

# **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Report of**

**“Flooding”**

**Chair  
Councillor J Birch**

# Contents

	<b>Page No</b>
1. Executive Summary	2
2. Introduction	3 - 4
3. Methodology	5 - 6
4. Key Findings	7 - 15
5. Measures to reduce floods	16 - 18
6. Summary	19 - 20
7. Conclusion	21
8. Recommendations	21
 Appendices	
- Appendix A - Flood Zones	22 - 23
- Appendix B - Categories of Consultation (Local Planning Guidance)	24
- Appendix C - Consultation Matrix	25
- Appendix D - Action Plan	26 - 27
- Appendix E - Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme	28

## Executive Summary

For many people flooding is a fact of life. Long-term this situation could worsen. Climate change is likely to increase winter rainfall and could increase the number of properties at risk. Furthermore unless controlled, continued pressure on land could mean even more new developments being situated in floodplains.

Substantial flooding has occurred at several locations in Wigan, when prolonged rainfall, land drainage and sewer problems gave rise to widespread localised flooding across the borough.

Wigan has suffered from flooding on numerous occasions. In October 2000 the borough had serious flooding due to prolonged rainfall. In June 2002, 1,000 properties were affected by flooding due to sewer problems.

Other areas of risk are around twenty watercourses that have been identified where Wigan is at risk of serious flooding, together with regular problematic areas such as Ashton, where the sewer system is inadequate to cope with current demands. Other areas that have been seriously affected are the Robin Park development, the car park and shop adjacent to the Asda development which has also affected the surrounding areas.

### Key Findings:

- Environment Agency have SoD<sup>1</sup> approval an investment of £12.6m for Douglas catchment through Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme, this ought to bring relief to areas surrounding Newtown, Poolstock, Swinley, Scholes and Robin Park
- Flooding target to reduce risk on 698 homes over a 5 year period
- United Utilities propose to spend £9m in the Wigan Borough area over the next five years
- Flood register held, those on it receive flood warnings as appropriate
- A reluctance by residents who live in a flood warning area to register
- Sewers in the Ashton area are inadequate to cope with demands and need to be replaced

If you are at risk of flooding you can call Floodline on 0845 988 1188 or log on to the Environment Agency web site to see whether your home is at risk from flooding.

---

<sup>1</sup> Scheme of Delegation

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 Wigan borough has had problems with flooding for many years. It has been difficult for some and impossible for others to reduce the problems of flooding. There are two principal hot spots in the borough; they are areas surrounding the River Douglas in the north of the Borough and the Bedford area in the south, together with other areas, e.g. Ashton.
- 2.2 According to the Environment Agency, Wigan has the highest risk of flooding within the River Douglas catchment. It is not just the hot spots that have these problems. Robin Park and areas surrounding Lilford Park/Bedford Leigh also suffer from floods during heavy rainfall. Although the Environment Agency can predict when river levels are expected to cause flooding in certain areas, there are issues about flood warnings, particularly for residents. Currently, flood warnings are given to residents by the Environment Agency but not all residents who may suffer from floods are currently registered to receive such warnings. By acknowledging this risk, residents fear that they could suffer blight on their property resulting in higher insurance premiums and effective devaluation of their property.
- 2.3 Despite floods caused by rivers and rainfall, floods can also be affected by drainage and sewage problems.
- 2.4 Taking into account these issues, the Select Committee agreed the following aims and objectives:
- a) Who is at risk of flooding?**
- To identify areas of the borough with a high likelihood of flooding including river flows, water courses and sewage.
  - Identify the number of flood warning issues over a three-year period within the borough.
- b) Do we receive adequate and cost effective flood defence warning systems?**
- Are flood warnings given in good time?
  - How effective are the actions, which are taken, e.g. in minimising the effects?
  - Confirm adequacy of emergency provisions?
  - Identify emergency response plans and frequency of review.
  - Who funds flood defences?
  - Identify cost effective new technologies and actions to reduce the risk of flooding.

### **c) What are the problems relating to floods arising from drainage systems?**

- Identify areas of risks arising from land use and new developments?
- Identify issues about drainage systems to households adjacent to streams and rivers.
- What are the costs relating to claims against the Council for damages to properties?
- Identify where appropriate contributions from developers or other beneficiaries of works/costs arising for flood defences.

A wide range of documents, research and data were used as the basis for the analysis of issues about flooding. This included the following:

- The Council's Emergency Plan
- Consultation with Council Departments, i.e. Engineers, Planning and Regeneration and Community Protection
- Semi-structured interviews with the Environment Agency, United Utilities and Axis (consultants for Environment Agency)
- Literature Reviews
- [www.environment-agency.co.uk](http://www.environment-agency.co.uk)
- National Flood Forum

### 3. Methodology

3.1 In preparation for the review of flooding and, in particular, to establish the difficulties that Wigan faced, the Select Committee collated evidence from various sources with the aim of improving services provided to the Council. Collation of data seeks to give a detailed portrait of the areas of the borough that are at risk of flooding. The review was to address the following issues:

- **Which areas are at risk?**
- **What can be done to alleviate the problems?**
- **What can be done to minimise floods?**
- **What provision is available to deal with floods?**
- **What are the risks from land use and new developments?**
- **What are the costs to the Council in dealing with floods?**

For the review, we have examined what policies and procedures are in place within the Council and have scrutinised available information. We have interviewed other agencies, for example the Environment Agency, United Utilities and Axis (consultants for EA) to establish what they are doing to resolve some of the problems about flooding and to clearly identify what they are responsible for.

