

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	22 July 2016
Title:	DEFRA Small Schemes Pathfinder
Reference:	7619
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to set out the outcomes and key lessons learnt from Hampshire County Council's Small Schemes Pathfinder.
- 1.2. Hampshire County Council's bid was one of six bids nationally from local authorities to be accepted by The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to a Small Schemes Pathfinder. The pathfinder's purpose is to look at efficiencies available through the assessment of a 'package' of small flood risk management schemes up to and including project appraisal stage.
- 1.3. The County Council's pathfinder is based on the five communities along the Bourne Valley i.e. Vernham Dean, Upton, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Stoke and St Mary Bourne, which have a history of groundwater flooding.
- 1.4. Building on work already undertaken through the County Council's River Test Pilot Strategy and engaging with the communities, a 'package' of potential attenuation measures has been identified that recognises that groundwater flooding cannot be prevented but its impacts once above ground can be mitigated. The measures range from routine maintenance activities to capital construction works such as the creation of flood storage areas.
- 1.5. The estimated cost (excluding, consents, utility and other third party costs) for the whole package of interventions is in the region of £500k. Actual costs will only be available as each element is progressed and detailed design is undertaken.
- 1.6. The Pathfinder has demonstrated the value of taking a catchment-based approach to flood risk management and reinforced the importance of

placing communities at the heart of the process and taking collective responsibility for the delivery of some of the key outcomes and actions.

- 1.7. The key test of the pathfinder, however, is whether beyond the appraisal stage the existing method of calculating and prioritising central government funding is 'fit for purpose' where small rural communities are affected by flooding, particularly groundwater flooding. Next steps will involve further engagement with the local communities to progress the outcomes of the pathfinder, and parallel discussions with Defra about the current flood risk management funding mechanism.
- 1.8. The Bourne Valley – Small Schemes Pathfinder report is appended to this Executive Member Decision report.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. In July 2015 Hampshire County Council's was one of six bids nationally from local authorities to be accepted by Defra to a Small Schemes Pathfinder. The pathfinder's purpose is to look at efficiencies available through the assessment of a 'package' of small schemes up to and including project appraisal stage. This followed feedback from local authorities, including Hampshire County Council, that securing national flood defence grant in aid is difficult where a number of small, disparate communities are at risk.
- 2.2. The County Council's pathfinder is based on the five communities along the Bourne Valley: Vernham Dean, Upton, Hurstbourne Tarrant, Stoke and St Mary Bourne, all of which have a history of groundwater flooding, the last being in 2013/14 when 36 properties were known to have flooded internally. The Primary School at Vernham Dean was closed for two weeks and large sections of the highway (A343 and B3048) were flooded. Critical infrastructure e.g. electricity sub-stations and pumping stations were also placed at risk.

3. 'Package' development

- 3.1. The pathfinder has built upon the work undertaken as part of the County Council's River Test Pilot Strategy, the aim of which is to work with other authorities and agencies to improve the co-ordination of actions and move the management of flood risk within Hampshire from a ward/district based approach to a catchment-based approach. This approach considers the interaction of flooding events from all sources within the catchment areas, and seeks to identify measures that manage the risk as a whole. It has also involved engagement with the communities, including an extensive "walk-through" of the five villages by the County Council with community representatives and other key partners, from which a 'package' of potential attenuation measures has been identified. These measures recognise that groundwater flooding cannot be prevented, but once above ground mitigation of its impacts can be carried out. The measures range from routine maintenance activities to 'capital' construction works including:

- creation of flood storage areas;
- improving flow paths;
- lowering ground levels to increase flow velocity;
- new or resized culverts;
- new gullies and grips; and
- re-grading stream bed levels

3.2. The outcomes of the proposed interventions will be to:

- increase the discharge rate of the Bourne Rivulet, to allow faster drain down of groundwater flows as they rise;
- increase the flood storage in the valley, as a whole; and
- return highway drainage, ditches and other watercourses to good condition.

3.3. The 'package' of interventions is not aimed at protecting individual properties, but rather to protect the community as a whole by managing groundwater flows through the Bourne Valley.

3.4. Subject to further work to look at how elements of the package of mitigation measures can be delivered and their associated costs such as consents and utilities, the estimated cost of the works at this stage is in the region of £500k.

4. Lessons learned

4.1. The pathfinder has demonstrated the value of taking a catchment-based approach to flood risk management and reinforced the importance of placing communities at the heart of the process. The key lessons from the pathfinder include:

- After a flood event undertaking a rapid follow-up with the community involving a walk-through or other assessment of the affected areas to establish a picture of what improved resilience might look like and in particular what a community can do for itself.
- Working with Flood Action Group(s) that provide local leadership and help empower the community to take responsibility for the strategy, and collective ownership for the delivery of some of the key outcomes e.g. riparian ownership responsibilities.
- Undertaking a brief appraisal of what, from a combination of experience, common sense and local knowledge, 'feel' like the range of options available. This process enables future actions to be scaled appropriately and to discard options that are neither proportionate nor affordable.
- Bringing communities together that are either linked by catchment, geography, experience or theme creates efficiencies, enables information sharing, cross-fertilisation of ideas and solutions, and consistency of approach.

- Being clear from the outset that in most cases future works will most likely require significant local funding contributions, including from the community itself.
- Working with other sectors in the water environment opens up access to other specialisms, advice and potential other funding streams.

5. Finance

- 5.1. The pathfinder has been funded by central government (Defra) funding. To progress the 'package' of measures identified in the pathfinder will require the County Council to explore potential funding sources with partners, and the Bourne Valley communities. At present it is calculated that the Bourne Valley package of measures will potentially attract 20% funding from central government Grant in Aid, meaning that the remaining 80% funding would need to be found from local sources.

6. Next steps

- 6.1. A key question raised by the pathfinder is whether beyond the appraisal stage the existing method of calculating and prioritising central government funding is flexible and adaptive where small rural communities are affected by flooding, particularly from groundwater flooding. This is especially relevant at a catchment or sub-catchment scale where the combination of flood risk management measures may include land management practice, natural flood management, property level protection as well as hard engineering solutions, with some measures easier to model and calculate the risk reduction than others.
- 6.2. The County Council has previously suggested that the opportunity to devolve national flood risk management budgets, to support the implementation of reduction measures at the local level, be explored through its own Hampshire Groundwater Pathfinder. The County Council considers that there would still be merit in this approach.
- 6.3. Progressing the outcomes of the pathfinder will involve further engagement with the affected local communities and parallel discussions with Defra about the current flood risk management funding mechanism.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1. That Hampshire County Council's Bourne Valley – Small Schemes Pathfinder report be noted and agreed for submission to The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Rpt/7619/SB

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

Small Schemes Pathfinder bid to Defra

[Defra Small Schemes Pathfinder Submission - Final 2015-04-02](#)

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The pathfinder report and its outcomes will have no impact on groups with protected characteristics. The project is based on the risk of flooding in a specific geographical location and is not based on groups or individuals.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The pathfinder report and its outcomes have no impact on Crime and Disorder.

3. Climate Change:

3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

No impact.

3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The frequency of flood events and their severity is predicted to increase with the effects of climate change. The County Council's programme of work considers the effects of these changes within all work streams. The outcomes of this work will support communities to become more resilient to flooding events.