

**Selly Park North and Selly Oak Flood Alleviation Scheme**  
**Partnership Opportunity – Updated Briefing Note – Sept 2016**

### **Background**

There are over 150 homes at risk of flooding in Selly Park north and Selly Oak, with a significant number of these having flooded on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2016. This event followed a similar pattern to the previous flooding experienced in this area in September 2008, but was significantly larger in scale.

Whilst Selly Park north is situated on the left bank of the River Rea, the community flood primarily due to the Bourn Brook overtopping at Pershore Road (one of the main arterial routes into the city). The Rea Catchment Partnership (a group of organisations working together to deliver flood risk and environmental improvements across south Birmingham) has been working to develop a flood alleviation scheme for the community and secure the funding needed for delivery.

### **The Proposal**

After a significant amount of detailed analysis, a number of consultants working on behalf of the Environment Agency, Calthorpe Estates and Birmingham City Council have developed a combined solution, consisting of upstream storage and downstream conveyance works. A flood risk scheme for this area has been rigorously appraised and assessed, with two Environment Agency framework contractors confirming that the proposed scheme is the best option for managing flood risk in this area. Details of this scheme have been provided in the hybrid planning application being considered.

### **June 2016 Flood Event Analysis**

Following the flood event on 16 June 2016, significant analysis has been undertaken to ensure that the computer model used as the basis for the flood alleviation plans is robust. The storm has been re-created based on local rain gauge records and then applied to the model to replicate the June event. Flood extents and depths have been verified.

The same event has been simulated with the flood alleviation proposals included, to ensure that the scheme would have prevented the spill of flood water from the Bourn Brook onto the Pershore Road and into the Avenues that ultimately resulted in flooding to properties. It should be noted that the flood alleviation scheme has been designed to deal with flood events larger than those witnessed in 2008 and 2016.

The use of highly detailed computer models is standard for both the assessment of flood risk and the design of alleviation schemes. The model in this location has been calibrated and verified against previous flood events and accurately reflects flooding dynamics in this area.

### **Previous Work**

The Environment Agency have undertaken no flood alleviation works in the Bourn Brook catchment. Previous works at Harborne Lane were undertaken to provide compensatory storage for development plots on the old Battery site. Whilst these works will have satisfied development requirements, they were never designed to deal with flooding at a catchment scale. The works proposed as part of this

scheme will substantially increase the volume of available storage, resulting in a significant decrease in flood risk across the Bourn Brook catchment.

### **Funding**

Changes to government funding in 2011, mean most flood defence schemes attract a percentage of capital money relative to the benefits proposed. However, external funding must also be sought to secure government funds and reach the total required. The scheme that has been developed is currently estimated at £4.3 million. Partnership discussions have resulted in a significant proportion of the costs being taken on by Calthorpe Estates, with an agreement of around £2 million in kind and direct cash contributions. Other public funding sources have been investigated but are not sufficient to close the identified funding gap.

Based on discussions with local planning officers there are no other large developments earmarked within the Local Plan, in this catchment, that will be able to provide the funding required to deliver a scheme for the community of Selly Park north and Selly Oak. It should also be noted that the Pebble Mill site is integral to a flood risk management solution, with the development proposals being designed to enable the alleviation works.

### **Conclusion**

The Selly Park north scheme offers a unique opportunity to reduce flood risk and provide environmental and amenity enhancements for the Selly Park and Selly Oak area of South Birmingham. By working together to deliver multiple outcomes, the Environment Agency, and members of the Rea Catchment Partnership, have been able to secure a substantial monetary and land contribution, without which a scheme in this location would simply not be possible. Birmingham City Council's horizon scanning analysis has confirmed that this is likely to be the only large scale development in this area for the coming years and as such is an opportunity that we cannot afford to miss.

### **Key Headlines**

- 150 homes will benefit from the proposed flood alleviation works
- Key highway routes and infrastructure will be protected from the Bourn Brook, helping to maintain vital transport and emergency routes
- A scheme is only possible if works within the Pebble Mill site are delivered
- Development on the Pebble Mill site will enable these works and release the additional funding required to deliver flood risk improvements for these communities
- Without use of the Pebble Mill site and a significant level of external contributions a flood alleviation scheme in this area will not be possible





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