Some of the issues we looked at included:

- How the Environment Agency and United Utilities worked together;
- How much funding was allocated for Wigan;
- Where Wigan's position was within the Asset Management Plan.
- Comparative information with Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Councils

3.2 To understand how other Local Authorities deal with flooding, a visit was made to Shrewsbury on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2005.

Shrewsbury has a long history of flooding and was badly hit until the late 1960's when Lake Clwedog was formed in mid Wales to prevent excess water reaching the lower reaches of the River Severn and also to provide water for Birmingham.

After the major floods of the late 1990's and 2000 when the river reached over five metres over its normal winter levels and caused extensive flooding in the town, it was decided that urgent action was required.

Shropshire County Council, Severn Trent Water, the Environment Agency and Shrewsbury Borough Council joined forces to form a Joint Flood Action Group which produced a Joint Action Plan in November 2002.

The aim of this plan was that all four agencies could co-ordinate their resources to act as a single body in the event of a flood.

Some of the measures introduced to prevent flooding were demountable flood barriers along the side of the river, a mobile dam which consists of two tubes filled with water, and a pallet barrier which consists of a metal frame on which wooden pallets and plastic sheets are placed to retain the water.

The Council also has volunteers who act as unpaid flood wardens who pass on flood warnings to local residents. Their duties are listed in an Urban Area Flood Warning Plan.

As a follow up to this meeting, we were invited to attend a meeting of the Shrewsbury Flood Forum which was held on 8<sup>th</sup> October. At this meeting, speakers were present from the Environment Agency Severn Trent Water, Shrewsbury Borough Council and the National Flood Forum. The speakers gave presentations on flood defence works, flood risk management strategies, the new flood warning direct system, the role of flood wardens and updates of work by Severn Trent in Shrewsbury. Information was shared about the work of the National Flood Forum and how it has helped in towns such as Gloucester, York and Bewdley.

The Select Committee held semi- structured interviews with representatives from the Council, Environment Agency and United Utilities and throughout this report we aim to clarify the issues about flooding.

## 4. Key Findings

### 4.1 Who is at risk of flooding?

- There are two main flood warning areas in the borough they are:
  - River Douglas - Eleanor Street, Wigan
  - Lilford/Bedford area, Leigh

The Wigan flood warning area extends from Central Park Way and includes properties in Scholes and Robin Park. Properties affected are both commercial and residential and include Asda, the bus depot, Scholes Weir and properties surrounding Adams Bridge. Tesco's, on the site of the former rugby ground, is also a flood warning area, but as it is built on higher ground, the risk from flooding has been reduced.

Residential properties within the Wigan area:

There are two blocks of Council owned flats within the designated flood warning zone. These are:

- Douglas House - 120 flats
- Woodcock House - 103 flats

There are also several Council owned properties just on the immediate border of the warning area, although these are not included in the Agency's Flood warning arrangements. These are:

- Regency Court - 23 sheltered flats
- Crompton House - 103 flats
- Derby House - 103 flats
- Brook House - 101 flats plus a public house

Lilford/Bedford area, Leigh

Although the above is classified as one area, there are actually three locations that can flood independently. The areas at risk are primarily residential and are around the Higher Folds, Green Lane and Lilford Park area of Leigh.

Two of the locations, Green Lane and Higher Folds, tend to flood at the same time, although the first point of flooding is downstream of Green Lane Bridge. This will occur when Bedford Pumping Station (on Mill Lane) is receiving significantly more flow than it can pump, since the capacity of the Bedford Basin is relatively small.

Lilford park brook joins Pen Leach Brook from Higher Folds / Green Lane Leigh north of the Bedford pumping station on Mill Lane in Leigh.

Both flood sources eventually link with Bedford Basin.

The third area, Lilford Park, floods when Lilford basin becomes full. Water flow over the spillway and into the park and houses.

The properties at risk are primarily residential and include a small mixture of Council housing, private housing and properties owned by the County Palatine Housing Association. Also at risk is part of Lilford Park, which is owned by Wigan Council and managed by Wigan Leisure and Cultural Trust.

There are two flood areas:-

1. This contains approximately 140 properties, with 90 Council owned and 50 privately owned. This comprises the 'Green Lane' and 'Higher Folds' areas.
2. This contains approximately 100 properties, all privately owned. Part of Lilford Park also comes into this area.

- **Level of Risk and Impact of Flooding**

Current estimates suggest there are some 250 properties at risk within the Leigh area.

The Environment Agency has a flood map that is intended to be as a guide only - it is not designed to be accurate at an individual property level. The flood map identifies main rivers, critical ordinary watercourses, and flood warning areas, water bodies and two flood zones.

