



**Report of the Cabinet Member for Environment and
Infrastructure
Scrutiny Performance Panel – 19th March 2024**

Local Flood Risk Management

Purpose	To provide an update on the policy/service area
Content	Update on Flood Risk Management in the City and County of Swansea
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the report, to give their views and make recommendations to Cabinet Member as necessary
Lead Councillor(s)	Councillor Andrew Stevens, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure
Lead Officer(s)	Stuart Davies Head of Highways and Transportation
Report Author	Mike Sweeney
Legal Officer	Debbie Smith
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1.0 Background

1.1 The Drainage Section is part of the Highways and Transportation Section. It covers a wide range of services within Flood Risk Management with the main role for overseeing compliance to statutory duties and the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy. This report will focus on the current work ongoing in order to comply with the national objectives which include;

- Reducing the consequences of flooding to individuals
- Raising awareness of and engaging people in response to flood and coastal erosion
- Providing an effective and sustained response to flood and coastal erosion events
- Prioritising Investment in the most ‘at risk’ communities.

1.2 To implement these objectives will be the responsibility of everyone involved in or affected by Flood and Coastal erosion risk management. From Welsh Government to the Welsh risk management Authorities in

Wales, including Natural Resources Wales, Swansea Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and Welsh Water. The Authority continues to work closely with these organisations to ensure that best practice is achieved with opportunities to share information and joint funding is continuously ongoing.

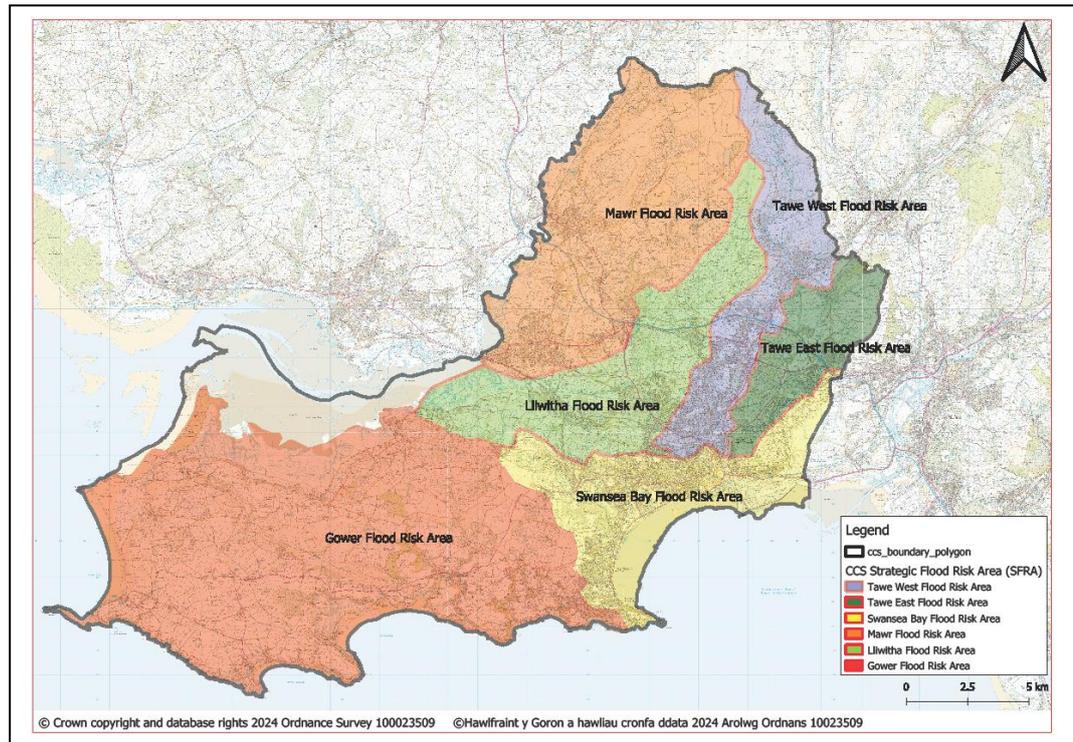
2.0 The key activities which are ongoing include:-

- 2.1** The Authority is currently producing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy as a requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (FWMA). They set out how flooding will be managed across a local authority area and should include local policies as well as key measures which the local authority would like to take forward.

