *"To what extent do you agree that the draft Flood Risk Strategy adequately addresses flood risks in Brent?"* 30% Strongly Agreed or Agreed, 50% Neither Agreed nor Disagreed and 20% Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed.
- 4.5 In response to the question *"If you disagree, what other suggestions do you have to adequately address flood risks in Brent?"* approximately 73% left comments.
- 4.6 Of the comments left, 36% of respondents emphasized the importance of the links to other policies (planning, building design, and climate change) to reducing flood risk. The wording of the strategy has been amended to emphasize these links. A further 18% of respondents left comments about drainage problems at particular locations (which will be recorded by officers); A total of 9% made comments about the need for good records of drainage events (this is part of the Strategy) and 9% commented on the need for Thames Water to publicise their works programme with facility for public dialogue.
- 4.7 In response to the question *"Please provide any other comments you may have on Brent's draft Flood Risk Strategy"* approximately 64% left comments. The comments were on the following subjects:
- Requesting named contacts for drainage matters within Thames Water and the Council. This is not thought appropriate for inclusion in a strategy document as names can change and in any case both organisations already have procedures in place to record queries or issues and direct them to the responsible team or individuals.
  - Concern about the possible effect of basement construction displacing surface water resulting in "a greater risk of instability". Although not thought to be a significant risk, planning consent requires suitable consideration to be given to any potential impact resulting from the construction of basements and is covered in Section 4.5.1 of the Strategy.
  - Concern about the adequacy of surface & foul drainage systems in the Kenton Area around Wealdstone Brook. The Council is aware of this and is working with other Stakeholders on a North Brent Catchment Area study.
  - An enquiry about "What are the strategies Brent have in place in an event of flooding?" The actions to be taken in for a flooding event are covered in Section 4.3 of the Strategy.
  - One comment thought the Strategy Objectives were "too vague" and "difficult to prove change either way" and should be more specific and measureable. The objectives mirror the legislative requirements which the Strategy is aimed at fulfilling; the action plan in Section 5 has specific actions.
  - Concern about the effect of flood risk on house insurance, "despite flood alleviation work having taken place". Insurance companies will take their own view of the risk involved in insuring individual properties, but implementation of a Strategy will reduce risk and consequently (hopefully) insurance premiums.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Many of the functions and activities detailed in the strategy are already embedded in the day-to-day activities of the Council, and so the adoption of this Flood Risk Strategy will not entail any significant additional cost.
- 5.2 Even though the implementation of the Flood Risk Strategy may require some extra officers time. The resultant additional cost is anticipated to be minimal and will be met from the service areas mainstream revenue budget.
- 5.3 This includes the approval of Sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), which will now be a planning requirement for developments of ten dwellings or more and equivalent non-residential schemes from April 2015 unless developers can demonstrate that SuDS would be inappropriate.
- 5.4 The Government laid a Statutory Instrument making LLFAs a Statutory Consultee by adding the consultation requirements to Schedule 4 of the Development Management Procedure Order from 15 April 2015. The cost of this will be in terms of officer time.

## **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Sir Michael Pitt undertook a review of the serious flooding that occurred across England in the summer of 2007. Nationally its effects were significant. Of particular importance was the high proportion of flooding that came from surface water runoff, rather than rivers.
- 6.2 The Pitt Review (June 2008) made 92 recommendations intended to change the way that local flood risk was managed. Many of these recommendations were based on upper tier local authorities, such as Brent Council, playing a greater role in the management of local flood risk as the Local Lead Flood Authority (LLFA). The roles and responsibilities of Brent Council and our partners in relation to flood risk management are principally defined by two key pieces of legislation:
- 6.3 The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 introduced the following duties onto Local Lead Flood Authorities ( LLFAs);
  - the duty to prepare preliminary assessment reports;
  - the duty to identify Flood Risk Areas and,
  - the duty to prepare a Flood Risk Strategy
- 6.4 Flood and Water Management Act 2010 aims to provide better, more comprehensive management of flood risk for people, homes and businesses. The Act identifies risk management authorities, which are bodies with an interest in flood risk management.
- 6.5 Brent Council takes on the role of Lead Local Flood Authority, and has the 'lead' role in managing local flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses across Brent. The Act outlines the responsibility of the lead local flood authority to

“develop, maintain, apply and monitor” a strategy for local flood risk management. The approval by Cabinet of this Strategy will evidence the fulfilment of that duty.

