

# ***Information/Discussion Paper***

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**4<sup>th</sup> September, 2023**

### **Climate Emergency Overview**

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

#### **1. Why has this come to scrutiny?**

- 1.1 In 2021, the Council employed two new Climate Emergency Officers to support its ambition to become a net zero carbon Council and Borough by the year 2030. The Climate Emergency team is committed to annually presenting its continuing work to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to offer an oversight of work undertaken since the previous presentation to O&S (in this case, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022) and to make known the proposed priority actions for the coming year.
- 1.2 The priorities and actions of the Climate Emergency team are transparently presented here, based on the understanding that there is cross-party support for local action to help tackle the climate emergency and therefore, positive input and scrutiny of the proposals by this committee is welcome.

#### **2. Summary of the Issue**

- 2.1 The Climate Emergency Action Plan (CEAP) is significantly relevant to Corporate Priority 2: '*Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham net zero by 2030*'. The Climate Emergency team wishes to provide the opportunity for the committee to provide collective input, ensuring that all decisions are transparently made or challenged where appropriate, with carbon reduction considerations being paramount.
- 2.2 There is a need for greater understanding that reaching net zero will be incredibly challenging. The entirety of the council has an important role to play in mitigating our contributions to climate change and a cultural shift must be embraced to ensure **all** decisions take climate implications seriously into consideration. In addition, CBC will require support and change from all those living and working in Cheltenham, as well as businesses and partner organisations like the County Council and the National Health Service.
- 2.3 For a significant reduction in our carbon footprint, a shift away from non-renewable energy sources, such as gas, has been and will continue to be an absolute priority.

The recent energy crisis resulted in utility bill price increases of up to 400% for the residents and businesses of Cheltenham, and the Council has not been immune from this pressure. To help mitigate this, we all need to change the way we live and work in order to reduce our consumption and to wean ourselves off our continuing reliance on fossil fuels. Improving the energy efficiency of our assets and the deployment of additional renewable energy generation opportunities will continue to be prioritised.

### **3. Summary of evidence/information**

**3.1** Since previously presenting its work to the Overview and Scrutiny Community on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022, the authority has made some significant strides towards the Council's net zero ambitions by delivering on key actions set out in the CEAP. Some of the key achievements are outlined below. These are categorised as either climate change mitigation (reducing our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions), or climate change adaptation (responding to the expected impacts from climate change to create a more resilient Cheltenham):

#### Climate Change Mitigation

- In September 2022, a new Heating and Energy Policy was approved, setting out key commitments to be applied to all energy activity within the Council and Council-owned Properties. Our key objective is to manage and reduce our energy usage within all Council buildings, particularly those that are part of our operational portfolio. Between January and July 2023, the Council was lacking an officer with energy management responsibilities and therefore the actions set out in the policy were not progressed as quickly as expected.
- To assess the feasibility of renewable energy generation on council owned assets, the South West Net Zero Hub was commissioned to complete a solar appraisal in respect of 12 of our operational properties. The final report recommended prioritising the following sites for solar PV: Cheltenham Leisure Centre, Prince of Wales Stadium, Municipal Offices, Cemetery and Crematorium. The next step is to complete a structural survey and develop a business case for the appropriate sites, taking account of our forward-looking operational needs and asset management strategy.
- CBC took part in a study funded by the Governmental Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) working with a consultant specialising in heat networks and district heating, to investigate the potential for heating zones within Cheltenham. The data from this study has fed into the new Energy Security Bill and has directly impacted current Government policy. We have been awarded further funding to carry out two more detailed feasibility studies, in order to explore the potential to develop heat network zones at the Golden Valley Development site and in the Town Centre. Heat networks generally avoid the need for individual boilers or electric heaters in every building and are able to use local sources of low carbon heat which would otherwise go to waste. This technology is not entirely new and has been successfully deployed in Europe and in the UK.
- Cheltenham Borough Homes (CBH) were successful in gaining £800,000 of

funding support from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 to improve 59 homes on a fabric first approach. This includes the installation of external wall insulation, upgraded loft installation, improved ventilation and smart monitoring. A ground source heat pump system was installed to supply heating for a sheltered scheme of 25 units; windows were renewed ahead of these works to further improve the energy efficiency of the homes and their ventilation; cavity insulation and upgraded loft insulation are also being installed. CBH were also successful in Wave 2 of the fund and were awarded £2m through the consortium bid, led by Stroud District Council, to improve the energy efficiency of an additional 187 homes.

