

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **19th October 2020**

Report Subject: **Flood Risk Management Plan (2016- 2022)**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr. Joanna Wilkins, Executive Member
Environment**

Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services
W. Jervis, Senior Engineer**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
16.09.20	01.10.20	05.10.20			19.10.20	09.12.20		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on progress made in delivery of Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's Flood Management Plan of 2016.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report provides the background to the Plan and summarises progress made on objectives and measures since its adoption, and approval by Welsh Government in 2016.
- 2.2 The Plan highlights the hazards and risk of flooding and sets out how the Authority will work with other parties and local communities to manage the risks.
- 2.3 The Plan sets out how over the six-year period, the Council will manage flooding so that the communities most at risk and the environment benefit the most.
- 2.4 The objectives outlined in the Borough's Flood Management Plan come under the headings: Social & Cultural, Economic, and Environmental
- 2.5 The above objectives have been further classed into 3 categories:
- Prevention (11 Measures)
 - Protection (15 Measures)
 - Preparedness (8 Measures)

To achieve the objectives under the headings and categories, the Plan identifies measures designed to reduce flooding.

- 2.6 Including the use of non-structural measures such as avoiding inappropriate development, and covering all aspects of flood risk management, including raising awareness of flooding and providing a better understanding of local flooding issues.

3. Options for Recommendation

3.1 Options Appraisal

- **Option 1:** Preferred option; That Members accept the Report and progress made over the previous 12 months.
- **Option 2:** That Members do not accept the Report and recommend alternative actions going forward.

4. Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan

- 4.1
- The attached Appendix 2 is a table of the measures identified in the Plan. The table identifies the progress made since the Plan was adopted in December 2015, and also progress made since the last annual review in 2019.
 - The measures evidenced in Appendix 2 demonstrates how the desired objectives of the Blaenau Gwent Well Being Goals, as well as the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act have been achieved

4.2 The findings of Appendix 2 can be summarised as follows:

Prevention (BG01-04)

- Undertook a number of CCTV surveys of culvert inlets to inspect their condition and to understand the reasons for the flood risk at:
 - i. Ladies Row, Picton Row and Georgetown Hill, Tredegar
 - ii. Glanffrwd Terrace, Rear of Holland Street, EV
 - iii. Cwmcelyn, Blaina
 - iv. Railway Street, Meadow Street and the sports field, Llanhilleth

This will enable the Council to effectively consider the risks of future developments, or decide if action can be taken to minimize risk of flooding.

- Commissioned 10 catchment surveys to enable the Council to evaluate expected flows at critical and significant inlets throughout the borough.
- Externally funded assistance from associated engineers within the department and an apprentice engineer has also been appointed to assist with delivery and development of the Flood Risk Management Plan.
- Monitored all three rivers in Blaenau Gwent on a monthly basis. Data was recorded by volunteers and fed back to responsible parties to be acted upon.
- Works and activities were held throughout the year with partners including Groundwork Wales, Natural Resources Wales and Keep Wales Tidy to resolve any issues identified on the rivers and increase the quality of the habitat, with works carried out by staff and volunteers.
- Several school workshops were held at Bryn Bach Park, linked with plastic pollution and flooding.

4.3 Technical Services were successful in applying for 100% funded Welsh Government Revenue Grants to undertake the following works and objectives.

Culvert Inlet Catchment Studies	£10,000
Funding the appointment of an apprentice engineer and also others within the department to assist with delivery and development of our Flood Risk Management Plan	£14,496
Various drainage works from revenue grant for Ad Hoc Maintenance works such as maintenance of drainage ditches, culverts and the like.	£32,870
Total value of works	£57,366

4.4 The following work was 85% Welsh Government funded. The remaining 15% was funded by other Welsh Government grants which were provided to enable councils to progress with their Flood risk management plans.

Scheme	Total expenditure	Value of Grant
Bridgend Culvert Repairs, Ebbw Vale	£27,538	£21,250
Ebbw Vale House Culvert Repairs, Ebbw Vale	£13,394	£8,500
Total value of works	£40,932	£29,750

4.5 Due to the severe storms encountered at the end of the year and early 2020 the Council was unable to complete a scheme anticipated to cost £40,000 with a grant value of £34,000. However, Welsh Government has allowed for carry this money to be carried over to the 2020-2021 budget.

4.6 The Council also undertook the following actions as part of our statutory duties.

- 2,675 culvert inspections for year 2019-20.
- 365 Con 29 Land Search requests relating to drainage.
- 108 Planning applications relating to drainage
- 220 Service requests for assistance relating to drainage.

4.7 **Protection (BG 05-08)**

- Further tree planting Bryn Bach Park to help store water and slow down surface run-off. Approx. 500 trees were planted, which were provided by Ovo Energy after applying for a free promotion they were offering.
- Weed clearance at Bryn Bach Lake, which consisted mostly of volunteers with minimal Council Officer time.
- Woodland planting to attenuate water and help prevent run-off at Bryn Bach Park.
- The removal of a large amount of rubbish in rivers at Llanhilleth, Dukestown, Tredegar, Bourneville, Blaina and Cambridge Gardens in Ebbw Vale.