The flood zones are noted as:

- **Flood Zone 1** - the area that lies outside of the outline for the flood with a 0.1% (one in a thousand) chance in any year .
- **Flood 2** – the area that is affected by the flood with a 0.1% (one in a thousand) chance in any year.
- **Flood 3** - the area that is affected by a flood from rivers with a 1% (one in a hundred) chance in any year and 0.5% (one in two hundred) chance in any year from the sea.

For example, some of the areas identified in zone 3 where there is a (1 in 100) chance of occurring are outlined in Appendix A.

Flooding has major problems for some residents in the borough as the case study below outlines:

*Mrs Brown has problems with flooding to her property during severe storms. Her property adjoins school playing fields, which during heavy storms compounds the problem. The difficulty seems to be that drains are not large enough to deal with the problem and a complaint had been made against the Council. This issue has been ongoing for a number of years. A formal complaint was made against the council and sent to the Ombudsman who was satisfied with the Council's response.*

*Source: Wigan resident*

## 4.2 So what causes floods?

A flood in your home or property may be caused by various sources:

- Burst water pipes
- Flooding during heavy storms causing overloading of sewers or drains
- High river flows which cause overtopping
- Blockages on screens/ culverts

**4.3** The Environment Agency has targets to increase warnings. For example by 2007, the target is 77% where it is cost beneficial. They are also investigating the use of radar for forecasts, but the technology is not good enough at present to do this. However, members of the public can sign up to receive free warnings if they live in a flood area. There are issues at the moment about how the Council receives flood warnings and the Environment Agency wants to work with the Council to improve this process. There is a Floodline number to allow residents to sign up to receive flood warnings if they live in a flood area. This has proved slightly difficult at times where some residents do not acknowledge that their property is at risk of flooding. This has consequences for insurance and selling properties. Other factors that affect residents who do not acknowledge this issue is that if their property is not registered on the flood register, United Utilities cannot undertake any area of work that they are responsible for and failure to register disqualifies residents from any assistance. This unveils another problem of who is responsible for what, e.g. Environment Agency, United Utilities and the local Council.

However, despite the flood warnings that are issued, one of the (if you say major you need to be able to quantify) contributors to flooding is the public sewer system. These systems were built in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Many of these are combined sewers and were designed at the time to take both surface and sewer water. Unfortunately, they are now unable to cope with the sheer volumes of water created by heavy downpours and surcharges occur. In exceptional storms the sewers discharge onto the highways.

To compound the problem, in some areas new housing estates are being developed within the borough. The surface water and foul water from such developments are being connected to the already overburdened and ageing network, which does not help to resolve the problems.

## 4.4 What Wigan Council Will Do

**The Council's approach to providing emergency assistance during times of river flooding is as follows:**

Arrangements have been made with the Environment Agency that Wigan Council will assist them with the distribution of sandbags, when required, to residents in the flood warning areas. The Environment Agency will provide sandbags and Wigan Council will assist with transportation and manpower. Wigan Council will also provide assistance with road signs to various locations. Should it be necessary to evacuate residents, there are a number of premises that have been identified that may be considered as temporary holding points until other rest centre accommodation can be arranged.

## **Transport for Evacuation**

Depending upon circumstances, transport for evacuation purposes can be organised through Adult Services Department, Engineering Services or, via arrangements with Greater Manchester Transport Executive, which full details are outlined within the Council's Emergency Plan. All Council Departments have key responsibilities to deal with and respond to a major flooding incident.

## **What are the problems relating to floods arising from the river systems?**

### **4.5 Environment Agency Maintenance Work**

The Agency has a number of duties and powers including the powers to maintain main rivers for the efficient passage of flows. These powers are permissive only. Riparian owners are responsible for maintaining any structures they own.

The Wigan critical ordinary watercourses (COWs) will not become a main river until April 2006. Therefore, they have just begun to work on compiling information and undertaking an on the ground assessment of the maintenance required. Once that is completed, they will be in a position to produce the maintenance programme.

- **Cleaning of Debris Screens**

Debris screen cleaning is both routine and reactive, during times of spate, leaf fall and debris accumulations. These costs are contained within their overall budget. Their priority is to manage flooding so the Environment Agency divert funds from routine activities if weather conditions dictate that during the year we have more than the average number of periods of heavy rain. So provision of an overall accurate budget for the activity is not possible. However, as a very basic costing exercise based on three men and a wagon for two hours per screen, they would be looking at a cost of approximately £200 per visit.

Inevitably as they gain more watercourses and screens, the need to carry out routine and reactive works will increase and they will increase their budget in line with this. However, the service provided is ultimately limited by the number of resources with the need to prioritise during periods of prolonged rainfall.

- **Sandbags**

The Agency carries a limited stock of one tonne sandbags for protection of its major assets.

- **Environment Agency - Service Provision**

As DEFRA<sup>2</sup> moves forward with its strategy for urban drainage, 'Making Space for Water' there is a clear need for all parties to share their understanding of flood risk from whatever source and to better understand the interaction between sewers, drains, culverts and open watercourses. If possible, capital improvement projects should be aligned to have the most benefit in reducing the overall flood risk.