The new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) which will incorporate an flood action plan to manage the Local Authority's expectations for managing flood risk from local sources for another cycle of six years. This will supersede the existing Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) produced by the Authority, which introduced measures for reducing flood risk in our most at risk communities between 2015-21 with another six year plan to manage flood risk.

To ensure consistency across Wales the Welsh Local Government Association has provided guidance to ensure that the production of the new LFRMS aligns with an all Wales approach. The major difference compared to the previous FRMP will be that instead of using individual Wards for areas where mitigation measures have been applied and this can be seen in the existing FRMP, the All Wales approach will be using data from Natural Resources Wales, Communities at Risk Register (CARR) where hydrological boundaries will set out new high flood risk areas in Swansea. This means that instead of having 32 wards with measures implemented to manage flood risk for each specific ward, it will be replaced with a six Strategic Flood Risk Areas across the region based on CARR boundaries as shown on Figure 1 below.

Figure 1 – Strategic Flood Risk Areas for Swansea



Within each Strategic Flood Risk area, different Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) in Wales are responsible for different sources of flood risk. LRFAs are responsible for “local flood risk” which is defined as flood risk from: Surface water runoff, Groundwater; and Ordinary watercourses (generally smaller watercourses)

This Local Strategy will focus on these local sources of flood risk in each SFRA, but acknowledges and considers other sources of flood risk (including the sea, main river and sewers) and associated Risk Management Authorities (RMAs).

An integral part of the LFRMS will be the Flood Action Plan which sets out the actions that The City & County of Swansea is undertaking or plan to undertake to manage the risk of flooding from local sources within the county for the next six years. These actions deliver the strategic objectives and measures contained within the LFRMS.

The Action Plan will contain county wide measures and individual measures for each Strategic Flood Risk Area (SFRA) where more detailed actions can be outlined in the local catchments.

Guidance from NRW states that there is a requirement that the measures and actions should address the four categories of Prevention, Protection, Preparedness and Recovery and Review. Each

Flood Action in this Plan is given a category and details of the type of actions for each category are given in the table below.

Table 1 – Types of Actions

Action Type	Actions
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue of Flood Consents to ensure works in ordinary watercourses do not increase flood risk. • Approving Flood Consequence Assessment and working closely with the Planning Department. • Avoiding construction of houses and industries in present and future flood risk areas. • By adapting existing receptors to the risk of flooding; and ensure that future developments take flood risk into account. • Mapping and better understanding of Flood Risk Compliance with Reservoir Act 1975, to ensure reservoirs are regulated. • Work with other local Authorities, emergency services and other key partners and explore opportunities for joint outcomes.
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-going maintenance programme for flood management of assets. • Capital expenditure on Drainage works. • Taking measures, both structural and non-structural, to reduce the likelihood of floods in a specific location. • Undertake asset inspection and keep a register of assets significant to flood risk.
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing the population about flood risk and what to do in the event of a flood, including emergency response. • Developing emergency response plans in the case of a flood. • Provide a flood incident response service 24 hours a day for highway flooding.
Recovery and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to normal conditions as soon as possible and mitigating both the social and economic impacts on the affected population.

The LFRMS and flood action plan will require stakeholder and member engagement prior to a 6week public consultation exercise. The Authority has a duty to share a draft version of the strategy to Welsh Government prior to publication on the Authority’s website this year.

2.2 Welsh Government Grant funding

Opportunities for external funding is continually being explored. Welsh Government FCERM Grant awards have been given to the following

flood affected areas which have incurred significant and repeated flooding from local sources/surface water flooding.

Current grant supported schemes

Brockhole Stream Blackpill – Detailed Design
400 Birchgrove Road – Outline Business Case
Llys Ddol Morrision - Outline Business Case
Capel Road Clydach - Business Justification Case -completed
Kingrosia Park Clydach - Outline Business Case
Killay Square Killay - Business Justification Case – completed subject to WG review
West Street Gorseinon Business Justification Case completed.
Beryl Road Clydach- Business Justification Case completed??
Western Street Sandfields - Business Justification Case completed??

