

06 January 2015**Agenda Item: 4****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, ACCESS AND PUBLIC PROTECTION****RISK OF FLOODING ARISING FROM DRAINS AND GULLIES****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to provide information for Committee regarding the circumstances and risk of flooding arising from drains and gullies.

Information and Advice**Background**

2. A report on the legislative basis for planning, preparing and responding to major floods was provided to Committee in April 2014. The report noted that recent experiences of severe flooding across the UK had raised concerns that flooding is becoming more frequent and more severe, with a growing number of communities affected each year. In such incidents, the victims may experience many weeks of hardship and the local economy can be badly affected. Thunderstorms in Nottinghamshire in summer 2013 and 2007 gave rise to widespread severe surface water flooding resulting in damage to domestic properties, businesses, schools and local infrastructure including roads, electricity substations and sewage works.
3. The report highlighted that, in addition to flooding from watercourses and rivers, there is also a risk of floods when the ground and drainage systems cannot cope with intense rainfall. This can happen with highly localised summer thunderstorms that tend to have a very short lead-time, making them difficult to predict, and can occur where no natural watercourse exists. In discussing these topics, Members raised the issue of flooding potentially resulting from drains and gullies.

Flood Risk Management

4. Legislation governing local authorities interest in flooding falls into two distinct parts; that relating to flood risk management and flood prevention work (which is led by Highways, and is reported to the Transport and Highways Committee), and that relating to the need to plan and prepare to respond when flooding occurs, which is led by the emergency planning team and is reported to the Community Safety Committee.
5. Following the severe flooding of summer 2007, the government commissioned an independent review (the 'Pitt Review') which in 2008 recommended that local authorities should lead on the management of local flood risk, working in partnership with other organisations. Two key pieces of legislation have brought this forward; the 'Flood Risk

Regulations' (2009) and the 'Flood and Water Management Act' (2010). Under this Act, the County Council is a 'Lead Local Flood Authority' and has powers and duties for managing flood risk from local sources (Ordinary Watercourses, surface water and ground water). The role includes investigations after flooding has occurred and flood risk assessment and management. Although this particular legislation does not cover flood emergency response, residents in flood risk areas naturally look to the County Council for support during flooding due to the authority's status as the 'Lead Local Flood Authority.'

Drains and Gullies

6. Drainage is a key feature of local roads design, with systems in place to remove water from the highway to provide a safe surface for vehicles and pedestrians. Routine maintenance and cleaning is required to ensure they continue to work effectively. The County Council's Highways drainage assets include various highway drainage pumping stations and a specialist drain cleaning vehicle. Also, the Authority has utilised CCTV in drains and culverts to identify problem areas. Roadside drains normally connect into larger highway drains and then into watercourses or soakaways. Alternatively, they may connect directly into combined foul and surface water systems of Severn Trent Water.
7. Typically, a drain will have a metal grill as a cover, and these can become blocked with debris and litter in between the sweeping operations carried out by District Councils. Also, if materials such as cooking fat are put into the drains this can accumulate with other materials to block even the most substantial of highways drainage systems. During a flooding incident, materials carried into the drains by flood water can also cause them to become blocked.
8. Flooding problems can occur even when drains are clean and well maintained if the amount of water arriving on the road is greater than the capacity of the drainage system to take it away. Exceptional rainfall, run-off from adjacent areas and rivers overflowing are all circumstances that can lead to flooding even when drains and gullies are in good working order.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION

10. It is recommended that the committee notes the content of this report.

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Constitutional Comments

21. This report is for noting only so no Constitutional approval is required.

Financial Comments (KAS 20/12/14)

22. There are no financial implications contained within the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Nottinghamshire County Council Floods Response Plan.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.