

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 4th February, 2014.

Present: Cllr Ken Lupton(Chairman), Cllr Miss Tina Large(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Julia Cherrett, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Nigel Cooke, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Paul Kirton, Cllr Terry Laing(Vice Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey) Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Steve Walmsley.

Officers: Mike Chicken(DNS), Kate Fulton(RES), Graham Birtle and Kirsty Wannop(LDS)

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Lynne Apedaile, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr Mrs Mary Womphrey.

EXC 53/13 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Tina Large declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item titled Review of the Performance of Housing Providers as she was a Member on the Tristar Board.

Cllr Nigel Cooke declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the item titled Report on Chairs Updates as he was employed by Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust. Cllr Cooke had been granted a dispensation in this regard.

Cllr Bob Gibson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in the item titled Review of the Performance of Housing Providers as he was a Member on the Tristar Board.

EXC 54/13 **Signed Minutes - 22nd October 2013**

The Chair signed the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2013 as a correct record.

EXC 55/13 **Draft Minutes - 17th December 2013**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings held on 17th December 2013.

AGREED the minutes be approved.

EXC 56/13 **Lustrum Beck Progress Update**

Consideration was given to the update regarding Lustrum Beck. The feasibility/appraisal stage of the project was in progress and the modelling work was still on-going. Significant progress had been made in understanding the nature of the complex flood risk along Lustrum Beck and identifying mitigation options.

The project had an indicative allocation of Flood Defence Grant-in-Aid (FDGiA) funding of £600k for 14/15 and £600k for 15/16 along with £415k of Local Levy funding.

a solution for the Browns Bridge area was close to being found which would comprise of a number of features:

- Opening up the first 10m of Primrose Hill Culvert (to create a large increase in inlet capacity).
- Preventing blockage/blinding on the screen of Primrose Hill Culvert (see below for details).
- Increasing the capacity of Durham Road Bridge by modifying the existing bridge or by building a new bridge if that was not feasible..
- Increasing the height of the existing flood wall between Browns Bridge and Durham road bridge.
- Alterations to the flood embankments upstream of Browns Bridge – raising the embankment and wall immediately upstream of the bridge and setting back and raising the embankments further upstream.

There were still some issues which need to be resolved with these solutions:

- Blinding of the security screen on Primrose Hill Culvert significantly increases risk upstream. It was not physically possible for the Environment Agency (EA) workforce to keep the screen clear during high flows. When the screen was blinded, with the proposed solutions in place (listed above), the resulting SoP was reduced to 1 in 20 (It was not possible achieve a 1 in 75yr standard of protection (SoP) using local options when the screen was blinded, if the 1 in 75 SoP could not be reached, the amount of FDGiA available falls significantly).
- The screen needed to stay for security reasons. Officers were therefore investigating the option to use a self-cleaning or lifting screen. This would require a new screen to be installed – both were affordable for the scheme.
- Key issues with the self-cleaning screen were the security of the mechanised cleaner (from theft and damage and resulting increase in flood risk if this occurs) and the risk to public safety (of remotely controlled machinery operating in an area which was known for being difficult to keep the public out). In addition to these risks, the lifting screen would also result in the culvert inlet being open during high flows.
- By introducing a mechanised screen cleaner, SBC was introducing risks to public safety. These risks must be considered carefully. There were three options:
 - No screen- risk to public safety – public accessing culvert.
 - Current screen provision – increased flood risk – no viable flood alleviation scheme.
 - Screen with mechanised cleaner/lifting screen – Risk to public safety - remotely controlled machinery, from which it would not be entirely possible to prevent access and risk from theft/vandalism – resulting in an increased in flood risk if the system was not functioning and in the case of the lifting screen open access during high flows.
- The flood risk downstream was currently uncertain due to changes in topography at two key sites, resulting from re-development. The key sites were the Queens Park North site which was a future residential development, located immediately downstream of Primrose Hill Culvert and includes plans to extend the culvert, and the adjacent North Shore Academy. New topographic survey needs to be obtained and input in the model. The model would then be re-run

with the current and proposed scenario to assess any change in downstream risk and determine whether any action was necessary as a result.

Surface water flooding

Surface water flooding emerging from the sewer network had been known to be an issue in the Browns Bridge area. The proposed options listed above would not address surface water risk and properties would still be at risk from surface water flooding. They had obtained Northumbrian Water Limited's (NWL's) model to investigate the surface water risk. The model had been run previously assuming a free discharge and therefore giving a "no risk" result. They had therefore run the model with the boundary conditions from the fluvial model. The initial results had shown NWLs system to discharge in the 1 in 20yr event. They were now in the process of determining the risk to properties from the surcharge volumes.

The proposed solution to deal with the surface water issue was to use the adjacent Wrensfield Road Adult Training Centre site as a storage area during high flows. During normal flows the site could be used as parkland/recreation area.

There were a number of outstanding issues which needed to be resolved before they could finalise the modelling for the surface water system and approach NWL to contribute or make amendments to their system. The outfall of the culverted watercourse (which was understood to have its source in the scrap yard) was reportedly located under Browns Bridge but had still not been located. The source and catchment area of the watercourse also need to be determined to understanding the flow and therefore design the storage feature. An initial survey had been carried out on the culverted watercourse to further inform the modelling work and inform the CCTV survey which was being commissioned. Survey work on Lustrum Beck would also be taking place to measure silt depths at the next low flow opportunity.

Next steps: Oxbridge/Browns Bridge issue

It was nearing the stage where there was a solution for the Browns Bridge area. There were still some key issues which needed to be confirmed however the currently proposed combination of options can deliver the 1 in 75yr standard of protection and was affordable for the funds which the project can draw down upon.

The solution for Oxbridge was much less advanced. The Oxbridge solution would need to involve up-stream storage. As a large scale dam as originally proposed was not economically feasible for the project, officers had begun to look at a number of smaller scale storage areas and improved land management in the upper catchment. This approach however would require time. It would involve working and negotiating with a large number of land owners and getting a number of agreements in place. This process could realistically take over a year.

Members were then provided with details of funding for the schemes.

The Committee also received an update on the recent floods at Port Clarence.

Work was currently underway to discuss possible options with the relevant organisations such as Network Rail.

AGREED the information be noted.

EXC **Review of Use of Demographic Information**

57/13

The Committee considered the final report from the Regeneration and Transport Select Committee on the Review of Demographic Information.

AGREED the final report be approved and forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

EXC **Review of the Performance of Housing**
58/13 **Providers**

Members considered the final report from the Environment Select Committee on it Review of the Performance of Housing Providers.

AGREED the final report be approved and forwarded to Cabinet for consideration.

EXC **Forward Plan**

59/13

The Committee was provided with the statutory forward plan for 1st January 2014 - 30th April 2014.

AGREED the forward plan be noted.

EXC **Report on Chairs Updates**

60/13

Members were provided with an update from each of the Select Committee's Chairman.

AGREED that the updates be noted.