- In an effort to reduce the carbon footprint of our Cheltenham fleet, there are now two electric vehicles operated by Ubico. One used by the toilet cleansing crew and one by a grounds maintenance team. We hope to expand this further, and are exploring options to ensure that the depot can meet the needs of a new, more sustainable, vehicle fleet.



- The installation of telematics on all CBC vehicles operated by Ubico is now standard. This monitors driver behaviour and supports the training of drivers to reduce fuel use, whether this is diesel or our drop-in fuel, Hydrogen Treated Vegetable Oil (certified palm oil free) which is 87.7% cleaner 'well to wheel' than diesel. This is helping to reduce fuel consumption and the associated emissions through changing behaviours.
- UKSPF funding is providing finance for up to 300 licences for the Zellar platform, as part of efforts to get Cheltenham businesses to net zero by 2030. The programme is delivered through CheltenhamZero, a partnership with the local Vision 21 charity, whose membership has exceeded 130 local businesses and community groups committed to working together to help propel the town towards zero emissions by 2030.



- Approval was given for Cheltenham’s Green Deal to fund enhancements to the Building Management Systems across the CBC estate to control the operation and consumption of energy for heating and cooling. The roll out of the BMS Optimisation programme, due to be delivered in autumn 2023, will help deliver cost savings and reduced carbon emissions. This will be achieved by preventing unauthorised access and unnecessary changes to the heating systems across buildings occupied by CBC and the Cheltenham Trust.
- We are currently working to provide loan support to Cheltenham Town Football Club (CTFC) to help fund the installation of a large solar array, which is likely to be the largest such renewable energy installation in the town to date and will make the club the greenest in Division 1 of the English Football League. The club plans to install a number of high capacity EV charging points in conjunction with this scheme at the Whaddon Road ground. CTFC is willing to work with CBC to help promote their approach to sustainability to the wider business community and local residents.
- Just under £30k grant funding was awarded to Cheltenham community groups to support their net zero journey. Christ Church Cheltenham, 1st Prestbury Scout Group, East Gloucestershire Club Ltd, 10th Cheltenham Scout Group and Hester’s Way Partnership were awarded up to £10k each to fund energy efficiency projects on their buildings, helping to reduce carbon emissions and mitigating the impact of rising energy costs.
- Cabinet adopted Cheltenham’s [Air Quality Action Plan](#) in May 2023. The action plan outlines 16 specific actions deliverable by CBC in partnership with the county council and other organisations. Due to the nature of the action plan, certain actions will have an ongoing measurable impact, whereas others have a definitive deadline and outcomes. Since May, good progress has been made on delivery of the Air Quality Action Plan. For example, we have successfully recruited an officer to deliver the various strands of education and awareness campaigns. The adoption of an air quality supplementary planning document has also been completed. The next steps are to review the borough’s Smoke Control Zones and the adoption of powers to deal with stationary idling of vehicles. A multi-agency meeting was arranged for the end of July to share the Air Quality Action Plan with key partners and to decide on individual roles and responsibilities for delivery of the plan.



- In March 2022, the authority consulted on a draft “Licensed vehicle emission and wheelchair accessibility policy”. This draft policy sets out the authority’s approach to implementing a net zero licensed taxi fleet by 2030. In September 2022, a Cabinet decision was made to launch a further, more focussed, consultation seeking views from people with disabilities and their experiences of using Cheltenham’s licensed vehicles. Whilst the results of this survey were being analysed, Cabinet agreed to phase out euro 3 and 4 licensed vehicles in 2023.
- Based on the results of a Mobilityways staff travel survey, a number of barriers preventing staff from travelling to work more sustainably were addressed. Improvements were made to shower, changing and bike storage facilities at the Municipal Offices, signposting was improved and pool bikes were repaired. Lunchtime walks and e-bike trials further encouraged staff to try something different, ultimately encouraging them to leave the car at home.

