

Update report on flood risk in Oban

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the October 2018 flood event and subsequent relief works in Oban, and to draw attention to the purpose and progress of the flood study currently underway for Oban. This report provides guidance on interim works completed to reduce flood risk, and clarity on the flood study programme including the potential for a wider flood scheme.
- 1.2 The Local Flood Risk Management Plan was published in 2016 which included an objective to undertake a flood study and surface water management plan in Oban. These objectives will be completed by the end of 2019. Any cost beneficial flood schemes identified may be eligible for 80% grant funding by the Scottish Government.
- 1.3 The Lochavullin area is particularly low lying (lower than even the front street) and susceptible to the effects of coastal water levels as well as rainfall and surface water. It has a pumped system in place to reduce the risk of flooding in the car park. At the most recent public meeting on 30 January, the Council facilitated the Scottish Flood Forum to be present for members of the public to gain first-hand information about self-help, property level protection and resilience measures that individuals can consider. The Council's website has useful links to advice at <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/flood-advice>

The Committee is recommended:

- To note the interim actions undertaken to mitigate immediate flood risk by carrying out works to the pumps in Lochavullin car park, and the provision of temporary flood barriers.
- To welcome the progress on the Oban flood study which is assessing flood risk and potential for cost beneficial flood protection solutions for Oban, with potential funding available from 2022 at the earliest.
- To note the advice and links to advice available to the public at the Council's website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/flood-advice>.

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Significant flooding was experienced in the Lochavullin area of Oban on the 8th and 9th of October 2018 which was reported to have a significant impact on local businesses.
- 2.2 A flood study and surface water management plan (SWMP) is being carried out for the Oban area as identified in the Councils Local Flood Risk Management Plan (LFRMP) 2016-2022. The Council is responsible for identifying flood risk areas and developing sustainable flood management options to form flood mitigation schemes. Currently central government is expected to contribute 80% to the overall funding of projects, which through a prioritisation process receive funding through to construction. The latest LFRMP update on progress toward reaching goals set by the Council is available at:
<https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/81/flooding/3>

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To note the interim actions undertaken to mitigate immediate flood risk by carrying out works to the pumps in Lochavullin car park, and the provision of temporary flood barriers.
- 3.2 To welcome the progress on the Oban flood study which is assessing flood risk and potential for cost beneficial flood protection solutions for Oban, with potential funding available from 2022 at the earliest.
- 3.3 To note the advice and links to advice available to the public at the Council's website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/flood-advice>.

4.0 DETAIL

- 4.1 Between the 7th and 9th October 2018 three SEPA rain gauges closest to Oban recorded cumulative rainfall totals of 90, 120, and 230mm. This recorded rainfall that resulted in flooding in Oban is estimated to have been the equivalent of a 1 in 70 year return period flood event. In context the flood study that the Council is undertaking is based on mitigating flooding up to a 1 in 200 year return period flood event.
- 4.2 As a result of this rainfall, significant flooding was experienced in the Lochavullin area of Oban on the 8th and 9th of October 2018. During the flood event the existing pumps below the Lochavullin car park operated automatically but the control cabinet was shorted by rapidly rising floodwaters. Back up pumps were sourced and work carried out to restore electrical supply to the pumps to allow operation on manual override. High water levels overtopping the Black Lynn (and Soroba) burn and tidelocking also limited the effectiveness of any pumps until burn levels subsided. The pumped system is necessary because the level of the car park is lower than the flood water levels in the Black Lynn and a gravity arrangement could not work. As such when the pumps are unable to work there is no way to remove the water from the car park to the burn. Updates were provided to Members during this time.
- 4.3 Since the October 2018 flood event interim works have been undertaken to mitigate flood risk in the short term. The Lochavullin car park existing pumps and cabinet and control panel have been serviced or renewed as required. Temporary flood barriers have been installed on a short section of the Black Lynn burn. Some targeted cleaning and CCTV of the drainage/combined sewer pipes in the Lochavullin area is pending. Further works may be undertaken on the pumps to improve resilience.
- 4.4 Separately in May 2018 the Council commenced a flood study and surface water management plan for Oban as part of our Local Flood Risk Management Plan. The scope of the study covers flooding from river, rainfall and coastal inundation in Oban including future impacts using the latest climate change predictions. Digital modelling has been used to simulate how flooding is generated during extreme weather events across a large area of the town, including Lochavullin. The study will assess the damages caused by flooding and look at a range of solutions to mitigate risk, in order to determine what options are cost beneficial to achieve. The flood consultant visited Oban during the week the car park was flooded and is incorporating the information gathered into the study (the data obtained during the storm event is useful in order to assist in calibrating the flood model).
- 4.5 Key stakeholders who will be consulted during the development of the study and SWMP include SEPA, Scottish Water, and Argyll and Bute Council. Public events are planned to engage a wider audience including Community Councils and local interest groups.