4.8 **Preparedness (BG09-13)**

The Authority continues to develop a response to flooding incidents and Multi-Agency Tactical Emergency Management and Strategic Emergency Management training is undertaken on an annual basis.

There is also a Gwent Local Resilience Forum Recovery Plan in place.

4.9 **Challenges and obstacles faced throughout the year 2019 – 20:**

This year has been quite an unprecedented year with climate change bringing storms Brendan, Ciara, Dennis and Jorge. Changes in the way we work due to Covid 19, and unavailability of staff for long periods all contributing to what has been a very difficult period.

5 **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Option 1:** That Members accept the Report and progress made over the previous 12 months.

5.2 **Implications:**

- i. Actions are not evenly distributed across the borough, as they are prioritised by risk.
- ii. Funding may not be available to continue the delivery of the plan. therefore, actions identified in the plan may not be delivered.

5.3 **Option 2.** That Members do not accept the Report and recommend alternative actions going forward.

5.4 **Implications:**

- i. Additional funding may be required to undertake the work.
- ii. Funding may not be available for alternative actions.

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 **Adoption of the 2016 Flood Risk Management Plan primarily contributes to meeting the following priorities:**

Corporate Plan Priority:

- Strong and Environmentally Smart Communities
- To improve the access to and quality of open spaces for the benefit of our communities, businesses and visitors.

6.2 **Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan:**

Adoption of the Flood Risk Management Plan 2016 – 2021 will help provide the following objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone
- Safe and friendly communities
- To look after and protect the environment
- To forge new pathways to prosperity
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the places that they live, learn, work and play.

By continuing to work towards the objectives set out in the Flood Risk Management plan, the Council will maximise its contributions to the Well-being goals.

6.3 The Future Generations Act

The Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council Flood plan achieves the goals of The Future Generations Act by improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals. It sets out five ways of working needed for Public Bodies to achieve the seven well-being goals.

6.4 Long-term

The importance of balancing short-term needs with the needs to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs

6.5 Integration

Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies.

6.6 Involvement

The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves

6.7 Collaboration

Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.

6.8 Prevention

How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objective.

7. Monitoring Arrangements

7.1 The identified objectives and achievements towards the plan are continually assessed by officers responsible for its delivery.

7.2 The achievements towards the plan will continue to be reported annually through scrutiny as it has done for the previous 2 years since its inception.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

• Flood and Water Management Act 2010
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

BGCBC Flood Risk Management Plan
https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Floods_FRMP_complete.pdf

- Flood Risk Management Strategy
https://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/fileadmin/documents/Resident/Planning/Flood_Risk_Strategy.pdf

Assess how well your project / activity will result in multiple benefits for our communities and contribute to the national well-being goals.		
Description of the Well-being goals	How will your project / activity deliver benefits to our communities under the national well-being goals?	Is there anyway to maximise the benefits or minimise any negative impacts to our communities (and the contribution to the national well-being goals)?
<p>A prosperous Wales An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.</p>	<p>The plan recognises the role of Green Infrastructure in helping to reduce the level of flood risk and the severity. Considering the issue of climate change and flood risk within or schools NRM programme will engender our Future Generations with a clear understanding of climate change issues and Flood Risk</p>	<p>The delivery of Green Infrastructure are a relatively low cost, sustainable option, but they are limited by the resource availability. Our NRM programme optimises progress</p>
<p>A resilient Wales A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</p>	<p>The Flood Risk Management Plan's measures will reduce the risk of flooding and by utilising Green Infrastructure to good effect will add value in terms of enhancing our biodiverse natural environment, and increase resilience to change.</p>	<p>Engaging with our communities and encouraging active participation in the understanding and management of our Natural GreenSpaces will maximise benefits.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</p>	<p>By reducing flood risk we are reducing stress and worry for people in these areas and thus maximising their mental well-being. Encouraging active participation in the management and use of our Green spaces has proven health and wellbeing benefits.</p>	<p>Our communities can be encouraged through initiatives such as Go Green 4 Health , Patient Referrals by GP's and general volunteering opportunities in order to maximise health benefits.</p>

Description of the Well-being goals	How will your project / activity deliver benefits to our communities under the national well-being goals?	Is there anyway to maximise the benefits or minimise any negative impacts to our communities (and the contribution to the national well-being goals)?
<p>A more equal Wales A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).</p>	<p>Active community engagement in Green Infrastructure initiatives will provide opportunities for all citizens to participate regardless of background. Project delivery through Probation Services, Go Green 4 Health etc focus on engaging with hard to reach groups of people.</p>	<p>Promotion and engagement of events to increase levels of engagement. Networking to encourage participation levels.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.</p>	<p>Through working with communities to enable them to respond to flood risk and encouraging events and activities that focus on local green spaces help to help to develop develop cohesive communities.</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.</p>	<p>Establishing local groups to take an active role in their local environmental quality will help to underpin local pride and cultural appreciation</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>By raising awareness and building resilience to flood risk we are making a positive contribution to global well-being.</p>	<p>Supporting local Groups to take an active role in the local environment will maximise the benefits</p>