### Climate Change Adaptation

- For the necessary shift towards a more climate focused culture at CBC, the Climate Impact Assessment Tool (CIAT) was developed in conjunction with West Oxfordshire District Council and applied within our decision-making process to help ensure that new projects and policies are aligned with the Council's commitment to climate action. The tool, which has been widely acclaimed, is designed to enable officers and decision-makers to easily evaluate the environmental and social impacts of projects and policies from the very start of decision-making on project and policy development processes. The team at Cheltenham Festivals has further developed the tool into a free-to-use, simple toolkit to assess an event’s community, accessibility and environmental sustainability impacts. <https://www.vision2025.org.uk/its-a-date-for-the-green-events-code/>

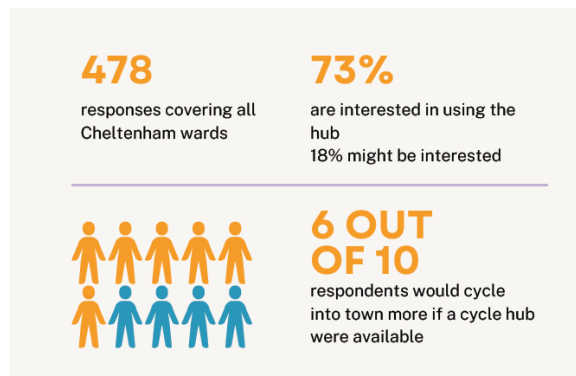


- The Cheltenham Culture Board has recently agreed its new strategy for culture which includes the following commitment: “Use culture, creativity and innovation to contribute to Cheltenham Zero and work collectively to address the climate emergency.” The board has made progress towards this commitment including establishing a sustainability working group that is advising the board and has already hosted a Cycle Hub network meeting.
- With match-funding support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), £900,000 was invested to improve habitat and biodiversity across 14 sites in Cheltenham. The project has focused on providing for pollinators and in particular, solitary bee species. Meadow creation, tree planting, community orchard creation, pocket parks, rain gardens, perennial planting and bulb planting are just some of the range of improvements made to help support nature.





- CBC and other Gloucestershire local authorities have been working in association with the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership (GLNP) to establish a [countywide mechanism to provide options for developers locally](#), which will reduce the risk of BNG payments being used for biodiversity enhancement outside of the county. This mechanism is intended to establish a Gloucestershire Nature and Climate Fund (GNCF), which will offer an option to developers for the delivery and monitoring of off-site BNG, where this cannot be achieved on the application site.
- UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) is being used to develop a central cycle hub for visitors, residents and staff to securely store their bikes. This is to encourage more people to cycle into town instead of driving private cars, which will help to reduce emissions and improve air quality and public health. A survey was published to gather feedback on what the facility would mean to residents and what they would like to see in the hub.



- A new partnership project with Planet Cheltenham and GCC commenced to support 11 Cheltenham residents over 8 months to put their sustainability ideas into action to make their part of Cheltenham better for both people and

planet. The 'Cheltenham Changemakers' programme will see participants develop their own project plans, which will come to fruition in autumn 2023. Planet Cheltenham will receive further support for its community climate action with Cabinet approval for a £17k contribution to the Planet Cheltenham hub building from our Neighbourhood CIL funds.