The above Business Cases provide Welsh Government with a steer on schemes to be taken forward to the next stage of the grant process.

3 Stages of Grant Process

- First stage BJC/OBC
- Second Stage FBC or Detailed design
- Third Stage- Construction

The current trend is that some Business cases are taking longer than expected due to complexity of the study. This is causing some frustration within communities due to the time being taken to complete the assessments. To note that funding is not guaranteed, as the FCERM Capital Programme and grant allocation is provided on a priority basis to those communities who rank highest across Wales.

However, this year the Authority has received further stage 2 grant awards for Capel Road Clydach and West Street Gorseinon and these schemes are now progressing in the detail design stage. Killay square is currently under reviewed by Welsh Government

2.3 Capital Drainage Budget

The Drainage Section is responsible for works required to improve drainage systems for the purpose of preventing flooding to the highway and risk to adjacent properties. The budget was increase this year , to compliment a core budget of 400k and additional 300k was provided for drainage improvement works.

With collaboration with the operational highways team and other internal departments works are identified to capture works which need to be undertaken to prevent flooding to the highway and adjacent properties. In addition works are identified via complaints received from Members

and members of the public should flooding be reported which is over and above routine maintenance requirements.

Particular examples of works completed include ditching works, gabion works, introduction of new improved drainage systems, land drainage systems, sink holes or any other works. 40 drainage schemes have been completed to date this year.

One major issue which has been experienced this year is the flooding on the Garnswllt Road at Pentrebach Bridge Pontardulais which frequently floods from the Camffrwd main river which results in the road becoming impassable. In this instance the Authority has worked with Natural Resources Wales and private landowners to reach an agreement solution which has been given consent and will be implemented as soon as weather permits. The works will provide greater resilience to protect the highway from flooding but for extreme conditions there is a possibility of future flooding but the action to create a flood bund alongside the river will significantly improve the situation for road users for this community.

2.4 Reservoir Act 1975 compliance

The Drainage Section is responsible with the safety measures for the two raised reservoirs we have in Swansea, namely Brynmill and Lower Swansea Valley reservoirs to ensure that in the interest of safety the reservoirs comply with the Reservoir Act 1975. There is ongoing annual works to be carried out to satisfy the recommendations of the inspection reports carried out by independent Panel Reservoirs' engineers.

2.5 SAB function

Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 came into effect on 7 January 2019. It requires new developments with more than one dwelling, or a construction area of at least 100 square meters, to include Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). SuDS must be designed and built in accordance with the Statutory Standards and construction must not commence until proposals are approved by the SuDS Approving Bodies (SABs). SABs are required by the legislation to adopt and maintain SuDS under certain conditions.

The SAB function is currently being carried out by 2 officers who approve drainage strategies to ensure compliance to the National Standards. New developments will now incorporate good suds design within their drainage strategies to ensure that the wider benefits to the environment are achieved, whilst ensuring that flood risk is not increased as the result of the development. For the year 2023 the SAB team had received 61 Full SAB applications with approvals granted for 34 applications. 21 preapplications were received with 14 approvals given.

Good collaboration with internal stakeholders through working groups has been essential in order to ensure that projects consider suds components at an early stage so that timelines and project deliveries are achieved. This is the case for many projects such as the More Homes Projects, Active travel schemes, 21st Century Schools programme and City Centre Regen developments where SAB officers have been attending stakeholder meetings at an early stage to ensure that submitted drainage schemes comply with National Standards. All new projects are delivering good suds systems which does not only manage the flood risk from proposed development but provide more wider benefits to improve the environment.

All developers have access to a pre-application service which offers early engagement in the smooth delivery of drainage strategies to meet the suds standards

In terms of planning and the potential impacts of new developments, there is close and good collaborative work being undertaken between internal departments and external risk management authorities. This is to ensure that flood risk is not exacerbated as the result of new development proposals. Compliance to the requirements of Planning Policy Wales and Tan15 ensures that national guidance is adhered to. Across the 2023 financial year we were consulted by the Planning department 303 times over a range of differently sized sites. These vary from large strategic sites that are proposed, to small windfall sites that comprised of no more than 3 or 4 units. We have provided assessments in relation to local flood risk from all sources and the management of surface water arising from additional impermeable areas.

