

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 28 October 2014

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Title: Lavender Field Flood Relief Scheme,
Saffron Walden

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Susan Barker

Key decision: No

Summary

1. This report for information only is to advise Members that a request has been received from residents and owners of residential property flooded last winter that the Council has been requested to draw up and implement a flood relief scheme to reduce the risk of a reoccurrence. Residents and owners have submitted a joint application to the Council for grant aid under the Defra Repair and Renewal scheme to enable the Council to draw down Defra funds to offset against the total cost of the scheme. The scheme is in the process of being prepared for costing purposes and consideration by the relevant statutory bodies.

Recommendations

2. The action in hand be noted

Financial Implications

3. Under the Repair and Renewal Scheme subject of a Cabinet report on 31 March 2014 residents and owners whose homes were flooded have the option of either applying to the Council for a Defra funded grant to carry out individual property level repairs and resilience measures, or a grant to jointly fund a communal scheme. The level of the grant is for the cost of the measures/ proportional share of the total costs of a communal scheme up to a maximum of £5,000 for each affected property. Measures have to be completed by 31 March 2015 to secure release of grant finance by Defra. At present the scheme is uncosted and it not possible to say whether the total cost could be covered by Defra grant. There is no Council budget for scheme design and development or for any excess expenditure over available grant.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The scheme has been devised through discussion between residents, landlords and the statutory bodies. Correspondence is attached.
Community Safety	
Equalities	
Health and Safety	
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The scheme as submitted requests the Council to take on responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the banks of The Slade watercourse from the riparian owners. If the Council does so, it would be obliged to continue to discharge that responsibility unless it was able to secure agreement of another party/ parties to take on the responsibility.
Sustainability	
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden Castle Ward
Workforce/Workplace	

Situation

6. Residential properties in Lavender Fields and The Spike were flooded in January when The Slade watercourse over topped its banks above the entry to the culvert under Elizabeth Way.
7. The submitted flood relief scheme meets the criteria for Defra grant funding.
8. A meeting on site between owners and representatives of the relevant statutory bodies took place in the summer to discuss the scheme. The council was represented in its capacity as owner of the culvert in so far as it passes under open land it owns. It was agreed that the owners would liaise to submit a joint application for grant funding to the council. Such grant applications are determined by the Council for Defra.
9. The Council has relevant powers as Flood Risk Management body.
10. The scheme involves the erection of a flood wall to replace an existing fence on top of the southern bank of The Slade up stream of the culvert entrance linked in to the culvert headwall to protect properties in The Spike owned by Swan Housing Association and homes in Lavender Field. Earth shaping of the open land owned by the council would be carried out to create an overflow channel diverting any water over topping the bank of the water course around

the homes in Lavender Field discharging into the carriageway of Elizabeth Way. The grille to the upstream culvert entry has been removed following the floods to reduce the risk of material getting caught and obstructing the water flow. Under the proposed scheme a trash guard to a different design would be installed, the upstream banks in the vicinity would be cleared of vegetation and the council would be expected to take responsibility for the on going maintenance of the guard and riparian banks.

11. Flooding in Elizabeth Way was identified as one the Council’s priorities in responding to Essex County Council in February over issues to be addressed in its Flooding Emergency Response Plan. The Plan was subsequently published in April and reported on work carried out to jet blocked gullies in the Elizabeth Way vicinity. The Plan states that although not an Essex Highways responsibility The Slade does take a substantial volume of water away from the highway and, downstream of Elizabeth Way, the culvert under the town centre requires substantial repair. The latter is a separate issue to that which the residents’ and owners’ scheme seeks to address.

Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Whilst protecting homes in Lavender Field and The Spike flood water over topping the bank could impact on other properties	2 Depends on the volume of water involved and the rate of run off and the area of land available to hold excess water without flooding homes until it begins to drain away	3 Flood damage to homes potentially leading to them having to be vacated whilst restored.	None

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.