

WIRRAL COUNCIL

CABINET 3 NOVEMBER 2011

SUBJECT:	ACCEPTANCE OF ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GRANTS
WARD/S AFFECTED:	ALL
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF TECHNICAL SERVICES
RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR HARRY SMITH STREETSCENE AND TRANSPORT SERVICES
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the successful applications for grant funding to undertake:

1. Property-level flood resilience works following an extreme storm event in August 2011 and;
2. Land drainage culvert investigations.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to note the contents of this report and approve the acceptance of the Environment Agency (EA) grants.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 PROPERTY-LEVEL FLOOD RESILIENCE GRANT

- 3.1.1 Following an extreme rainfall event on the evening of 26 August some 30 properties suffered varying degrees of internal flooding in Wallasey, Leasowe, New Brighton and Heswall.
- 3.1.2 Investigations did not identify any operational problems with the highway drainage system at these locations and it is unlikely that any improvements to the highway drainage system or the public sewers would have prevented the flooding that occurred. The storm is believed to have been greater than a 1 in 400 year event.
- 3.1.3 The Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) through the EA have made available funding during 2011/12 specifically to allow property-level flood resilience work to be undertaken on properties that have suffered internal surface water flooding. The closing date for applications was extended by the EA as not all the funding available had been allocated and 20 of the Wirral properties affected met the criteria for grant support and an

application for £64k was made by Technical Services which has subsequently been approved but must be spent before the end of this financial year.

3.1.4 Each of the 20 identified properties will undergo an independent survey to ascertain what remedial action is necessary to mitigate or prevent future flood related damage. A maximum of £4500.00 can be awarded to each affected property, although households are able to contribute more via their own funds or contributions from their household insurers.

3.1.5 Some examples of remedial work that can be undertaken to “harden” properties include the fitting of airbrick covers, the installation of doorway flood barriers or the raising of internal electrical sockets above the estimated upper flood level.

3.1.6 Progress on this of work will be reported via the Wirral Flood and Water Management Partnership.

3.2 LAND DRAINAGE CULVERT INVESTIGATIONS

3.2.1 In addition to the £54k for property-level flood resilience works, an application for £10k to undertake an investigation to locate and map culverts on watercourses within Wirral particularly where they pass beneath the public highway, has also been approved by the EA. Wirral will be making a contribution of £1k through the Technical Services drainage staff time in directing the investigations.

4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

4.1 The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 established Wirral Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). LLFAs are required to lead the strategic management of local flood risk (arising from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses). Understanding how the various drainage systems within Wirral operate and link will enable Wirral Council to better meet its responsibilities as an LLFA and the resilience works when undertaken will reduce the flood risk to these properties.

5.0 RELEVANT RISKS

5.1 Wirral faces a significant risk of flooding with a substantial number of domestic properties identified as at risk from potential future flooding.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 Not relevant.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 There is no consultation required as a result of this work.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

8.1 Flooding affects all voluntary, community and faith groups whether it be directly with their properties being flooded, or in a responder or recovery capacity.

9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

9.1 There are no additional financial implications.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no legal implications other than duties imposed under the new legislation.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no Equality implications.

12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

12.1 There are no specific carbon reduction implications although there are significant links with carbon reduction and sea level rises, increases in extreme weather patterns, etc.

13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no planning implications in relation to this report.

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REFERENCE MATERIAL

Council Meeting	Date