---

<sup>2</sup> Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

The Agency is developing Catchment Flood Management Plans, which will look at the potential global impacts of changes such as increased development, climate change etc over a one hundred year period. These plans need to be fully supported and the policies acted upon by planners if we are to minimise the potential increase in flood risk.

#### 4.6 Risk areas arising from developments/drainage systems

As identified in paragraph 4.1, some flood defences in Wigan are old and need upgrading. The areas of risk have been identified in table 1 below, together with proposed recommendations to reduce the risk.

**Table 1**

Risk Area	Measures to Minimise Damage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• River Douglas through Wigan</li> <li>• Tesco site (Water Heyes) problem of flooding getting worse.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Agency approval of flood storage structure at Water Heyes and improve flood defences downstream to Robin Park. SoD approval £12.6m work to commence January 07</li> <li>• Proposed flood storage at Water Heyes will reduce flood levels.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Robin Park development is built on flood plain which has seen both the car park and shops flooded.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JJB Stadium has a flood tank - Asda has a flood tank underneath car park. Also B &amp; Q in Wigan has a similar arrangement where the storage is in the form of a series of parallel pipes.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eleanor Street which backs onto River Douglas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wall joints are undermined and need to be replaced</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ashton area floods (its not regular some properties have only flooded once in 2002 which was an exceptional storm)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity of some of the sewerage network</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leigh Lilford/Bedford area</li> </ul>	<p>Although this area is identified as a high-risk area, the Environment Agency have stated that no works will be undertaken until 2010</p>

Table 1 are but a few of the areas at risk of flooding. Contributing factors to flooding are new developments which are built on flood plains. Although Local Authorities do grant planning permission for new developments to be built on flood plains, advice is taken from the Environment Agency as to whether the risks are minimised. For example, a new development in the south of the borough proposed to build on a flood plain and Wigan Council refused planning permission. The developers took the Council to court and won their case to build. However, they did agree to install a basin to prevent flooding.

## **4.7 Highways and Gullies**

The Council's Engineers Department is the best performer within Greater Manchester in ensuring that our road gullies are running free. This is established through an independent random sample of a visual inspection of two gullies at a specified location on every street in the Borough.

### **Gully Cleaning**

There are 53,311 gullies located on the main highway network and 1,792 located on adopted back streets, throughout the borough.

Key features of the existing operation include:

A computerised management system has been developed jointly between client and contractor, which provides essential management data relating responsiveness, cost and performance. The Highways DLO, along with Highways Services Section, have developed a comprehensive gully cleaning programme that has enabled improved delivery of the service year on year.

Gully cleansing is undertaken on a planned and systematic basis every eight months.

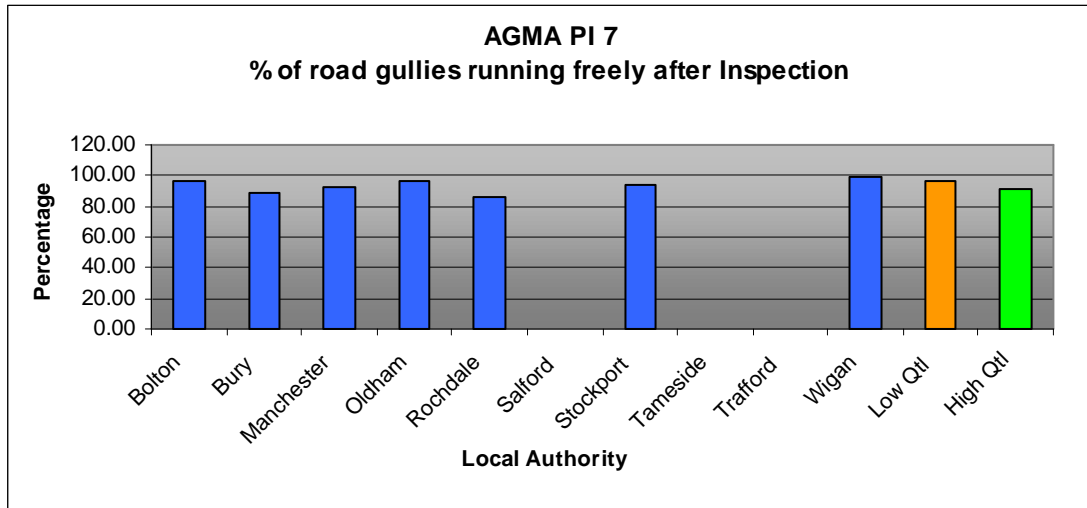
Defective gullies are attended to within two hours, twenty-four hours, three days or seven days of notification/identification depending upon urgency. The response rates are the same as those contained in the Highways Works Contract.

The Council, as highway authority, is responsible for the maintenance of culverts that run under the adopted highway. These could be short lengths of pipe enabling a ditch or more substantial watercourse to pass under the carriageway or long lengths of pipe carrying a former ditch etc many hundreds of metres. If these block, the watercourse would flood and could affect land, crops or houses.

