


















Report of: Environment Scrutiny Committee

To: Executive Board

Date: 18th December 2006

Item No:

Title of Report : Committee recommendations on the Oxford Flood Alleviation Plan

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To report the recommendations made by Environment Committee on Oxford's Flood Alleviation Plan.

decision: No

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Alan Armitage

Scrutiny Responsibility: Environment Scrutiny

Area(s) affected: All

Report Approved by: Emma Griffiths (Legal)
Andy Collett (Finance)
Cllr Phellps, Chair of Environment Scrutiny

Policy Framework: No

Recommendation(s): The committee recommendations are those detailed in the minutes at 1 below. The Executive Board is asked to respond to Environment Committee:

1. If it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations outlines.
2. If it agrees when will the recommendations be implemented and who will take lead.
3. If it disagrees why.
4. If more information is required from other officers when that will be considered.

1. Environment Scrutiny Committee Minutes and Recommendations

Nigel Bray from the Environment Committee attended and gave a presentation on the current position of the management study being undertaken in relation to the development of a flood alleviation plan for Oxford.

Members commented as follows;

1. Noted the effects of flooding on and arising from development on the flood plain which contributed to the problem of trying to deal with additional flood water arising from the increased burden on drain and sewerage systems. Recommended that the Executive Board should ask the Environment Agency to strongly advise that there should be no Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), allowed on any part of the Oxford flood plain. The Committee also asked the Environment Agency to submit a statement regarding their views on the matter to a future meeting;

2. Developers in Britain not responsible for the ill-effects of their developments such as from flooding as they were in France and Sweden. However, when applications are considered by Area Committees, the problem of flooding issues not being properly considered was often found to be down to the relevant body such as Thames Water not submitting comments. The Committee recommended that the Executive Board should ask the Planning Business Manager to devise guidance which can be issued to all potential developers reminding them of their duty of care under law to ensuring that flooding does not arise as a result of any future development within the environs of Oxford City.

3. Noted some short-term measures which had been taken including attention to critical ordinary water courses alongside the rail line south of the city and increasing maintenance to remove trees and other blockages.

4. Agreed that urgent measures were required and recommended the Executive Board to ask that the Flood Alleviation Plan for Oxford be made available by 2015 at the latest with further progress report being brought to Committee.

5. Noted that the Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Group was subject to a budgetary reduction which might affect the way future work is undertaken. The priority listing given by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) might also have an effect on the resources available to develop the Oxford Flood Plan.

a. Recommend the Executive Board to:

- 1. ask the Environment Agency to strongly advise that there should be no Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), allowed on any part of the Oxford flood plain. Also to ask the Environment Agency to submit a statement regarding their views on the matter to a future meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee;*
- 2. ask the Environment Agency that the Flood Alleviation Plan for Oxford be made as soon as practicable.*

b. Ask the Planning Business Manager to devise guidance which can be issued to all potential developers to ensure that flooding does not arise as a result of any future development within the environs of Oxford City

2. Background

2.1 The Environment Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from Nigel Bray (Environment Agency) on the Oxford Flood Risk Management Study. This is a regional, high profile study that requires the Environment Agency to:

- Identify problems and key issues
- Gather data
- Identify options and do an options appraisal
- Select a preferred strategic approach for flood management.



2.2 The timetable for the study is as follows:

- Strategic Study completed 2007
- EA and Defra approvals 2008
- Outline design and permissions 2009*
- Detailed design and public enquiry 2011*
- Commence construction 2015*

* Subject to EA and Defra approval

The Committee felt that it is imperative for the safe guarding of the city against flood risk, that a strategic flood alleviation plan be approved and progressed without delay.

2.3 Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) is a system where instead of channelling all the surface water runoff through conventional pipes (storm sewers), the water percolates through a porous surface before soaking into the ground. There are 2 main advantages: 1. "flash" runoff is less likely reducing risks of flash flooding and 2. diffuse pollutants get absorbed into soils rather than being carried away by pipes. The problem with SUDS on the flood plain is that in periods of heavy rainfall, the flood plain is already saturated. Excess water cannot soak into the ground, hence recommendation 1.

2.4 The committee wanted to ensure future developments would not add to the flooding pressures already on Oxford.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Ask the Environment Agency to strongly advise that there should be no Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), allowed on any part of the Oxford flood plain. Also to ask the Environment Agency to submit a statement regarding their views on the matter to a future meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee

3.2 Ask the Environment Agency that the Flood Alleviation Plan for Oxford be made as soon as practicable.

3.3 Ask the Planning Business Manager to devise guidance which can be issued to all potential developers to ensure that flooding does not arise as a result of any future development within the environs of Oxford City

4.0 Comments from the Business Manager (Michael Crofton Briggs)

The Planning Business Manager would like to remind Members that the Council's own Adopted Local Plan already takes flooding very seriously. Policies NE. 7 and NE. 8 explain how the Council will consider proposals for development within the flood plain. Policy NE. 9 requires all such applications to be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment.

Members should also know that from 1st October the Environment Agency became a statutory consultee, rather than an advisory one for applications within the flood plain.

It is the Business Manager's view that there is no need to provide developers with any further planning guidance - all that needs to be said is clearly set out in the Adopted Local Plan.

5.0 Comments from the Portfolio Holder (Councillor Alan Armitage)

The Scrutiny recommendations to Executive Board are supported.

Name and Contact Details of Report Author:

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Background papers: Environment Scrutiny Committee minutes and agendas

