

Growth and Regeneration Scrutiny Commission

13/02/2020



Report of:

Title: Bristol Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, including River Avon Flood Strategy Update

Ward: Citywide

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Recommendation

This report is for information. It is our annual update to G&R Scrutiny on progress with our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, with a focus on the Avon Flood Strategy project. Officers are seeking Scrutiny's advice and feedback on our progress to date and next steps, particularly regarding our proposal to refresh the citywide Strategy.

The significant issues in the report are:

The Bristol (citywide) Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is a statutory document. It was first adopted in 2014 and was formally updated in 2017. We present an update on our Strategy every year to Scrutiny to seek their views and steer on our approach. For this year's reporting we will also be providing an update on the Avon Flood Risk Management Strategy and again seeking the Commission's views and advice on our progress to date.



1. Summary

2. Context

The Bristol Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (the Strategy) sets out how the Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority for Bristol, will manage flood risks to the city now and into the future with key partners such as the Environment Agency, Wessex Water and the Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board. The Strategy was first adopted in 2014 and was formally updated in 2017. Therefore our update this year is seeking the views of Scrutiny on our progress to date and how we can continue to engage with our communities on flood risk and resilience.

The Strategy is an Action plan to ensure delivery. The Actions help to meet five higher level Objectives, which are as follows:

1. Understand the risk of flooding to the city through flood risk assessment studies and data management
2. Manage the likelihood of flooding through flood defence schemes and maintaining our watercourses
3. Encourage communities to take action to reduce their risk of flooding
4. Encourage sustainable development through reviewing planning applications to ensure development achieves reduction in flood risks, where appropriate
5. Improve flood prediction, warning and post flood recovery by working proactively with our colleagues to improve processes in advance of a flood event

The Strategy has a particular focus on working with nature and encouraging green infrastructure to manage flood risks by slowing the flow of water. The Mayor has given a clear steer that he supports the use of green infrastructure and other methods that achieve multiple benefits, such as traffic calming and improved public realm. Officers will raise this in their presentation to Scrutiny and seek views as to how we can further encourage the implementation of such measures. The Commission's views will be sought on how officers can work closer with our communities to raise awareness of the flood risks posed to the city, as well as wider resilience issues. It is noted that many examples across the country and beyond suggest that engagement is low until an event occurs but the Strategy advocates a more proactive approach that we seek advice on.

The Strategy includes Actions that relate to large scale projects – the Avonmouth Severnside Ecology Mitigation and Flood Defences project and the River Avon Flood Risk Strategy. Officers will provide an update on both projects at the Scrutiny meeting, focussing on the Avon Strategy. Officers will explain the background to the project, including the predominant flooding mechanisms, before summarising the work we have completed to date and invite the Commission's views on progress and direction of the project.

Officers will also introduce our plans to update the citywide Strategy. Our initial (2014) Strategy was based on the Environment Agency's National flood risk management strategy. The EA will be updating their National Strategy in 2020 and therefore we will be using this opportunity to refresh our strategy. Like the National Strategy, our refresh will be more of a long term vision for the city over the next 100 years or so. It will also have a stronger resilience theme, as well as setting out specific flood schemes and objective. In these respects, it will better align with the One City Plan and Corporate Strategy.

The presentation to be given by officers is included in Appendix 1 of this report.

3. Policy

Bristol City Council has a statutory duty (under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010) to develop and maintain the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. Making the city more resilient to flooding is identified as specific actions in the One City Plan and helps us meet the requirements of the Corporate Strategy, such as the Build City Resilience Principle

Appendix:

1. Local Flood Risk Management update presentation