Highway drains are/were built for the specific purpose of carrying rainwater from the highway via road gullies. House drainage is not connected to them. Localised flooding of the highway could occur if they become blocked, though it is not usually associated with house flooding.

Maintenance of both culverts and highway drains, due to financial restrictions, is restricted to reactive which, through our contract with the Highways DLO, is very responsive (target responses as per shown in table 2).

**Table 2**



#### **4.8 Issues around property**

House building on flood plains - nationally Government is telling Councils not to build on Flood Plains unless absolutely necessary.

In May 2001, the Environment Agency and the LGA published a Flood Defence Protocol. This aims to achieve an effective flood defence service by providing a framework for the work of Local Authorities and the Agency.

The Environment Agency carries out continuous monitoring of the way in which local planning Authorities respond to its advice on planning applications, upon which the Agency is consulted.

The Environment Agency ceased to visit Council offices to check planning applications. This process will be replaced by the Council implementing a consultation/self-assessment process. There are fifteen categories of development, which might impact on the water environment. These are outlined in Appendix B.

Categories 4, 5, 6 and 9 associated with flooding state that consultation must take place with the Environment Agency. They are as follows:

Category	Type of Development	Consult Agency	Refer to local planning guidance	Sources of Guidance/ Advice	Reason for Consulting Agency
4	Works in / adjacent to watercourse	Yes	No	GDPO 1995 Article 10 (1) (p). PPG 25 Development and Flood Risk	To ensure development does not increase flood risk through increased flows or restricting access for maintenance and/or improvement. The Agency has a general supervisory role over all matters relating to flood defence (S105 Water Resources Act 1991)
5	Development that falls within eight metres of a main river watercourse or within Flood Zones, 2 or 3 of the EA Flood Map	Yes	No	GDPO 1995 Article 10-(1) (p). PPG25 Development and Flood Risk	Flooding can have devastating impacts on people and property and the implications of building in areas of flood risk must be fully considered before a decision to grant planning permission is made. Consult to ensure flood risk implications for the development and possible increase in flood risk elsewhere are properly considered.
6	New build development on sites over one hectare within Flood Zone 1 (i.e. anywhere in the Borough outside Flood Zones 2 and 3)	Yes	No		The discharge of surface water from large sites can significantly increase the flow on the receiving watercourse, causing problems downstream from the development site. Measure to deal with surface water discharges from large sites must be properly assessed. Consult to ensure that issues of flood risk associated with surface water runoff are properly considered.
9	Development involving storage, treatment or disposal of sewage, trade-waste, slurry or sludge. Does not include: • Laying of sewers • Pumphouses in a line of sewers Septic tanks or cesspools for one dwelling or caravan or a building where ten or fewer people will live or work	Yes	No	GPO Article 10-(1) (s). PPS23 Planning and Pollution Control. Circular 3/99 Planning Requirement in respect of the use of Non-Mains Sewerage incorporating Septic Tanks in New Developments	To protect surface water and ground-water from pollution. New developments should generally be served by new or existing public sewers. Only where it is impossible or impractical to connect to a public sewer will the Agency agree to the use of non-mains sewage systems. Under the terms of the Water Resources Act 1991, the prior written consent of the EA may be required for any discharge of sewage or trade effluent into water, including ground water via soakaway.

The Council believes that planning obligations can enhance the quality of development. However, a planning obligation will only be sought where the Council considers that specific improvements are necessary to the granting of planning permission. Development will not be permitted which would:

- be subject to an unacceptable risk of flooding;
- create an unacceptable increase in the risk of flooding, on-site or elsewhere;
- adversely affect the water environment as a result of an increase in surface water run-off;
- harm existing or proposed flood defences or interfere with flood control and maintenance works;
- include the culverting of watercourse.

New developments and redevelopment can have significant implications for flood risk. Similarly, new developments may result in a substantial increase in surface water run-off from permeable surfaces such as roofs, paving or hardstanding. This may result in an increased risk of flooding downstream, increased pollution, silt deposition and watercourse channel instability.

#### **4.9 United Utilities Capital Schemes Proposals**

United Utilities have a number of proposed schemes for Wiganover a five year period 2005 - 2010. They propose to spend £9m during this period . £3 m of this will be spent on the following schemes:

- Stubshaw Cross, Ashton - in – Makerfield ( Upsizing sewers and providing new sewers)
- Walford Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield ( New sewers)
- Blenheim Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield ( New sewers)
- 
- Latham Lane, Wigan ( New sewers and flow diversion)

## 5. Measures to reduce floods

5.1 The review has highlighted a number of issues about flooding in the borough. The table below begins to address the issues and identifies the strengths and areas for improvements to look at ways on how they can be addressed.

