

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 14 September 2023

Flooding in Kirkliston and the wider Almond catchment

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
Almond

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Transport and Environment Committee notes:
 - 1.1.1 That it is not possible to fund a River Almond Flood Study from the £2 million capital funding allocated for flooding, and that no alternative options have been identified to meet the cost of this study in advance of the planned programme (as part of Cycle 3 of the Plan for the Forth Estuary Local Plan District (2028 - 2034); and
 - 1.1.2 That officers will progress the [programmes of work](#) identified as part of the £2 million and the actions identified for the Council within the current Cycle 2 of the Local Flood Risk Plan

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Flooding in Kirkliston and the wider Almond catchment

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report outlines options on how the start of a River Almond study could be funded in this financial year, including whether money could be utilised from the additional £2 million allocated for flooding.

3. Background

30 December 2022

- 3.1 Substantial flooding occurred in Kirkliston on 30 December 2022, resulting in significant damage to three residential homes and outbuildings, a local business, a local children's nursery and the scout hut next to the Niddry Burn. Whilst flood gates substantially protected properties from the Niddry Burn, most flooding occurred from the River Almond.
- 3.2 It was reported that the flooding resulted in three of the four main roads in and out of Kirkliston becoming impassable for a number of hours, cutting off homes in the Gateside estate.
- 3.3 It was also reported that flooding occurred to Edinburgh Airport main runway, the airport taxi drop-off area, and several local roads around the west of Edinburgh, including the access road into the airport. In the same event, Harvest Road and Cliftonhall Road in Newbridge were also impassable due to road flooding.
- 3.4 SEPA advised that the 30 December 2023 event was the second highest on record for the River Almond, recorded at the Craigiehall gauge (downstream from Edinburgh Airport), 6mm lower than the highest level on record from 27 April 2000.
- 3.5 On 18 May 2023, Committee considered a [report](#) in response to a motion on flooding in Kirkliston and the wider Almond catchment. The report outlined short term mitigations and long-term solutions which could address flooding in the area and noted that a flood study on the river Almond would not be considered until the next cycle of the Local Flood Risk Management Plan (expected 2028-2034).
- 3.6 The [actions](#) agreed by Committee included a request to report back with options on how the start of such a study could be funded in this financial year, including whether money could be utilised from the additional £2 million allocated for flooding in financial year 2023/24.

4. Main report

- 4.1 As a Local Authority, under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009, the Council collaborates with all councils within the Forth Estuary to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Plan). The Plan for the Forth Estuary Local Plan District (2022-2028) was developed in conjunction with Scottish Water and SEPA, who also have actions within the Plan. The draft Plan was published for consultation in two stages between December 2020 and October 2021, and the [final Plan](#) was published by the Lead Local Authority (Falkirk Council) in March 2023.
- 4.2 Under Action ID 26406, the published Plan states that “a flood study for River Almond is to be carried out as part of future activities” with an indicative delivery of Cycle 3 (expected 2028-2034). A flood study for the River Almond is likely to take three to five years to develop and will involve cross boundary analysis with West Lothian Council.
- 4.3 In developing the Plan, it was assessed that flood studies for the Gogar Burn and the Braid Burn (including the more sensitive Jordan Burn study) should be included within the current Cycle as they have been assessed as higher priority than the River Almond.
- 4.4 Whilst the Council can undertake additional actions not within the Plan, there are currently insufficient resources to do so, and any additional work would be to the detriment of the actions agreed in the Plan.
- 4.5 The £2m additional funding allocated for flooding is capital funding. With the current Scotland-wide pressures on the Scottish Government’s Flood Risk Management funding (£1bn of Schemes are currently proposed within Cycle 2 and there is less than £40m funding available), there is no likelihood of funding for construction of a River Almond flood scheme in the near future, and as such, any flood study for the River Almond would need to be funded by the Council’s revenue budget. Therefore, it would not be possible to use any funding from the £2m Capital allocation for this purpose, given that this funding allocation would not cover the costs of the major interventions expected to be required to mitigate flooding from the River Almond.
- 4.6 Council Officers are currently focused on delivery of the [programmes of work](#) identified as part of the £2 million.
- 4.7 The Council has committed to undertaking a mini flood study to identify possible alleviation measures to address road flooding in extreme rainfall events. This mini flood study has commenced and is scheduled for completion within this financial year. Whilst this will not address flooding from the River Almond, it will consider measures to address the issues with impassible roads within the village as a result of surface water flooding. The recent road flooding was not due to the River Almond, but rather surface water during an extreme rainfall event, and no internal property flooding was caused by the surface water during that event.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Officers will continue to progress the programmes of work identified as part of the £2 million and the actions identified for the Council within Cycle 2 of the Plan.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There is no financial impact resulting from this report.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 No decision is required by Committee.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 There are no Climate or Nature Emergency implications resulting from this report.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 Public consultation on the Plan was undertaken in two stages between December 2020 and October 2021, and conducted by SEPA.
- 9.2 As the Plan was produced in accordance with the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 and in conjunction with all relevant parties, there is negligible risk associated with this report.
- 9.3 No existing Council Policies are affected.
- 9.4 There are no health and safety, governance, compliance or regulatory implications that elected members need to take into account when reaching their decision.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 None.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 None.