

Area North Committee – 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008

## 9. Land Drainage and Flooding Issues Update Report

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### Purpose of the report

The purpose of this Report is to update Members on progress in dealing with land drainage and flooding matters across the District.

### Recommendation

It is recommended that Members note the current situation with regard to flooding and land drainage issues.

### Background

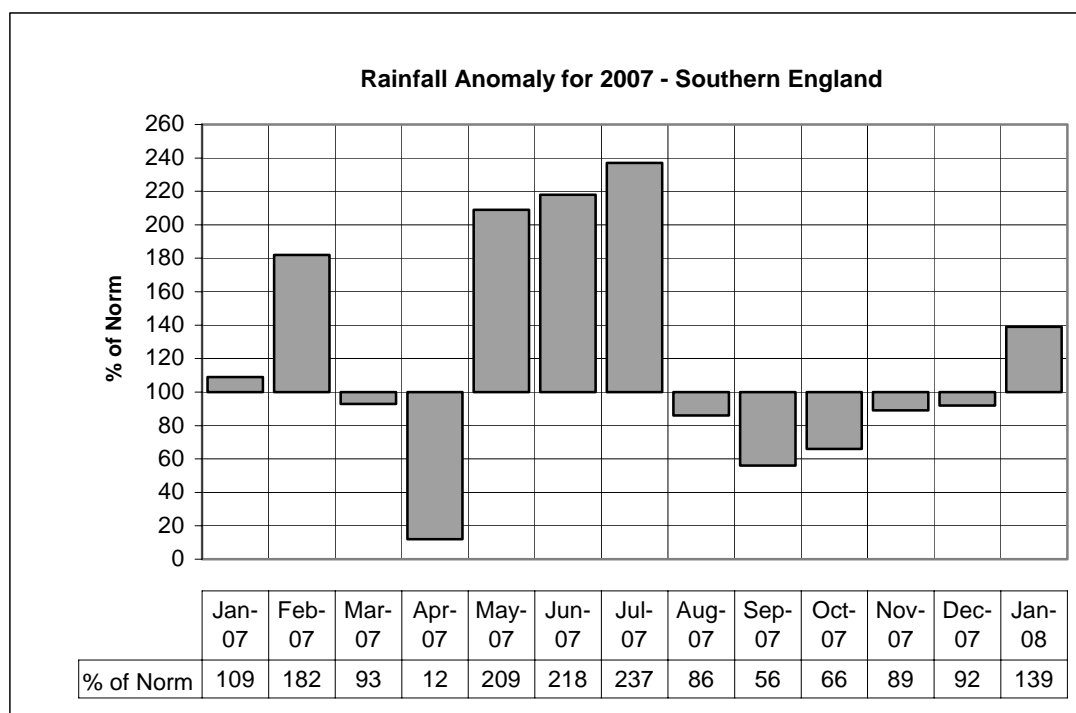
Flooding update reports are periodically presented to Members in order to advise them of ongoing flood alleviation works and any policy issues or developments in respect of flooding matters.

### Report

#### 1. Rainfall Trends and Flooding

##### a) Rainfall Trends –

Rainfall over the last year has averaged at 20% above the long-term average but there have been some notable periods of significant variation from the normal cycle of rainfall.



The monthly variations to the norm are indicated in the graph below from which it can be seen that the summer months experienced particularly higher than average rainfall.

July was a very wet month, especially in the Gloucestershire area as was widely reported in the media at the time. Major flooding problems were also experienced at Hull, Sheffield and Oxford whilst flood warnings for the East coast in November resulted in the evacuation of several hundred households in the Norfolk area.

Total rainfall for July in the Gloucestershire and South Somerset areas respectively were approximately 200mm and 100mm. These figures represent anomalies above the normal expected rainfall for this particular month of 450% and 237%. The fact that there was particularly high rainfall in the Gloucestershire area is simply down to the vagaries of the weather patterns in the UK.

#### **b) 'Localised' Flooding –**

It will be seen from the 'Rainfall Anomaly' graph above that August was below average in terms of total rainfall. What this does not show is the fact that in that month there were a number of very heavy, localised storms.

In the Council's area of particular note are storms that occurred in the Chard area on 15<sup>th</sup> August and at Compton Dundon on 6<sup>th</sup> August. The Compton Dundon event involved 65mm of rain falling over a period of about 1.75 hours and gave rise to flooding of some 31 properties. This, statistically speaking, is a storm that should occur once in 160 years and is a clear demonstration of the more 'stormy' weather conditions being experienced over the last few years that give rise to fairly unpredictable 'flash flooding' problems.

The flooding event at Compton Dundon perhaps served as a good example of partnership working where County Council, District Council and Environment Agency staff all acted to deal with the emergency situation and have subsequently been involved in identifying the issues that need to be resolved.