Area of risk	Proposals	Key outstanding issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of areas at risk of flooding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of risk areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reduce the risks of flooding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood defences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council has procedures in place to act upon in the event of a major flood incident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council to have access to a range of support</li> <li>• Effective strategies are in place</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Investment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment Agency propose to undertake work on the River Douglas through Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme ( £12.6 m investment)</li> <li>• 610 residential and 170 non-residential properties will be protected by the scheme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation process to be agreed with communities</li> <li>• ( Appendix E shows Tesco site in its current state)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asset Management Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Year plan in place</li> <li>• UU have £112 million to spend of which 9% of monies allocated for Wigan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protocols and procedures are in place to ensure maximum efficiency of AMP</li> <li>• To raise Wigan in the priority list for works to be undertaken within the 5 year AMP.</li> <li>• The Environment agencies Capital Programme takes into account works to be addressed in the Bedford area by 2010 based upon the risk of flooding i.e. 2% risk</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interagency planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council's Flood Watch/ Emergency Plan identifies interagency delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint commissioning between agencies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for preventative work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Utilities have £9m to spend in Wigan and £3m has been committed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Utilities to confirm spending of £6 m of the £9 m allocation for Wigan over the next 5 years</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drainage/sewers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge/awareness of problem areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital investment required replacing / upsizing some of the sewer network in Ashton</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning/associated issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council have policies/ procedures in place to resolve issues about new developments etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimise risks of flooding</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood warnings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flood map in place.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-ordination between community and Environment Agency</li> <li>• To improve processes of issuing flood warnings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Areas of responsibilities between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Council</li> <li>- Environment Agency</li> <li>- United Utilities</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agencies aware of their responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To avoid services operating independently and duplicating provision</li> </ul>

I think that this confuses the report, (We don't set a programme of day one of the amp period it develops over the five years)

## **Environment Agency Proposals**

The Environment Agency has developed a new **flood risk strategy**. The strategy sets out a clear vision:

- Flood risk will be reduced year on year to an agreed level across England and Wales;
- Flood risk will be understood and acted upon by those who live, work, travel and invest in flood-prone areas;
- Flood risk management will be supported by the public, partner organisations and politicians;
- By tackling flood risk we will make a valuable contribution to people's quality of life, the environment and sustainable development; and
- The Environment Agency will play the lead role in delivering flood risk management in England and Wales.

This new approach moves away from the traditional focus of defending against floods, to managing flood risk.

## **Targets**

In the first three years of the strategy the Environment Agency aim to:

- Prevent loss of life from flooding by improving warnings, public information and emergency response;
- Reduce the risk of flooding to life, major infrastructure, environmental assets and some 80,000 homes - 698 of which are in Wigan.
- Encourage 75 per cent of residents in risk areas to take effective action to protect themselves and reduce flood damage;
- Improve their flood warning service to cover 77 per cent of properties in risk areas. (This is agreed by Defra and the Agency of at risk properties at risk as shown on the indicative flood plain map to have been offered an appropriate flood warning service by 2007. This is flooding from rivers and the sea).
- Achieve a reduction in the proportion of properties within the floodplain exposed to a high risk' of flooding;
- Publish plans for all principal river catchments in England and Wales;
- Prevent all inappropriate development in floodplains and
- Ensure that in urban areas 70 per cent of flood defence systems are in 'good' condition or better (by 2008) and no more than three per cent are in 'poor' condition or worse.

## **Financial resources**

Funding is crucial to delivering the strategy. Since the Autumn 2000 floods, the Government's total flood and coastal defence funding has steadily increased - by 2005/06, it will reach £564 million, up by £150 million on 2002/03 levels.

### 5.2.1 Key issues to be resolved:

- Replacement or renovation of walls adjacent to River Douglas
- Commitment from United Utilities to continue with the capital programme
- Resolve issues about supply and payment of sandbags
- Ensure that all residents who live in a flood warning area are signed up to receive flood warnings
- (covered in the statement above)
- Developers supply adequate sewer systems
- Review process for the Council to receive flood warnings from the Environment Agency
- Planned programme of works / maintenance to clean and repair culverts including highway culverts and clear silt
- Sewer overflows to be upgraded where required
- Highway drains - to acknowledge the deteriorating condition and the need to eventually resource the replacement of the more critical lengths

## 6. Summary

Table 4 outlined below identifies the roles, responsibilities and actions of agencies including the Council to respond to a major flooding incident.

**Table 4**

<b>Environment Agency - (Their job is to manage the flood risks from rivers)</b>
<p><b>Roles and Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monitoring of weather forecasts, weather radar, water levels and flows, rainfall etc</li><li>• Assessing risk and advising emergency services</li><li>• Issue flood warnings</li><li>• Maintenance and operation of flood defences</li><li>• Check flood defences including maintenance and repairs as necessary</li><li>• Monitoring and clearing of blockages of culverts</li></ul> <p><b>United Utilities – Wastewater network and wastewater treatment works maintenance and operation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To update the flood register on a monthly basis</li><li>• To reduce the number of properties on the flood register</li><li>• Maintain a sewer flooding register</li><li>• Attend incidents</li><li>• Develop a programme of work in line with their business plan and agreed by OFWAT</li></ul>