- Over 2,000 new trees were planted in 2022-23. These were a mix of native and non-native species, large and small, short- and long-lived, with both insect and wind pollinated species. Increasing the diversity of tree species grown in Cheltenham is a key adaptation strategy for building resilience to climate change-related threats. The impact of Ash die-back is being addressed where appropriate, however it is not possible to control this devastating disease/fungus. Many new Tree Protection Orders (TPO) are being applied through the relevant planning mechanism and recommendations have been made by CBC Trees Officers to enforce developers to plant trees on development sites.
- Volunteer Himalayan Balsam 'bashing' days took place over the summer to help control the spread of this invasive species, with the aim of improving the health of the river Chelt. Himalayan Balsam outcompetes native plant species for resources such as sunlight, space and nutrients. The balsam has very sugary nectar which tempts bees and other pollinators away from native plants. The native plants are then less likely to be pollinated and so produce less seed. Himalayan Balsam dies in winter and leaves river banks bare and vulnerable to erosion. This can reduce water quality, cause sediment to collect in fish spawning areas and can lead to increased flood risk.
- Work in Pittville Park continues following the successful [introduction of seed species harvested from Leckhampton Hill](#) last year, and the same is planned for the west side of Tommy Taylors Lane later this year.



- Grazing took place on both Leckhampton Hill and Charlton Kings Common between October 2022 and March 2023. The cattle were removed during



spring to allow the wild flowers to proliferate. Gorse and shrub removal has continued on Leckhampton Hill as part of the National Grid funded work to restore Cheltenham's grassland, increasing the grassed area that the cows graze and the hectareage of calcareous grassland and associated wild flower species.

- In partnership with the friends of Griffiths Avenue Nature reserve, work has continued managing the woodland and meadow areas. A wild flower area was seeded, and surveys were undertaken of moths and bats utilising equipment supplied by the University of Gloucestershire; the results from this will inform future management. Bat surveys were also undertaken in Pittville Park, and Sandford Park by volunteers.
- The attenuation ponds built to store drainage water from the newly refurbished Burrow's Playing Field have been planted with marginal aquatic plants to create a wetland habitat
- The CBC flooding team (Flood Risk/Drainage Officer and Support Officer) was established in September 2022. Prior to the current team being posted the flooding work streams were shared between a flooding resilience officer and an external Publica Flood Risk Management Team (through a technical support contract) following the retirement of the previous CBC flood risk engineer in 2020. The main responsibility of the flooding team is to improve the Borough's resilience to flood risk, in both existing and future climates. Predictions for future climate indicate that storm rainfall intensities are likely to increase, which will have a significant impact on flooding in short-response/flashy urbanised catchments like Cheltenham. The team work collaboratively with numerous CBC departments and other Risk Management Authorities (Environment Agency, the County Council, and Severn Trent Water) to build resilience through a range of workstreams which are listed below and described in more detail in Appendix i. Key priorities include:-
  - Ensuring new development manages flood risk and the water environment through planning and watercourse consents. Promoting sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) that incorporate habitat and amenity value as well as drainage.
  - Managing CBC-owned watercourses and drainage assets with a sustainable approach to mitigate flood risk, improve water quality, and promote biodiversity / habitat creation.
  - Community engagement projects and partnerships to improve community resilience and implement more nature-based solutions to flood risk management within the Borough.
  - Emergency response support and recovery to flood events.
- The Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was created to communicate CBC's ambitions and requirements for all buildings within the borough and sets out how applicants can successfully integrate a 'best

practice approach' towards climate and biodiversity in their development proposals. CBC Planning Officers continue to endorse the SPD and the need for a considered response in any pre-application discussions. The SPD was highlighted to one applicant where the original submission made no mention of sustainability and the applicant later responded with a climate change statement and a proposal that includes solar panels on each dwelling and enhanced landscaping. Since the adoption of the SPD, most applications now include a Sustainability Statement as standard.

- The climate team arranged multiple screenings of the [2040 movie](#), including a panel and screening event at the Cheltenham Science Festival. The film presents some practical solutions to environmental concerns with the hope that the filmmaker's daughter, 21 years old in the year 2040, has a more hopeful future. The screenings encouraged positive conversation around the climate agenda.

