

Full Council meeting 11 March 2025

Agenda item 8 – Flooding Update

Written by Councillor Jack Vittles



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Following an initial meeting with the Environment Agency (EA), Brian Mathew MP, and the leader of Wiltshire Council after the 25<sup>th</sup> November flooding during Storm Bert, a further meeting took place on 13<sup>th</sup> February.

The Environment Agency reported back on the previous flood management plan for Bradford on Avon which was paused in 2019 due to a funding gap. The updated figures showed that the EA believed we would be eligible for about £1.4m of funding, however the full scheme would cost approx. £11m. Due to this very substantial funding gap, all agreed that the currently paused plan would not be deliverable.

I then asked about how we could repurpose the money which may be available for flood resilience measures, including some funding towards a new pedestrian bridge. We also spoke about the possibility of smaller amounts of money being made available to individual properties and businesses for resilience measures. It's also worth noting that central government did not release any recovery funding to local authorities following Storm Bert.

We have also asked the EA to deliver an engagement event in BOA focusing on how residents are able to increase their flood resilience. We hope to have a date for this event very shortly - we're just working out a venue with St Margaret's Hall currently out of use.

Useful snippet from a draft EA briefing:

*The key findings are that due to the complexities of this location the overall scheme, including surface water pumping stations, has increased in cost from £4.5million to over £11million. This then led us to consider replacing the permanent surface water pumping with management by temporary pumps. This option reduces the initial cost of the scheme to about £3.1 million, with the further ongoing costs to manage the surface water needing to be picked up by Wiltshire Council.*

*However, with current central government grant unable to cover the whole cost of this work it would leave the project needing to find approximately £1.7 million in partnership funding. We discussed this with the Town Council, Wiltshire Council and Wessex Water and currently we cannot identify any forthcoming opportunities to fill a funding gap of this scale.*

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