## **7.0 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Both Screening and a full Equalities Assessment has taken place for this Strategy. The Screening identified that there could be beneficial effects from the Strategy on three protected characteristics. As the aim of the strategy is to reduce the risk (and therefore logically) the incidence of flooding, access to properties should be improved (through reduced flooding) which should benefit those groups who may have mobility issues (Age, Disability and Maternity & Pregnancy).
- 7.2 The full Equalities Assessment considered the borough Flood Risk Map and cross-referenced it against the geographical diversity across the Borough of the effected Protected Characteristic groups. It showed that there were higher proportions of the Age and Disability groups in areas of higher flood risk; therefore any mitigation of flood risk should disproportionately benefit those groups. There was no geographical information available for the Pregnancy and Maternity Group.
- 7.3 See Appendix B for full Equality Assessment.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **Flood Risk Strategy**

### **CONTACT OFFICERS**

Jonathan Westell, Highways Contracts & Delivery Manager  
Tony Kennedy, Head of Service, Transportation  
Chris Whyte, Operational Director, Community Services

LORRAINE LANGHAM  
Chief Operating Officer

## Appendix A – Detailed Consultation Responses

| 1 - 1. To what extent do you agree that the draft Flood Risk Strategy adequately addresses flood risks in Brent? | 2 - 2. If you disagree, what other suggestions do you have to adequately address flood risks in Brent?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 3 - 3. Please provide any other comments you may have on Brent's draft Flood Risk Strategy:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Comments From Officers                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
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| Strongly agree                                                                                                   | Although I agree, I do not believe that the current strategy for housing and new buildings seriously recognises its dangerous future impact on flooding. This needs to be reviewed with the primary consideration be given to local need not profit. Transparency in the actions Thames Water are taking to ensure there are no serious problems in Brent and where there are 'historic issues' or problems with sewerage or less serious problems, there is a pragmatic and clear schedule of work planned and that information is easily available to the public and that there is a public dialogue facility for updates from all stakeholders as well as feedback. | The Comments regarding an open dialogue with Thames Water also apply to Brent Council. In both cases there also needs to be at least two named persons who can be contacted by the general public by phone, in writing as well as by social media (e-mail) and with the knowledge and authority to get things done when problems arise and also answer queries. | <p>Regarding the strategy for new buildings affecting flooding, the new requirement for SUDS (Sustainable Drainage Systems) is proof that these considerations are being taken into account, though the extent to which this is so can always be debated.</p> <p>Regarding named contacts for drainage matters within Thames Water and the Council. This is not thought appropriate for inclusion in a strategy document as names can change and in any case both organisations already have procedures in place to record queries or issues and direct them to the responsible team or individuals for reply.</p> <p>The request for Thames Water to publicise their works programme with facility for public dialogue will be forwarded to Thames Water for their consideration</p> |
| Strongly agree                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No Comments required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Agree                                                                                                            | 41 The Croft                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No Comments required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



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|                            | Reinstate front gardens with just partial parking facility. At present the majority of properties all the way along from Kingsbury Road up Stag Lane to the top of Burnt Oak are covered in hard standing. Not much green and very little left of some of the gardens. Very short-sighted to allow these properties to continue to concrete over their gardens. There is a need for parking but shouldn't be necessary to concrete some of these very large frontages. | I APOLOGISE I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO READ ALL 58 PAGES and the above is only a comment which I'm not sure may be covered.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Currently, permission for new vehicle crossovers is contingent on 50% of the front garden area being permeable. Making this a retrospective condition would be problematic                                                                                                                                   |
| Neither agree nor disagree | Poor attention to road drains which always flood in heavy rain. (Example - just past the junction of Harrow Road with Scrubs Lane. In really bad weather this contributes to problem of surface water flooding                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | The borough is focussed on maintaining the highway drainage system as best it can given the constraints it operates under. If rainfall is heavy enough good maintenance will not stop flooding but may mitigate it. Where there are problems with the capacity of the main sewer, Thames Water are notified. |
| Neither agree nor disagree | Greater control and consideration of the effects of basement constructions on ground water.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | The sections of the strategy 3.3.4, 4.5.1 and 4.5.3 specifically mention the issue of built environment and impermeable surfaces. The construction of basements particularly on areas where surface water may now be underground displaces surface water into the ground where there is greater risk of instability from this kind of development. This issue is not adequately considered when proposals for new basements are proposed especially in Conservation Areas. | This is not thought to be a significant risk given the relative volumes of basements compared with the volume of ground available for the water to flow in and around                                                                                                                                        |