**3.2** Looking ahead to the next 12 months, the Climate Team will continue to prioritise reducing the direct energy consumption of CBC and its closest delivery partners. There is a direct link between energy consumption and carbon emissions and with the higher costs resulting from the energy crisis, it is imperative that we take this action now. Key priorities will be:

#### Climate Change Mitigation

- Appraising options for energy reduction interventions across the estate. This will include taking forward the installation of solar PV on a number of our assets and designing a works programme hierarchy with supporting business cases, based on the anticipated impact of the projects.
- Driving forward the recommendations within the Council's new Heating and Energy policy, through delivering a behaviour change programme linked to real-time energy monitoring, to actively help reduce CBC's energy consumption.
- Continuing to work with local businesses and CBC suppliers to drive the wider adoption of the CheltenhamZero Partnership, influencing behaviour change, collaboration and the sharing of information and best practice. A grant fund totalling £100k will be made available to local businesses who have signed up to CheltenhamZero and the Zellar platform, to support their climate action work.
- UK Share Prosperity Funding was allocated for the installation of electricity provision in two of our parks and gardens: Imperial Park and Montpellier Gardens. In the coming year, a multi-disciplinary team of engineers will properly scope the project requirements in order to deliver this project which will reduce the reliance on fossil fuel powered generators, particularly for events.
- Deliver around 40+ Electric Vehicle (EV) chargers, with the majority being in

the fast/rapid category. In addition to this, we continue to work with GCC to support their provision of charging points for areas with limited off-street parking. Slow responses from the electricity Distribution Network Operator (DNO) have been the primary reason for delays to date.

- Furthering our commitment to reduce the carbon footprint of our Cheltenham fleet, there are now three more 3.5 tonne and under electric vehicles on order which will be operated by Ubico during 2023. All 8 EV charging points provided at the Swindon Road depot will be utilised by the end of the year, including for the charging of the Mayor's car.
- Environmental Services continue to optimise the number of vehicles in use to deliver services, to reduce the carbon footprint of our fleet, including looking at our collection rounds and the payload of the vehicles. The introduction of the Podback scheme (coffee pod collection) and FlexCollect (flexible plastics collection) by our existing fleet will be further rolled out in the next 12 months.
- Waste reduction initiatives will continue over the next 12 months to reduce the amount of refuse generated and encourage more recycling of materials which cannot be reduced or re-used. This work will be delivered in conjunction with cross county initiatives via the Climate Leadership Gloucestershire waste group.

#### **4. Next Steps - possible next steps for the committee to consider.**

- 4.1** Any transition to low or zero carbon emissions vehicles is unlikely to reduce the number of vehicles on the road, or necessarily improve air quality to the extent required (for example, particulates are still generated from tyre-road abrasion). Many of the existing problems associated with personal transport such as cluttered streets and congestion are likely to remain, or intensify. There is also a significant up-front embodied carbon cost associated with the production of new vehicles.
- In July 2022, a Motion was carried at Gloucestershire County Council's (GCC's) full Council meeting. The Council resolved to call on the Environment Scrutiny Committee to establish a task and finish scrutiny group to examine and make recommendations on how bus service improvements can be achieved. A task group was subsequently set-up in January of this year. The Council Leader, along with relevant officers from the Climate team, will meet with the task group to understand and feed into the long-term strategic aims, objectives and targets for Gloucestershire's local bus services. This will include the relationship with GCC's other transport and corporate policy objectives, including decarbonisation and the Gloucestershire 2050 vision.
- 4.2** Work is being commissioned through Climate Leadership Gloucestershire to undertake a Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment for the County which may well have resourcing implications at a local level, beyond those already identified.
- 4.3** Staffing changes in the climate department have created an opportunity to reconsider the strategic priorities of the department, and reflect that consideration in a new

staffing structure. CBC anticipates taking on additional staffing capacity, both in terms of team members and in terms of hours, as part of this transition.

<b>Background Documents</b>	<a href="#">Climate Emergency Action Plan: Pathway to Net Zero</a>
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Mike Redman, Director of Climate Change and Place Services, 01242264160, <a href="mailto:Mike.Redman@cheltenham.gov.uk">Mike.Redman@cheltenham.gov.uk</a>
<b>Accountability</b>	Cllr Alisha Lewis, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

