



## Mayor and Cabinet

### **Response to the comments of the Sustainable Development Select Committee on the flood risk management strategy**

**Date:** 14 September 2022

**Key decision:** No.

**Class:** Part 1.

**Ward(s) affected:** All (none specific)

**Contributor:** Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm

### **Outline and recommendations**

This report provides Mayor and Cabinet with a response to the comments and views of the Sustainable Development Select Committee on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, which were referred to Mayor and Cabinet on 6 July 2022.

It is recommended that Mayor and Cabinet agrees that the response set out in this report is approved and reported back to the Sustainable Development Select Committee.

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. On Monday 27 June 2022, the Sustainable Development Select Committee considered a report from officers on the flood risk management strategy ([link to the agenda](#)) The Committee reflected on the contents of the report – and received a presentation from officers. Following questions to officers, the Committee agreed to refer its views to Mayor and Cabinet.

## **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1. That Mayor and Cabinet agrees that the response set out below to the Sustainable Development Select Committee is approved and reported back to the Committee.

## **3. Sustainable Development Select Committee views**

- 3.1. The Committee welcomes the Flood Risk Management Strategy report and agrees that the strategy should be implemented.
- 3.2. The Committee recommends that Mayor and Cabinet should consider the

options and resource implications of commissioning a comprehensive survey of underground water sources and streams in the borough. The Committee acknowledges the constrained financial situation facing the Council and it encourages Mayor and Cabinet to consider innovative and collaborative approaches to implementing this recommendation.

- 3.3. The Committee would welcome additional education and outreach on the issues related to homeowners paving their gardens. This should include updated information on the Council's website about the potential impacts of replacing gardens and green spaces with impermeable paving.

#### **4. Officer response to Sustainable Development Select Committee**

- 4.1. Objective 1 of Lewisham's new Flood Risk Management Strategy highlights the need to continue to improve our evidence base of watercourses and flooding related assets to understand risks.
- 4.2. Mapping all underground water sources in the borough would be an expensive and technically challenging exercise. The Council's priority is to focus resources on those locations the Council has responsibility for as landowner or to undertake wider work where external funding is available.
- 4.3. An initial priority that has been highlighted to members of the Sustainable Development Select Committee is to conduct a survey of a culverted watercourse in Sydenham and officers will report back on this to ward members. Funding has now been secured to carry out this investigation.
- 4.4. As a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) the Council has made assessments of a number of hydrological features within the borough. In the last year this has included surveying, mapping and designating features that convey surface water within the borough as Ordinary Watercourses – and providing updated maps to Planning to ensure these features are highlighted during the planning validation process.
- 4.5. Action 4.02 in the Strategy commits to providing guidance for homeowners to help them de-pave front gardens as well as on creating sustainable drainage features. Officers will use the Council's website as part of this work. Further outreach work with residents to encourage action on flood risk is also happening as part of the Borough of Culture In Living Memory programme drawing on the borough's experiences of the 1968 floods.
- 4.6. One of the initial activities of the In Living Memory project: 'Lewisham Underwater' is attending community events to engage residents on actions they can take to reduce flood risk – one of which is to depave front gardens. Guidance documents will be handed out to residents directing them to where they can find out more information on how to carry out climate adaptation actions.
- 4.7. A later phase of the Lewisham Underwater project is to commission artists to create cultural outputs in the public realm that relate to flooding, climate adaptation and the health of our local environment, these installations will aim to interrupt residents helping them consider the input that they have on rivers. These commissions will also have an interactive element which will direct viewers to online information where they can find out more about how to improve their local environment by reducing the risk of flooding and improving

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biodiversity.

## **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report. Work to survey watercourses and engage with the public on flooding will be funded from existing service budgets.
- 5.2. The cost to conduct a survey of a culverted watercourse in Sydenham as mentioned in 4.3 above has been covered by once-off corporate funding.

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in the report. The Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), is required, together with other obligations pursuant to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, to prepare and maintain a strategy for local flood risk management in their area, (“the Strategy”). The response to the Committee arises out of the Committee’s consideration of the report to it in relation to that Strategy
- 6.2 The Constitution provides for select committees to refer reports to the Mayor and Cabinet, who are obliged to consider the report and the proposed response from the relevant Executive Director; and report back to the Committee within two months (not including recess).

## **7. Equalities implications**

- 7.1. The Equality Act 2010 brought together all previous equality legislation in England, Scotland and Wales. The Act included a new public sector equality duty, replacing the separate duties relating to race, disability and gender equality. The duty came into force on 6 April 2011. It covers the following nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 7.2. The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
  - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
  - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 7.3. There are no direct equalities implications arising from the implementation of the recommendations in this report.

## **8. Climate change and environmental implications**

- 8.1. There are no direct climate change or environmental implications arising from the implementation of the recommendation in this report. However the impact of climate change is expected to increase the risks faced by places such as

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Lewisham from surface water, river and groundwater flooding. In 2019 Lewisham Council declared a Climate Emergency and in 2020 the Council's published a Climate Emergency Action Plan identifying a range of actions to meet the ambition to be net zero carbon by 2030 and improve the resilience of the borough to a changing climate.

## **9. Crime and disorder implications**

9.1. There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

## **10. Health and wellbeing implications**

10.1. There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

## **11. Report author and contact**

11.1. If you have any questions about this report then please contact: Marcus Gayle: Flood Risk Manager, [marcus.gayle@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:marcus.gayle@lewisham.gov.uk)

11.2. Legal implications: Paula Young: Senior Planning Lawyer, [Paula.young@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:Paula.young@lewisham.gov.uk)

11.3. Financial implications Shola Ojo: Principal Accountant Corporate Resources; [shola.ojo@lewsham.gov.uk](mailto:shola.ojo@lewsham.gov.uk)

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