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| Neither agree nor disagree | A detailed record of both photo and video recordings is needed to adequately address the evidence of what actually happens during flash flooding of the kind we witnessed in the Kenton area on the afternoon of Wednesday 26th August 2015 | It seems clear to me having witnessed various storm like downpours in the Kenton area close to the Wealdstone Brook over the past 40 years that the street drainage and sewage systems are totally unable to cope. Raw sewage can be seen flowing into the Brook from sewage systems full to overflowing in our local area. Brent needs a moratorium on developments until a full review is undertaken on the ability of the drainage systems to cope with downpours of the kind we appear to be witnessing every year now and an undertaken given that improvements in the systems will be happen. Check out my videos on the latest flooding in our part of Kenton on YouTube under the name of John Hepple. Dried toilet paper and sewage waste still remains on the field at Uxendon Manor School behind the nursery unit and along the path from Falcon Way to the back entrance to the school after the sewers overflowed on Wednesday 26th August. Someone somewhere has to take responsibility for what is happening and clearing up the mess afterwards. | <p>In accordance with the relevant legislation details of flooding events are kept on the Floodstation in order that a better picture of Flood Risk can be built up.</p> <p>The Council is aware of the problems around Wealdstone Brook and is working with other stakeholders on a North Brent Catchment Area study.</p> |
| Neither agree nor disagree |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | No comments required                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Neither agree nor disagree |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | What are the strategies Brent have in place in an event of flooding?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | The actions to be taken in for a flooding event are covered in Section 4.3 of the Strategy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

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| Disagree | <p>There needs to be stronger integration of this policy with planning, transport and climate change strategy. RE: Planning: 1) The increase in buildings and development in Brent is covering previously permeable ground which means substantially increased rainwater that will run off the surface down drains and into the sewers. New developments also appear to involve as standard a significant increase in paving. At basic level photographs depicting the difference between Wembley Park now and in the past when it was mostly Green around the stadium is stark. As you step out of Wembley Park station and cast your eye down Wembley Walk towards the stadium it is predominantly concrete. This can be seen with the planned Quintain Development, the Willesden Library sale to developers that as no green spaces. There is also the issue of planning permission being given in conservation areas like Mapesbury that build over Gardens. The proportion of impermeable ground in existing developments is increasing and will continue to do so across Brent and should be thought about. It's vital to address this as climate change has resulted in wetter winters and heavier showers in the summer months which are predicted to get worse over the coming decades. This will put additional pressure on an ageing sewer system. 2) Air Pollution can cause floods. A 10 year study published in Nature Geoscience by Zhanqing Li found that air pollution, impedes gentle rains while exacerbating severe storms.</p> <p><a href="http://www.nature.com/ngeo/journal/v4/n1">http://www.nature.com/ngeo/journal/v4/n1</a></p> | <p>The objectives in the flood Risk Management Action Plan are far too vague and difficult to prove change either way. I would like to see some SMART goals for action within the strategy. What specifically is Brent going to do and how will they measure it.</p> | <p>The objectives mirror the legislative requirements which the Strategy is aimed at fulfilling; the action plan in Section 5 has specific actions</p> <p>In writing a strategy there is always a balance about how much to include where there are links to other strategies and policies, avoiding too much overlap and coverage of topics in one policy that are already included in the other documents. Additions to the strategy have been made to reflect this feedback.</p> |
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|                   | <p>2/full/ngeo1313.html This shows the need for the local council to be doing its bit to help reduce the sulphur, nitrogen and hydrocarbon emissions within Brent. This might range from acting locally, thinking globally (e.g. changing the street lights across Brent to LED) but also in looking at our Transport policy and advocating for the local transport providers to increase community bus routes and reduce polluting vehicles across the borough.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Strongly disagree | Tree planting, less building, driveways that provide drainage for surface water                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | I am considered to be in a flood risk area and can only get insurance from one company despite flood alleviation work having taken place. We have seen flooding in the local area and have photographic evidence. | Insurance companies will take their own view of the risk involved in insuring individual properties. but implementation of a Strategy will reduce risk and consequently (hopefully) insurance premiums |