
Decision Session - Executive Member for City Strategy

7 July 2009

Report of the Director of City Strategy

Peckitt Street and Friar's Terrace Flood Protection Scheme

Summary

1. This report provides details of a proposed flood protection scheme to reduce flood risk from the River Ouse to four properties in York and maintain access during floods to thirteen more, and to the rear access to the fire station.

Recommendation

2. The Executive Member is recommended to agree the principle of implementing the Peckitt Street and Friar's Terrace flood protection scheme.

Background

3. During a River Ouse flood event the Council installs temporary sandbagging and pumping to protect 8 Peckitt Street and 1 – 3 Friars Terrace (plan in Annex 1). Sandbags are also used at Tower Place to provide some protection to 1 – 9 Tower Place. It is not possible for the residents to protect their properties individually.
4. This procedure, developed since the 2000 flood, has proved to be effective on three occasions against events up to 4.42m (14'6") above summer level (ASL). It has also been partially installed on some ten other occasions when forecasts predicted a higher peak than was actually reached.
5. The Council and residents acknowledge that the procedure will not be effective above that level, but because of its success residents expect that it will be carried out whenever there is a risk of the properties flooding.
6. There are resourcing and health and safety implications for the Council. It is expensive and the cost of the response to the flood in September 2008 was £31,844 of which approximately £25,000 could be attributed to the works at Peckitt Street and Tower Place.

7. Although the temporary installation uses sandbags, it is also dependent on the stability and integrity of the existing walls. These are in varying states of repair and the quality of the sandbagging can vary depending on the time available for erection. These factors decrease the certainty of being able to provide protection to the properties.

Proposal

8. A scheme has been designed which is more effective and reliable and less resource dependant. The height of the parapet wall in front of the four affected properties will be raised and a new wall constructed across the end of Peckitt Street. The existing railings will be remounted at the higher level.
9. Two pedestrian openings in the raised wall at the top of the steps from the riverside walk up to Peckitt Street will be closed at times of flooding with removable handstops. A third opening, with steps up to No. 3 Friar's Terrace from the riverside will be walled up and backfilled. Minor works will be carried out on the frontage of Tower Place.
10. Discussions with Yorkshire Water Services will establish whether it will be possible to install valves to control backflow through the local sewerage system. This is not essential to the scheme but will enhance its reliability. It will still be necessary to provide temporary pumping during flood events.
11. This scheme has the same limitations as the temporary procedure and will only protect the properties against events up to a maximum level of 4.70m (15'5") ASL. This occurred twice in 2008 and the 2000 flood peaked at 5.4m (17'7") ASL.

Operation

12. Currently sandbagging operations commence on receipt of a warning of forecast river level in excess of 2.5m ASL.
13. In future, on receipt of a warning of forecast river level in excess of 3.9m ASL, resources will be mobilised to:
 - Install the two handstops at the top of the Peckitt Street steps.
 - Provide pumps to handle seepage and supervise during operation.
 - Provide pumps and sandbags to Tower Place.

This will significantly reduce revenue costs.

Consultation

14. The works in front of the houses facing the river are on private property. The wall and barriers at the end of Peckitt Street are in the public highway. The footpath and City Wall in front of the Tower Street properties is in Council ownership. The residents of the affected

properties are supportive of the proposals. The scheme will also maintain a dry access to the fire station from Peckitt Street.

15. The Neighbourhood Services Assistant Director (Construction and Leisure) has expressed concern about the safety of operatives working behind the temporary sandbag wall and welcomes the implementation of the scheme and the consequent reduction in risk to his staff.
16. Planning Approval and Listed Building Consent for the scheme were granted by the West and City Centre Area Planning Sub-Committee on 19 March 2009.
17. Guildhall Ward Councillors, Group leaders and the opposition Executive Member have been consulted and the four responses received are all in support.

Options

18. Three options are available:

1. Do not build scheme and withdraw from providing the temporary protection.
2. Do not build scheme but continue to provide temporary protection.
3. Build the proposed scheme

Analysis

19. Option 1

The residents expect the Council to implement its current defence procedure. The properties are very vulnerable and the residents cannot individually take action. It is likely that the effects of climate change will increase the frequency of flooding.

This option is rejected.

20. Option 2:

The reliability of sandbagging cannot be guaranteed. The likely increase in the number of flood events will increase costs and risk of flooding due to failure.

This option is rejected.

21. Option 3

This provides the most reliable protection against flooding and will very significantly reduce the resources required.

This option is recommended.

Corporate Priorities

22. This scheme assists in meeting the following Corporate Priority:

- Sustainable City : We aim to be clean and green, reducing our impact on the environment while maintaining York's special qualities and enabling the city and its communities to grow and thrive.

This scheme will

- reduce the environmental impact of council activities – approximately 1,500 new sandbags are required each time the procedure is implemented, and fuel is required for transporting and pumping.
- decrease the tonnage of biodegradable waste and recyclable products going to landfill – after each flood the contaminated sandbags have to be disposed of.

Implications

23. Financial – The estimated cost of the scheme is £80,000. The Regional Flood Defence Committee has granted aided 50% of the cost of the scheme up to a maximum of £35,000. Should the scheme be approved in principle a further report will be taken to the Executive to seek guidance on the procurement of match funding. It is estimated that there will be a saving to the Council of approximately 75% per flood event due to fewer resources being required, later mobilisation and no costs from abortive operations.

24. Human Resources – Less manpower will be required, freeing resources to work elsewhere, and health and safety risks from working behind a vulnerable flood defence and the risk of its failure will be eliminated.

25. Equalities – None

26. Legal – The Council has a general duty of care to protect the public from foreseeable dangers.

27. Crime and Disorder – Less risk of the defences being compromised by vandalism.

28. Information Technology – None

Risk Management

29. Risk has been assessed according to the Council's risk management procedure. Thee relevant impact is Health and Safety.

30. The risk rating for the current procedure is:

- Impact – Major
- Likelihood of occurrence – Possible
- Risk Rating – 19
- Required action – Constant monitoring, action plan and measures to be put in place to reduce exposure.

31. Following implementation of the recommended scheme the risk rating will be:

- Impact – Minor
- Likelihood of occurrence – Unlikely
- Risk Rating – 8
- Required action – Regular monitoring

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Report Approved



Date 20-06-09

Specialist Implications Officers None

Wards Affected: Guildhall

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes

Annex 1 – Plan of Properties