

**Appendix 3 Progress Notes, Executive Committee,
Minute 81, 26th October 2009**

Funding matters have yet to be clarified except that Defra repeatedly states, that where there are any new responsibilities, these will be fully funded. Initially it is seen that this chiefly applies to LLFA (Worcestershire County Council). However, where functions are permissively delegated to other authorities and/or partnerships, then corresponding funding elements are to be passed forward.

Whilst Redditch currently is recognised as having a good set of asset records, these need to be aligned with the latest legislation, to include all “designated features”. Rather than being confined to pipes, culverts, weirs and the like, designated features include any feature that has an affect upon flood defence and/or flood routing. Examples of these are: -

- Highway embankments
- Bunds and berms
- Balancing Areas
- Garden Walls

By virtue of the new Flood and Water Management Act 2010, such new features would enjoy the same level of protection and enforcement as existing ones (currently protected by means of Section 23 of Land Drainage Act 1991).

Through pursuing engagement with both Bromsgrove District Council and Wyre Forest District Council, Officers believe it will be possible to enhance service delivery both operationally and strategically. This is in line with Members earlier guidance but will be subject to subsequent detailed referral, as indicated in Appendix 2. Consequently, such a system would allow the relevant local authorities to retain as much control and influence as possible.

The new Act also confers additional powers and responsibilities with regards to sustainability and environmental matters. With reference to Defra’s factsheet (Appendix 4), specific mention is made in addition to hydraulic and hydrological factors to ‘works that are deemed by the relevant authority to be desirable for the natural environment, or other aspects of the environment, such as historic environment, landscape, amenity or leisure benefits’. With a significant amount of abandoned former drainage assets, particularly related to former milling activities, there is both an opportunity and a need to recognise such features.

Officers remain vigilant to the effects of climate change and as a consequence, regularly monitor performance, particularly where new or improved works have been carried out. Part of this process, includes a cyclic review of balancing areas which allows maintenance regimes to be modified accordingly. Experience shows that where such features operate at their

limits, some form of adaptation may be necessary to ensure their long-term fitness for purpose.

Officers are working with LLFA and other neighbouring authorities in the preparation of Multi-Agency Flood Plans (an emergency planning tool) and Surface Water Management Plans (a strategic and planning tool). The former is at an advanced stage and is provisionally scheduled to be published in the autumn. The latter document is only now being progressed and the first workshop is expected to take place on 16th August 2010. Details of availability of the final plan are not yet available.

Working within the Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership continues with the next meeting scheduled for 23rd August 2010. If necessary, a verbal update will be provided to Members at Committee. The information sharing has been extremely variable, although an updated spreadsheet records the current assets and resources criteria.

In terms of a prospective land drainage partnership for North-Worcestershire, with reference to census and other data, if Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest were to collaborate, this would represent roughly 49% of the population of Worcestershire. All three are geographically linked to one of the partner organisations and most importantly retains both banks of the River Severn under the control/influence of one organisation in addition to EA. Area-wise, this is relatively compact amounting to 26% of Worcestershire and excluding Worcester City, contains the next 2 largest conurbations of Redditch and Kidderminster respectively.

In response to the resolutions: -

- 1) As per Appendix 1, the policies and other documents were in addition to the Minutes arising from the meetings listed in Section 7 of the main report were approved and subsequently ratified by Council on 26th October 2009.
- 2) The officers of respective Councils in North-Worcestershire have actively engaged in discussions regarding a prospective local land drainage partnership. Following a meeting on 3rd August 2010, delayed because of the earlier long-term illness of the Operations Manager, informal exchanges of information has now taken place. Once the relevant officers can formulate a combined strategy to address expectations set out in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, these will be referred to the relevant Heads of Service, Joint Chief Executive and subsequently Members for approval in due course.