**Greater Manchester Ambulance Service**

- Focal point at an incident
- The saving of life
- Treatment and care of the injured
- Support and direct the priority evacuation needs of those injured
- Determine the main receiving hospitals
- Arrange and ensure most appropriate needs of transportation
- Availability of medical manpower and support equipment resources are available
- Provision of communication facilities for National Health service resources

**Local Council (Wigan Council)**

- Emergency care including feeding accommodation and welfare of those affected
- Emergency transport for personnel, equipment, materials and sandbags
- Supply information with media, public and relatives
- Flood alleviation e.g. dealing with flooded roads, diversions and issuing sandbags
- Provide emergency environmental health advice
- Joint agency co-ordination of non-life threatening action
- Co-ordination of the voluntary response

**Greater Manchester Fire Service**

- The saving of life and rescuing trapped persons
- Assist the Ambulance and Police Services
- Monitoring of procedures in respect of health and safety
- Containment and extinguishing of fires and undertaking preventative measures
- Prevent, contain and make safe spillage's or release of chemicals etc
- Pumping out flood water and salvage works
- Assist other agencies

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Flooding cannot be totally prevented but can be managed provided appropriate measures are in place. The best we can do is to ensure that all preventative measures are in place. The Select Committee has seen first hand some of the issues to be resolved between the Environment Agency and United Utilities. The difference between the two organisations is that the **Environment Agency** is a public body whereas **United Utilities** are a private company regulated by **OFWAT** and are responsible to their shareholders. Despite this, Wigan has a commitment to all members of the Borough to ensure that every possible step is taken to protect the public in the event of a major flood and to work to ensure preventative measures are put in place at the appropriate agencies.

## 8. Recommendations

- 8.1 The proposed recommendations for the borough to address flooding are as follows:

**R1** - To secure the replacement of the wall adjacent to the River Douglas at Eleanor Street.

**R2** - United Utilities to Continue with capital programme to reduce the risk of hydraulic flooding

**R3** - To ensure that all residents who live in a flood risk area are signed up to receive flood warnings.

**R4** - Ensure that developers provide separate drainage systems, with appropriate surface water attenuation when required.

The above recommendations are outlined in detail within Appendix D.

### Flood Zone 3

#### Main rivers that are within The Wigan District Boundary

• River Douglas
• Poolstock Brook
• Ince Brook
• Hey Brook
• Coffin Lane Brook
• Borsdane Brook
• Pennington Brook
• Carr Brook
• Millingford Brook
• Atherton Lake Brook
• Hindsford Brook
• Moss Brook
• Rindle Brook
• Carr Brook
• Amberswood
• Atherton Brook
• Bedford Brook
• Buckow Brook
• Chanters Brook
• Choughey Hill Cut
• Collier Brook
• Common Lane Brook
• Cunningham Brook
• Dean Brook
• Dog Pool Brook
• Down Brook
• Ellams Brook
• Glaze Brook
• Hall Leigh Brook
• Jacks Brook
• Jennets Lane Brook
• Landside Brook
• Lilford Park Brook
• Marsh Brook
• Moss House Brook
• Moss House Farm Brook
• Nan Holes Brook
• Netherbarrow Brook
• Newton Brook
• Penleach Brook

• Trib
• Westleigh Brook
• Warton Brook
• Wheelgutter Brook
• Shackerely Brook

## **Environment Agency Consultation/Involvement and Local Planning Guidance**

When to consult the Environment Agency and when to apply local planning guidance.

- Category 1 - EIA development
- Category 2 - Contaminated land and detailed study submitted
- Category 3 - Potentially contaminated land with no study submitted
- Category 4 - Works in/adjacent to watercourse
- Category 5 - Development within eight metres of main river or in high risk flood zones
- Category 6 - Larger developments in low risk flood zone
- Category 7 - Oil refinery development
- Category 8 - Waste disposal proposals
- Category 9 - Sewage and sludge storage/treatment
- Category 10 - Cemeteries
- Category 11 - Fish farming
- Category 12 - Major Accident Hazard Sites (none in Wigan Borough)
- Category 13 - Development within landfill site consultation zones
- Category 14 - Private sewage treatment plants
- Category 15 - Car parks, oil storage, livestock buildings, stables, swimming pools

## Stakeholder Consultation

Stakeholders	Method of Consultation	Brief Summary of what they said
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representatives from Engineers Department</li> </ul>	Semi-structured interview Face to face interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlined the Council's responsibilities.</li> <li>Discussed issues of who funds flood defences.</li> <li>Explained United Utilities/Environment Agency responsibilities.</li> <li>Demonstrated map of watercourses Advice and information provided</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Representative from Planning and Regeneration Department</li> </ul>	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of planning procedures/process. Examples of planning applications Explained consultation process with Environment Agency</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environment Agency</li> </ul>	Semi-structured Interview Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlined hotspots of Wigan at risk of flooding.</li> <li>Discussed working relationship between Environment Agency and United Utilities</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Axis (Consultant for Environment Agency)</li> </ul>	Semi-structured Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presented proposals for the Flood Alleviation Scheme in Wigan.</li> <li>Proposals to improve environment in parts of the Borough.</li> <li>Discussed consultation process.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>United Utilities</li> </ul>	Semi-structured Interview Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlined areas of responsibilities.</li> <li>Discussed proportion of budget allocated for Wigan for the next five years.</li> <li>Provided details of proposed capital schemes for Wigan.</li> </ul>