Going forward the new TAN 15 which has been delayed in its introduction will ensure that the decisions made by the Planning department has due regard to the updated Flood Map for Planning which makes allowances for climate change predictions. Consequently, the Authority is required by the Welsh Minister to complete a Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment to identify flood mitigation measures/pipeline of schemes as the result of climate change predictions in order to inform planning decisions. This work is ongoing.

2.6 Coastal Risk Management Programme

As part the National Coastal Erosion Risk Management Programme (CRMP) construction works of the flood defence walls is well underway. The scheme will not only provide sustainable flood defence in Mumbles but will seeking to maximise multiple benefits i.e. increase tourism, green infrastructure and other benefits. With the total cost of the scheme being circa 23million pounds, 50%of the expenditure has been achieved to date with completion of the works anticipated early 2025.

2.7 Operational Update

Drainage project has received additional funding and we understand this is now supported for the next 4 years. The service is currently running two routine teams, three reactive and one proactive/specialist team.

The service has over 40,000 drains, cleansed on a three year cycle but with the additional teams this is running ahead of schedule. Selective high priority drains are cleansed on an annual or 6 monthly basis.

The Authority continues to respond to reactive calls and carry out proactive cleansing of high risk areas. Though this is for individual problems rather than reports of whole street blocked.

The Authority also offers a paid service for weekend work over and above our service level which has been taken up by a small number of councillors and works well if there is community engagement to assist with parking over drain issues.

The Highways department has a policy in place on watercourse inspection procedures. Watercourses are checked at the frequencies below depending in weather conditions and level of flood risk. During dry periods inspections will not be carried out if deemed unnecessary.

	Sept to March	April to August
Blackpill & Birchtree Close	Daily	Weekly
Red List	Weekly	Monthly
High Priority	Fortnightly	Monthly
Low Priority	Monthly	Bi-Monthly

Red List to be checked following notification of a severe weather warning to wet weather. Red list to be rechecked following severe wet weather.

3.0 Future Challenges & Opportunities

- 3.1. The production of the new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy will place an additional financial burden of the Authority to deliver the measures and actions which will be outlined in the new LFRMS. Should Welsh Government Grant funding not be made available for future business cases and the construction of flood alleviation schemes, then the responsibility for managing flood risk for our communities will solely rest with the Authority to deliver. Consequently, the LFRMS will need to have the appropriate governance in place to consider, where available,

allocation of appropriate resource, design and construction of potential flood measures/interventions going forward and also, the internal staff to support the delivery of the plan.

- 3.2 The trend on the demand of delivery the SAB function is increasing and the need to deliver the service will incur additional pressures in managing the SAB process and the adoption of sustainable drainage features.
- 3.3. The introduction of the new Tan 15 in June 2023 will increase the workload on the Drainage Section, as Planning Consultations will need to be responded to have due regard, to the updated flood maps and climate change predictions to inform Planning decision.

4.0 Risks

- 4.1 Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Swansea Council became a lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and was given a series of new responsibilities to co-ordinate the management of local flood risk for surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses. Failure to fulfil this statutory duty will result in increased flood risk within the administrative boundary of Swansea Council and non-compliance to the expectations of Welsh Government.

This may lead to increased risk to life and property and critical infrastructure with the Authority being subjected to claims and public criticism.

Shortage of Drainage Engineers is being felt across the water industry where appointments of suitable candidates for drainage roles are being found difficult to fill in across many Authorities and other sectors.

5.0 Legal implications

The Flood Risk Regulations came into force in December 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act became law in April 2010. Under this legislation, the Council has been identified as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and has been given a number of key responsibilities including the preparation of a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). Policy guidance associated with flood risk and development is also contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW) and Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15). Although PPW and TAN15 do not dictate the requirements for, or provide any guidance on, preparing a LFRMS, the strategy is consistent with the requirements of this Guidance. Implementation of specific measures

shall also take into consideration other legislation including the Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Coast Protection Act 1949.

6.0 Finance Implications

There are no immediate financial implications arising from this report and in the meantime, costs will continue to be contained within existing budgets.

7.0. Integrated Assessment Implications

This is an information only report, with no implications, therefore no IIA required

Background papers: None

Appendices: None.