Keeping you updated

In response to recent severe flooding experienced by residents and businesses in Southend, a Flood Partnership Group has been established. This group is made up of those organisations who share responsibility for the drainage network in Southend-on-Sea, including Anglian Water; Southend-on-Sea Borough Council; the Environment Agency; and neighbouring councils. Together we are working to better understand the causes of flooding in the area and to take action where necessary in flooding hotspots.

Recent flooding in Southend has been the result of extreme weather events, principally intense rainfall. When such events have occurred, the sheer volume of water has overwhelmed the entire drainage system, including rivers and road gullies, as well as sewers. Rainwater runs off of hard surfaces and over-ground, collecting at low points and inundating the drains.

The first Flood Partnership Group meeting, held on 5th November 2014, was very productive and we are confident that it will bear a number of productive partner projects to help reduce the risk of flooding in the future.

Who owns the drainage system?

There is no single party responsible for the management of the drainage system in Southend with Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency sharing responsibility for different elements.

Anglian Water – Anglian Water is responsible for the management of some surface water drains, the sewer network and the majority of Southend’s sewerage pumping stations.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council – Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is responsible for the management of surface and roadside drains and gullies.

Environment Agency – The Environment Agency manages the risk of flooding from the main river watercourses, which include Eastwood and Prittle Brooks, and the Prittle Brook flood relief tunnel.

For more information on flooding please visit the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, Anglian Water and Environment Agency websites

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council – www.southend.gov.uk/flooding
Anglian Water – www.anglianwater.co.uk/household/water-recycling-services/flooding-advice.aspx
Environment Agency – www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood
What are we doing?

Anglian Water

Anglian Water has recently published an action plan for Southend. This builds on work that’s been taking place for several months already to help alleviate flooding in the area, but goes further to address the recommendations outlined in the independent flood investigation, carried out by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council in August 2013.

This action plan sees us build on the £275,000 we have already invested since 2011 on foul, surface water and combined sewer network models for Southend. We will share the data from these models to help Southend-on-Sea Borough Council update their Surface Water Management Plan to include hotspot areas recently affected by flooding. In line with this collaborative approach, we will undertake a survey of our assets along the seafront, City Beach and other flooding hotspots, as well as surveying Council and Highways drains in the interests of working more collaboratively and effectively, and to help support the Council’s modelling of Marine Parade.

In addition to our existing planned programme of investment, a funding pot of over £8m will be made available over the next five years for flood partnership projects across East Anglia. Moreover, hundreds of thousands of pounds have been specifically allocated for regular jetting and maintenance of our sewers and assets in Southend. A further £17,000 has been set aside for the installation of a stand-by pump at Eastern Esplanade as a ‘back-up’, and the pumps at Chalkwell Pumping Station have been refurbished.

This action plan demonstrates our commitment to collaborative working and will be vital in helping us to understand the causes of flooding in Southend. It will also prove critical in enabling us to identify sustainable solutions which will reduce the risk of flooding in the long-term.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is working closely with the Environment Agency and Anglian Water to see how we can share our resources to provide the best local flood protection system we can for residents and businesses.

Our highways team is investigating parts of the road-drainage system in locations across the Borough where flooding has been reported. We have carried out structural works, including installing new gullies, repairing existing connection pipes, and laying or clearing existing pipework in order to speed up the removal of rain water from the surfaces of roads.

We have also invested in new computer software to assist in flood forecasting and we are looking into new ways to support residents’ efforts to protect their own properties.

We will continue to carry out investigations and technical analysis of those underground pipes and other assets in our ownership over the coming months, and we would like to reassure local people that we are committed to carrying out this work as thoroughly as possible and in a timely manner.

Southend-on-Sea is also currently administering a Central Government flood support scheme that provides financial relief to people whose properties were flooded between April 2013 and March 2014. You should visit www.southend.gov.uk/flooding for further information.

Environment Agency

We maintain main river watercourses in Southend under our permissive powers. Our work includes removing in-channel vegetation and other blockages that could increase flood risk along Prittle Brook, Eastwood Brook and Nobles Green Ditch. We also maintain the Prittle Tunnel intake structure off Eastwood Road, Leigh-on-Sea; the debris screen at Manchester Drive (a secondary inlet to the Prittle Tunnel); and the Prittle Tunnel outfall structure on Chalkwell Beach.

The sea defences within Southend are managed by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council.

In early 2015, we will be installing a new gauge to monitor river levels at Lower Wyburns. This will be 4km higher up the river than the current gauge which is located well down the system near the airport. This will help us to improve our flood warning service to existing recipients and extend the service to hundreds more properties.

There is a need to further investigate and mitigate the fluvial and surface water flood risks along the mid-course of Eastwood Brook (Glenwood Avenue to Rayleigh Road). This has been identified on our programme of projects and will be promoted and steered by Southend-on-Sea Local Flood Risk Partnership from April 2015.