- 4.6 As of January 2019 the data analysis and baseline modelling of coastal, river and rainfall elements is substantially complete. Surface water management options for urban areas are also progressing noting the SWMP is something that will be developed iteratively in future years to refine the understanding of the underground drainage and combined sewer network in association with Scottish Water.
- 4.7 It is not possible at this stage of the flood study to define what solutions might be cost beneficial in the context rainfall and river flooding in Oban, but a wide range of options will be assessed in isolation or combined to alleviate flood effects. Options are likely to include hard engineering solutions on the Black Lynn and Soroba burns in Oban, but also softer options such as upstream attenuation and natural flood management. Coastal solutions will likely involve consideration of raising seawall crest levels or similar.
- 4.8 The flood study provides the most financially viable avenue to assess and address flood risk in Oban in the long term. This is because cost beneficial scheme solutions identified in the flood study may be awarded an 80% Scottish Government grant, noting there is central funding available, and all councils across Scotland will be bidding for a share of funding available from 2022. The mechanism for prioritisation of schemes for national funding will be finalised later in 2019. It should be noted 20% funding by Councils of such schemes will be required. For context a flood scheme is currently progressing for Campbeltown under the same Scottish Government arrangement with grant funding of up to £7.5M available. This and other flooding schemes are being progressed as part of a national programme which is currently receiving 80% funding from Scottish Government with the remainder to be provided by local authorities.
- 4.9 Consultation with the community regarding flooding in Oban is a key component of the flood study. An initial drop in event was held at the Rockfield Centre on 27th June 2018, and a second on 30th January 2019 at the same venue to update on study progress and obtain relevant feedback from the October flood event. These public events were publicised using the Oban Times, Council website and social media. Paul Hendry from the Scottish Flood Forum attended the January 2019 event to provide local advice to house and business owners.
- 4.10 **Programme.** Projected milestones for the flood study project are:
- Completed flood study to SEPA – December 2019;
 - Publication of Cycle 2 LFRMP (including Oban flood scheme if achieves an acceptable cost benefit ratio and hence 80% grant funding) – by 2022;
 - Implementation of Cycle 2 LFRMP (including design and build of Oban flood scheme) – 2022-2028;
- 4.11 **Funding.** It should be noted that any scheme grant funded by the

Scottish Government will require 20% capital funding by the Local Authority. No estimates for a flood scheme in Oban have been developed as yet.

- 4.12 **Self Help Options.** Advice for home and business owners is available on the Council website at <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/transport-and-streets/flood-advice> This includes links to advice from SEPA at <http://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/> and the Scottish Flood Forum <http://www.scottishfloodforum.org/> The Scottish Flood Forum is a Scottish based organisation that provides support for and represents those who are affected by or are at risk of flooding and is funded by the Scottish Government. Self-help options include the use of property level protection (PLP) barriers that can be installed by property owners to improve resilience of property to flood impacts locally.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The October 2018 flood event resulted in significant disruption locally in the Lochavullin area and to the operation of businesses. Interim works have been undertaken since to improve the resilience of the current pump systems, and a short section of temporary flood barriers have been erected.
- 5.2 A flood study is progressing towards completion later in 2019 which will assess flood risk from river, rainfall and coastal elements across Oban using the latest climate change projections, assess damages caused, and complete an economic assessment of options. This may result in identifying cost beneficial scheme option(s) for Oban which may be eligible for 80% Scottish Government funding from 2022.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy:
Works are in accordance with the Local Flood Risk Management Plan 2016-2022 as endorsed by Council.
- 6.2 Financial:
Future funding by Council may be required.
- 6.3 Legal:
None at this stage.
- 6.4 HR:
None
- 6.5 Equalities / Fairer Scotland Duty:
None
- 6.6 Risk:

Interim works are a short term solution to mitigate flood risk. Long term the flood study provides a mechanism to understand flood risk, associated damages, and potential cost beneficial flood schemes.

6.7 Customer Service:

Potential for rise in complaints if the Council does not address flooding long term. A flood scheme may provide economic, cultural and physical benefits to the community.

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