Many problems in flash flooding events relate to sewerage and highway drainage systems becoming blocked or overwhelmed and these are often beyond the remit of the District Council. Where such problems are reported to the Council they are generally referred to the sewerage or highway authority as appropriate although, in some cases, advice/assistance on self-help options such as local flood protection measures is given where the problem is a recurring one.

#### **c) Development Impact –**

Global warming and climate change are topical issues but much has been said about the impact of new development in respect of flooding problems. Development in flood plains and the effect of increased surface water run-off are very real issues but the development control process should now take account of these.

PPS25 (Planning Policy Statement 25) sets out the need to take these factors into consideration and requires that Flood Risk Assessments are carried out for many planning applications and especially for larger sites.

The general principle for new development is that the surface water run-off from the developed site should be no greater than that from the undeveloped site. On-site controls in the form of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) are the means by which this objective is generally delivered.

Alongside site specific Flood Risk Assessments there is a requirement for the Council to prepare a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment identifying locations with potential flooding problems across the whole District. Consultants are currently preparing the SFRA for South Somerset.

## **2. Emergency Flood Defence Measures – Sandbags, etc.**

The District Council continues to issue sandbags and the general policy in this respect is that 6 bags per doorway will be issued free of charge to households as and when required. A charge of £2.50 per bag will normally be made if more are required. The Council's policy is that prevention of internal flooding is more important than protecting gardens or outbuildings. It is often the case that householders order sandbags as a precautionary measure in order that they are instantly available when required. One drawback with this is that, unless kept in the dry, sandbags have a limited life and can often disintegrate at the critical time. Alternative types of sandbags are currently being looked at in order to overcome this particular problem and the basic logistics of delivering a lot of sandbags in an emergency situation. For example, over the period 11<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008 the Council delivered over 900 sandbags to 71 locations. The Council's staff and crews performed admirably in achieving this but it did put a considerable strain on resources.

Recently produced reports from the Environment Agency and the Government commissioned report by Sir Michael Pitt produced in the aftermath of last Summer's flooding events have highlighted the need for a better response to flooding situations. The interim report by Sir Michael Pitt suggests that Local Authorities need to take more of a lead role in respect of surface water flooding (as against flooding from main rivers which is more in the remit of the EA). The interim Report also identifies the need for individual property owners to have a greater awareness of potential flooding and for them to consider protection measures. National Guidance on the issuing of sandbags is also recommended in the interim Report. The implications of the Pitt Report recommendations are still being considered. The final Pitt report is scheduled for Summer 2008 and this matter will then be presented to the Council by the Emergency Planning and Civil Contingencies Manager.

Householders with recurring flooding problems are already being advised to consider the installation of floodboards or to undertake what can often be relatively simple flood defence measures to protect their property and Flood Awareness events are being planned by the District and County Council's Emergency Planning teams.

## **3. Minor Works**

In spite of the recent 'freak' events there has been a general reduction in widespread flooding problems and, although much of this reduction can be attributed to the different pattern of rainfall, it must also be recognised that over the last few years there have been a significant number of minor flood alleviation works implemented. This, combined with advice being given to members of the public about self-help options, gradual changes in land management practices, etc., has helped to reduce the number of properties at risk of flooding across the district as a whole.

Minor works are continuing and the current schedule is attached at the end of this report.

Of particular interest to Area North members will be the items relating to Compton Dundon. Various minor works have already been carried out here and further works are planned in conjunction with Somerset County Council.

#### 4. Somerset Water Management Partnership (SWMP)

Members were advised in last year's flooding report that a new Water Management Partnership was being set up to replace the Levels & Moors Partnership (LAMP) and the Parrett Catchment Group (PCG). This new multi-organisational partnership known as the Somerset Water Management Partnership (SWMP) was established in April 2007 and serves as a forum through which water management issues can be raised and discussed at a County level. Councillor Patrick Palmer, supported by officers, is the Council's representative on this Partnership.

A series of meetings have subsequently taken place about a broad range of issues including the actual role of the Partnership and funding arrangements.

#### 5. Land Drainage and Flooding Responsibilities, Powers and Roles

There is often confusion about the roles of the various flooding and land drainage organisations and about the general responsibility of landowners in respect of watercourses within their property. For clarification and as a reminder to Members, these roles and responsibilities are set out in Appendix A.

It should be particularly noted that, although there are statutory powers available, the implementation of flood alleviation measures by any of the organisations is a discretionary function i.e. there is no statutory obligation to do so.

#### Financial Implications

Details of the 2007/08 District-wide budget and expenditure in respect of land drainage works are shown in the table below where it can be seen that, of the total budget of £99,520, £11,347 is currently uncommitted but it should be born in mind that:-

- a) Possible flooding and the future requirements for sandbags is an unknown quantity.
- b) The schedule of Minor Works is based on currently known problems whereas others may be identified.