## Appendix i

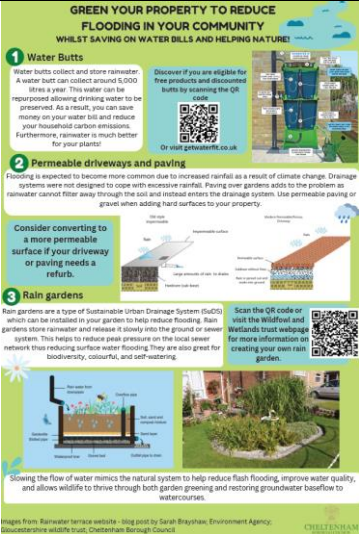
### CBC flood team - current works and plan for year ahead


Workstream	Description	Summary of works September 2022 to present	Plan for 2023-2024
Planning	CBC flooding team is a consultee to planning for non-major developments to ensure flood risk mitigation and sustainable drainage design is incorporated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation is now being undertaken by CBC flooding in-house (previously this was sub-contracted to the Publica flood risk management team).</li> <li>• Provided technical expertise and commentary on 74 individual consultations since October 2022.</li> <li>• Commentary and support provided on CBC applications for major developments (West Cheltenham) and within Greenspaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for support officer to review applications to improve capability and resilience of the team.</li> <li>• Work collaboratively with planning team and the new heads of planning department (when the vacant positions are filled) to identify any gaps in the consultation process and current policies</li> </ul>


Workstream	Description	Summary of works September 2022 to present	Plan for 2023-2024
			<p>on flooding and sustainable drainage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work collaboratively with climate emergency team to increase influence on SUDS that incorporate biodiversity improvements.</li> </ul>
Consenting and enforcement	GCC (the Lead Local Flood Authority) has delegated consenting and enforcement on ordinary watercourses to CBC flooding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBC flooding team has dealt with (or are dealing with) 71 enforcement issues since September 2022. These mainly consist of the removal of debris impeding the flow of watercourses which cause either a flood risk or environmental issue.</li> <li>• CBC flooding has reviewed (or provided pre-application advice) on 8 land drainage consent applications since October 2022. Previously these were sub-contracted to the Publica flood risk management team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GCC wishes to extend the delegation agreement for another 3 year period with an increased payment to CBC and this is likely to be agreed.</li> </ul>
CBC asset/riparian ownership maintenance.	<p>CBC owned / maintained land includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20km of watercourse (includes open and culverted watercourse),</li> <li>• 21 debris screens,</li> <li>• 7 CBC managed flood alleviation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBC flooding have completed version 1 of a maintenance plan that catalogues all watercourses and assets (as this had not previously been done) and a plan for future maintenance. The first draft of the plan primarily focusses on flood risk, but also incorporates habitat values and carbon emission reductions where possible (i.e. identifies reaches where a more natural flood management approach can be adopted through technical assessment of flood risk).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete version 2 of maintenance plan with best practice habitat management where possible to promote biodiversity on watercourse corridors.</li> <li>• Version 2 to also include T98 asset inspections and logging of CBC flood assets</li> </ul>



Workstream	Description	Summary of works September 2022 to present	Plan for 2023-2024
	<p>schemes (each consisting of multiple assets).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 Sustainable drainage systems (each consisting of multiple assets).</li> </ul> <p>As a riparian owner, CBC has a responsibility to manage these reaches of watercourse and assets for flood risk and environmental management purposes, including management of invasive species.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CBC flooding has inspected all watercourses and assets and have commissioned any necessary maintenance identified. The above mentioned maintenance plan includes an inspection schedule for future years.</li> <li>Flood risk officer has recently completed Environment Agency T98 flood asset inspector accreditation.</li> <li>Invasive species such as Himalayan Balsam have been mitigated.</li> </ul>	<p>in Geographical Information System (GIS) consistent with Environment Agency database to streamline future inspection schedules, maintenance, and asset performance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider tendering a maintenance contract based on the plan.</li> </ul>
Community engagement	Raising awareness of flooding and enabling communities to take their own actions towards building resilience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reinvigorated CBC flood warden scheme alongside Gloucestershire Rural Community Council using a grant from the local resilience forum. New wardens recruited and meetings organised every 6 months.</li> <li><i>“Green your property to reduce flooding in your community”</i> infographic created and distributed at engagement event in Warden Hill. Leaflets being distributed by parish council.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map flood warden coverage geographically and drive recruitment in areas lacking coverage.</li> <li>Monthly infographic social media posts to raise community awareness of property level flood mitigation and water management.</li> </ul>