## Action Plan

**Recommendation 1** - To secure the replacement of the wall adjacent to the River Douglas at Eleanor Street.

Key Task	Responsible Organisation	Resources	Start Date	End Date	Success will be when .....	Comments/Progress
a) Identify who owns the wall	To be identified	Human	Feb 06	5 <sup>th</sup> April 06	Responsible owners identified	NPS to provide information for Land Registry search to be carried out
b) Replace wall	To be identified	Financial	Sept 06	Sept 07	Wall completed	
c) Replace Eleanor Street Wall, Wigan  (Part of the proposed River Douglas, Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme)	Riparian owner  (EA funding proposed as part of Wigan Scheme)	Not confirmed	TBC	TBC	The River Douglas, Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme is complete	Temporary repairs have been carried out  Awaiting confirmation of funding and resources for the Wigan scheme

**Recommendation 2** - United Utilities to spend adequate funds to minimise risk of flooding in the borough.

Key Task	Responsible Organisation	Resources	Start Date	End Date	Success will be when .....	Comments/Progress
a) Stubshaw Cross, Ashton-in-Makerfield (Upsizing sewers and providing new sewers)	United Utilities	£1.3 million	April 2006	January 2007	Project completion	On site progressing well
b) Walford Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield (New sewers)	United Utilities	£304K	October 2006	February 2007	Project completion	Ecological surveys prior to start on site underway
c) Blenheim Road, Ashton-in-Makerfield (New sewers)	United Utilities		Estimated Start September 2006 End April 2007		Project completion	In design to be put forward for financial approval in august
d) Latham Lane, Wigan (New sewers and flow diversion)	United Utilities	£400K	Project complete		Project complete	
e) Victoria Terrace (Tank storage)	UU	£340K	Project complete		Project complete	
F) HAWWTHORN / Ludlow avenue (flow diversion)	UU	£341	August 2006	December 2006	Project completion	To be put forward for financial approval shortly

### Action Plan

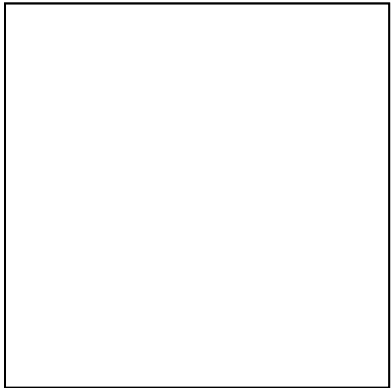
**Recommendation 3** - To ensure that all residents who live in a flood warning area are signed up to receive flood warnings.

Key Task	Responsible Organisation	Resources	Start Date	End Date	Success will be when .....	Comments/Progress
a) To encourage residents to register their property on flood register	- United Utilities - Wigan Council - Environment Agency	Human and Financial	Sept 06	Dec 06	Ensure that information on the flooding register is accurate	- Promote in Borough Life Magazine  - Link to Wigan website - Attend Leigh and Wigan Township Forums
b) National Public Awareness Campaign	EA	National funding and resourcing	Oct 06	2010/11	The intermediate target has been met; 65% of residents in Wigan, Leigh and Bedford flood warning areas are signed up for the service	National EA target for sign up is 65% by 2010/11.  This is a rolling campaign to raise awareness and to encourage people to sign up to the flood warning service. The National campaign however is not targeted at a local level – it therefore needs to be supplemented by local initiatives.
c) Local Public Awareness activities	EA	EA Flood Incident Management teams at Birchwood and Preston. Funding from Regional Public Awareness Project.	Oct 06	2010/11	The intermediate target has been met; 65% of residents in Wigan, Leigh and Bedford flood warning areas are signed up for the service	Activities may include supermarket and library displays and local newspaper articles, billboard and Flood Warning Area publications in conjunction with Wigan MBC, community meetings and door knocking.
d) Contact with Community Groups	EA  Wigan MBC	EA Flood Incident Management teams at Birchwood and Preston.  ??	July 06	2010/11	The intermediate target has been met; 65% of residents in Wigan, Leigh and Bedford flood warning areas are signed up for the service	EA and Wigan to arrange talks for community groups in flood warning areas to explain the benefits of the flood warning service and encourage sign-up.  Wigan MBC to include information in community newsletters in flood warning areas to encourage awareness and sign-up to the flood warning service.

**Recommendation 4** - To ensure that developers supply adequate sewer systems.

Key Task	Responsible Organisation	Resources	Start Date	End Date	Success will be when .....	Comments/Progress
a) Joint working arrangements to be set up to minimise the risk of flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wigan Council</li> <li>- United Utilities</li> <li>- Environment Agency</li> </ul>	To be agreed	Sept 06	Ongoing	Targets/projects to be identified and agreed by December 06	

**Current site for Wigan Flood Alleviation Scheme**



29