#### Land Drainage Expenditure (Revenue) 2007-08

<b>Code KP145</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual at 6/2/08</b>	<b>To follow (est'd)</b>	<b>Anticipated total</b>	<b>Balance</b>
1000	<b>Routine (maintenance of ditches, screens)</b>	36,490	25,454	8,061	33,515	2,975
1001	<b>Non-routine (minor works, sandbags, etc)</b>	46,190	27,529	22,440	49,969	-3779
1500	<b>Operational Costs</b>	2,210	0	0	0	2,210
2004	<b>Transport group (standby crew, etc)</b>	9,240	0	7,880	7,880	1,360
3004	<b>Supplies &amp; Service</b>	5,390	0	0	0	5,390
3990	<b>Misc Exp / projects</b>	0	54		54	-54

9930	<b>Regular income</b>	0	-3,245	0	-3,245	3,245
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>99,520</b>	<b>49,792</b>	<b>38,381</b>	<b>88,173</b>	<b>11,347</b>

### **Implications for Corporate Priorities**

Dealing with flooding problems and offering advice to members of the public in respect of flooding matters fulfills the Council's Corporate Aims of promoting a balanced natural and built environment and of improving the health and well-being of our citizens.

### **Other Implications**

None

**Background Papers:** *Area North Report February 2007*

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## Land Drainage Minor Works 2007-08

Ref No.	Area	Parish	Description	Actual at 6/02/08	To follow (est'd)
1	SOUTH	Barwick	Dredging to mill stream	500	
2	SOUTH	Barwick	Adjust weir at mill stream	88	
3	WEST	Broadway	Ditch/pipe at Hare Lane (SCC)		0
4	EAST	Bruton	Jetting at Mill Dam	330	
5	EAST	Bruton	CCTV at Mill Dam		250
6	WEST	Chard	Reset manhole cover at Oakend Way	75	
7	WEST	Chard	Flood bank/ditch at rear Mitchell Gardens	1,396	
8	WEST	Chard	Clear inlet pipe at Millfield (Wessex Water)		0
9	WEST	Chard	Drainage improvements at Laurel Gardens, Crimchard	1,859	
10	WEST	Chard	Lordsleaze/Bryer Close drainage		1,000
11	WEST	Chard	Glynswood - school playing field drainage		500
12	WEST	Chard	Drainage at coal yard, Beeching Close		1,000
13	NORTH	Compton Dundon	Fit cover at 'The Cross'	1,572	
14	NORTH	Compton Dundon	Drainage works at Moor Close	327	
15	NORTH	Compton Dundon	Dredging ditch at Moor Close		500
16	NORTH	Compton Dundon	Additional drainage by SCC		0
17	WEST	Crewkerne	Build flood defence step at Orchard Lane		500
18	SOUTH	East Coker	Control board at Slades Farm	660	
19	NORTH	Huish Episcopi	Dredging at Wagg Rhyne	490	
20	NORTH	Huish Episcopi	Repairs to bridge at Huish Episcopi		250
21	WEST	Ilminster	Pallettes at Home Farm park	39	
22	NORTH	Ilton	Piping of ditch at Cad Road	2,934	
23	NORTH	Ilton	Drainage works at Cad Road	294	
24	WEST	Merriott	Bank support at Brookside	8,302	
25	WEST	Merriott	Dredging, etc at Tail Mill - Brookfield	500	
26	WEST	Merriott	Seal drain at Moorlands Road		250
27	EAST	Milborne Port	Dredging at Pud Brook and Higher Kingsbury	474	
28	WEST	Misterton	Dredging at Newbery Lane		250
29	EAST	North Barrow	Replace outfall pipe	520	
30	WEST	North Perrott	Adjust pond control	101	
31	EAST	Pitcombe	Jetting at Hadspen	330	
32	NORTH	Stoke sub Hamdon	Flood board at North Street		250
33	WEST	Tatworth	Bank support at Lower Coombses	310	
34	WEST	Tatworth	Clearance of pond inlets	50	
35	WEST	Tatworth	Clearance at Lower Coombses	153	
36	WEST	Tatworth	Improvements to culvert inlets, etc.		500
37	WEST	Tatworth	Linkhay (CCTV & jetting; repair pipe)	639	
38	WEST	Tatworth	Bank support at Waterlake Road		2,500
39	WEST	Tatworth	Flood defences at Bridge Cottages		1,000
40	WEST	Tatworth	Fit air brick covers at Axe Close, Chard Junction		200
41	WEST	Tatworth	Pipes at Axe Close, Chard Junction		2,000
42	SOUTH	Yeovil Without	Land drainage improvements at Wessex Road	1,984	
			Various other works/items, sandbags, etc.	3,603	11,490
				<b>27,529</b>	<b>22,440</b>

Information or feedback from Members in respect of any other flooding problems would be welcome and they should contact Roger Meecham in this respect