Workstream	Description	Summary of works September 2022 to present	Plan for 2023-2024
		 <p><b>GREEN YOUR PROPERTY TO REDUCE FLOODING IN YOUR COMMUNITY</b> WHILST SAVING ON WATER BILLS AND HELPING NATURE!</p> <p><b>1 Water Butts</b> Water butts collect and store rainwater. A water butt can collect around 5,000 litres a year. This water can be re-used for watering plants, washing cars, or for flushing toilets. As a result, you can save money on your water bill and reduce your household carbon emissions. Furthermore, rainwater is much better for your plants!</p> <p><b>2 Permeable driveways and paving</b> Flooding is expected to become more common due to increased rainfall as a result of climate change. Drainage systems were not designed to cope with excessive rainfall. Paving over gardens adds to the problem as rainwater cannot flow away through the soil and instead enters the drainage system. Use permeable paving or gravel when adding hard surfaces to your property.</p> <p><b>3 Rain gardens</b> Rain gardens are a type of Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS) which can be installed in your garden to help reduce flooding. Rain gardens store rainwater and release it slowly into the ground or sewer system. This helps to reduce peak pressure on the local sewer network thus reducing surface water flooding. They are also great for biodiversity, colourful, and self-watering.</p> <p>Slowing the flow of water mimics the natural system to help reduce flash flooding, improve water quality, and allows wildlife to thrive through both garden greening and restoring groundwater baseflow to watercourses.</p> <p>Images from Rainwater terrace website - blog post by Sarah Brayshaw, Environment Agency, Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, Cheltenham Borough Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further community engagement events including schools.</li> </ul>
Projects / partnership schemes	Working collaboratively with partners to deliver nature-based solutions to flood risk management in the Borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warden Hill flood risk management group looking to implement local SUDS where feasible.</li> <li>Working collaboratively with County Council and Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust on potential SUDS and natural flood management opportunities.</li> <li><i>“Reclaim the River”</i> Himalayan Balsam invasive species project in collaboration with greenspaces and climate emergency team. This has involved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7 sessions to pull the balsam with 8-10 volunteers and 3-4 members of staff at each session. Approximately 4km of watercourse managed including litter removal.</li> <li>Letter drops to 121 properties who have riparian ownership of the River Chelt to raise awareness of Himalayan Balsam and remind</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with relevant CBC teams and partners to further progress on implementing nature-based flood management solutions.</li> <li>Utilise skills within the flooding and climate teams to establish potential projects focussing on water quality and water management issues. For example public awareness “only rain down the drain” campaigns and water re-use at CBC property</li> </ul>

Workstream	Description	Summary of works September 2022 to present	Plan for 2023-2024
		<p>landowners of riparian responsibilities.</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation given at Severn Vale Catchment Partnership meeting and regular updates provided at quarterly Gloucestershire Risk Management Authorities meetings.</li> <li>• Collaboration with CBC Greenspaces to implement SUDS features in public parks (Naunton and Benhall).</li> </ul>	and greenspaces.
Enquires, land charges and FOI	Responding to CON29 land charge enquires related to flooding and drainage and other public enquires regarding flooding and watercourses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All CON29 questions answered (approx. 20 properties per week).</li> <li>• All Enquiries and FOI requests responded to including media response to water quality issues on River Chelt.</li> </ul>	Update relevant website pages and look at implementing automated forms for enquiries.
Emergency response and recovery	Supporting CBC emergency response team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensured flood team actions outlined in CBC emergency response plan have been undertaken before and after flood alerts have been issued. Clearing high risk assets before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with emergency response team, parish councils and flood wardens to identify</li> </ul>

Workstream	Description	Summary of works September 2022 to present	Plan for 2023-2024
		<p>and after flood events (example of post event clear-up below).</p> 	<p>potential improvements based on latest best practice guidance.</p>