

Preliminary flood risk assessment: West Berkshire Council

This addendum by West Berkshire Council (2017) updates the council's preliminary flood risk assessment report published in 2011. Read the addendum in conjunction with the [preliminary assessment report](#).

Addendum

The preliminary flood risk assessment (PFRA) and flood risk areas (FRAs) for West Berkshire Council were reviewed during 2017, using all relevant current flood risk data and information.

Past flood risk

There has been no change to the Council's understanding of significant flood risk following this review. However, widespread flooding in 2014 revealed risks from the combined effect of high groundwater and flooding from groundwater fed main rivers in small rural communities in West Berkshire, and the problem of flooding in urban areas from groundwater infiltration into foul sewers, and the associated public health issues.

Widespread flooding also occurred in 2014 from the overtopping of the Kennet and Avon Canal through West Berkshire which indicated the need for small scale bank maintenance work and to establish procedures for the operation of privately owned control structures during flood events.

At present there is no information regarding the economic and social consequences of flooding in West Berkshire or the extent of flooding on agricultural land.

Future flood risk

There has been no change to the Council's understanding of future flood risk following the review. However, our understanding of flood risk in West Berkshire has improved over time as a result of accumulated knowledge from low level flood events which have highlighted areas at risk of serious flooding from more severe or prolonged rainfall events.

It is recognised that future climate change will exacerbate flooding in West Berkshire but without quantitative data it is not possible to predict the consequences. However, it is likely that new locally significant flood risk areas will emerge over time. The design of all current and future flood defence scheme will include an allowance for future climate change.

Flood risk areas (FRAs)

The following Flood Risk Area has been identified for the purposes of Flood Risk Regulations (2009) 2nd planning cycle:

- Newbury and Thatcham

Newbury is considered to be a Flood Risk Area in terms of surface water flooding. The completion of the Newbury Flood Alleviation Scheme in 2014 has significantly reduced the risk of flooding the River Kennet.

Thatcham will continue to be seen as a locally significant flood risk area for surface water flooding until all of the flood defence scheme identified in the Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) have been implemented.

Other changes

Since 2011, West Berkshire Council has established community flood forums for the Pang Valley and Lambourn Valley, Newbury and Thatcham. The community led groups have greatly improved our ability to collect and agree flood risk data, develop proposals for flood defence and maintenance works, improve flood emergency plans and in raising public awareness. Local Flood Risk Management Plans and SWMPs have been developed for each catchment with Action Plans that are continually being updated by the community groups.

West Berkshire Council and the Pang Valley Flood Forum are exploring the potential benefits of 'Natural Flood management' in the Pang valley catchment. If successful, similar initiatives will be used elsewhere in the district. The NFM initiative has already led to landowner involvement and a better understanding of the links between land management and farming practises and flood in nearby communities.

The apparent link between high groundwater and river flooding has resulted in more collaboration between West Berkshire Council and the Environment Agency in the development and implementation of flood defence works.

Surface water flood alleviation schemes have been constructed at Cold Ash Hill in Thatcham (2013) and Winterbourne (2016). A flood alleviation scheme is currently being constructed at the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Burghfield and is programmed to be completed in 2018.

Surface water flood maps have been refined and updated with modelling data from flood defence schemes. The West Berkshire Groundwater Study generated new groundwater flood maps flood defence scheme and emergency response plans.

**West Berkshire Council
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