



**WOKINGHAM**  
**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

# **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

**VOLUME 5**

**SEVERE WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

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# HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Including:  
Sweeping and Street Cleansing  
Weed Control  
Verges and Open Spaces  
Trees  
Grass Cutting  
Public Rights of Way

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# **HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

## **VOLUME 5 - SEVERE WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

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# **VOLUME 5 – SEVERE WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

## **1. SEVERE WEATHER AND OTHER EMERGENCIES**

### **1.1 Object**

To establish, in consultation with others including Emergency Services and relevant agencies such as the Environment Agency, operational plans and procedures to enable timely and effective action so far as is reasonably possible by the highway maintenance service to mitigate the effects of such weather and other highway related emergencies.

There are several potential emergency situations which could affect the highway, such as road accidents, oil spillages, subsidence, landslip or collapsed walls. Where contingency planning cannot be undertaken and due to the nature of most emergency situations, each incident will be dealt with by an appropriate team of officers. In extreme cases there may be a requirement to enlist the assistance of the council's Community Resilience team and other council services. (Reference the Neighbourhood Services' Business Continuity Plan).

The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 sets out the council's duties relating to the risks of flooding.

### **1.2 Standards**

- (i) As set out in the Council's Emergency Plan and Volume 4 of the HMMP (Winter Service Plan).
- (ii) To maintain an out-of-hours emergency service from 1700 hours to 0800 hours weekdays and 24 hours at weekends and Bank Holidays.
- (iii) Information regarding road closures and other serious disruptions to traffic can be automatically sent as emails or text messages to mobile telephones. Residents and other road users will be encouraged to sign up for this free service by registering their details at:

<http://wokinghamalerts.datasquirt.co.uk/Login.aspx>

## **2. FLOODING**

### **2.1 Introduction**

- 2.1.1 Wokingham Borough has experienced extreme weather events which have highlighted that many areas are vulnerable to flooding from rivers, streams, highway drains, sewers and run-off from land during periods of heavy or sustained rainfall.

- 2.1.2 Predictions on climate change suggest flooding will be even more frequent in the future.
- 2.1.3 Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 places a duty on the Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority for its area, to investigate flooding incidents that it becomes aware of, to the extent that it considers necessary or appropriate.
- 2.1.4 The Council will investigate all flooding incidents reported by residents, or that otherwise come to its attention, that involve
- Internal flooding of habitable property (excluding garages and outbuildings)
  - Flooding of any road that requires formal closure of that road and diversion of traffic
  - Flooding of critical infrastructure (such as electricity sub stations, sewage pumping stations or schools) that results in loss of service to customers or potential loss of service
- 2.1.5 The Council may also investigate smaller “near miss” flooding incidents
- 2.1.6 The Council, as Highway Authority, will continue to investigate smaller scale flooding and “ponding” on the highway
- 2.1.7 Investigations will be undertaken during, or as soon as possible after, the flooding incident, and will be appropriate to the scale and nature of the flooding incident.
- 2.1.8 Small scale flooding incidents, and incidents where the relevant risk management authorities are immediately apparent or are undertaking actions to alleviate the cause of the flooding incident, are likely to require limited investigations.
- 2.1.9 Large scale flooding incidents, incidents where the relevant flood risk management authorities are unclear, and incidents where two or more risk management authorities are involved, are likely to require more detailed investigations. In such circumstances the Council will work closely with the risk management authorities involved and may, where appropriate, prepare a detailed report.
- 2.1.10 The Environment Agency has a strategic overview for all forms of flooding at national level and is responsible for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers and regulating reservoirs. This information is used to predict the possibility of flooding and to issue flood warnings directly to the public. If flooding is forecast, warnings are issued using a set of easily recognisable codes as illustrated later in this document.
- 2.1.11 Information regarding main rivers and indicative floodplain is available on the Environment Agency website. However, it should be noted that specific warnings cannot always be given in advance for surface water run-off, many small rivers and streams.

2.1.12 The Council works locally in partnership with the Environment Agency. The aim is to adopt the Environment Agency's flood warning service as a framework for providing support and assistance to residents who are at risk from flooding.

## **2.2 Advice to the Public**

2.2.1 Those in or adjacent to a floodplain should follow the advice given by the Environment Agency. Registering with the Agency's Direct Warning Service on 0845 988 1188 is very important.

2.2.2 Those outside the flood plain but who have experienced flooding problems are recommended to follow the Agency's advice as appropriate. The Council automatically receives the following information:

- Notification of severe weather from the Met. Office via their National Severe Weather Warning Service.
- Notification of the possibility of flooding from the Environment Agency. □  
Flood Warning Areas/Codes

2.2.3 This information will be applied as a guide to the potential risk of flooding from highway and land drainage sources.

## **2.3 Wokingham Borough Council - Flood Information**

2.3.1 For general information and advice the council can be contacted on 0118 974 6000 (working hours: 8:30am to 6pm Monday to Friday). At all other times the Council's out of hours emergency service can be contacted by calling (freephone) 0800 212111.

Highway flooding issues can be emailed to [flooding@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:flooding@wokingham.gov.uk). Emails received out of hours will be dealt with on the next working day.

The 'Borough Alert' pages on the council's web site will give further information where available

2.3.2 Radio flood warnings will be broadcast on local TV and radio during weather and traffic reports. In the Wokingham area the main radio stations are:

- BBC Radio Berkshire on 104.1 FM
- Heart Berkshire Radio on 97.0 & 102.9 FM
- Reading 107 on 107 FM

2.3.3 The Council will work with the Police, Fire and Rescue and the Environment Agency to co-ordinate the response during severe flooding and deal with road closures.

## **2.4 Environment Agency Flood Warning Information**

2.4.1 Information/advice is available 24 hrs a day by calling – Floodline 0345 988 1188 (calls charged at local rate) or logging on to [www.environmentagency.gov.uk/flood](http://www.environmentagency.gov.uk/flood).

Alternatively, residents can call the following Floodline numbers followed by the direct extension for advice in specific areas:

**□ River Loddon Catchment (Tel: 0345 988 1188 + 0112412)**

River Blackwater, River Whitewater, Emm Brook and Twyford Brook, Arborfield, Barkham, Charvil, Earley, Finchampstead, Hurst, Ruscombe, Sonning, Swallowfield, Twyford, Woodley, Winnersh, Wokingham and Wokingham Without.

**□ River Kennet Catchment: (Tel: 0345 988 1188 + 0112411)**

Lower River Kennet and Foudry Brook, Grazeley and Shinfield

**□ River Thames Catchment: (Tel: 0345 988 1188 + 011124)**

River Thames (Wallingford to Henley), Remenham, Sonning and Wargrave

### **2.4.2 Direct Warning: Telephone, Fax or Pager**

People who live or work in an area prone to flooding from rivers can receive flood warnings direct by phone at home or at work, via the Environment Agency's Automated Voice Messaging Service (AVM).

The system automatically calls home or work telephone numbers and, when the call is answered, plays a recorded flood message. The message can be sent to all types of phones, including mobile phones and fax machines. The aim is to give two hours' notice of flooding, day or night.

Sign up for Floodline Warnings Direct by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188

### **2.4.3 The following pages contain the Environment Agency Flood Warning information and Codes:**



**2.5 Environment Agency Advice Leaflet**

## How can you prepare for flooding?

- Find out if you live or work in an area at risk of flooding.
- Sign up for our FREE Floodline Warnings Direct service.
- Download and complete a personal flood plan from our website.
- Buy and install flood products in advance. Visit [www.bluepages.org.uk](http://www.bluepages.org.uk) for an independent directory of flood products. Look for the Kitemark to check that a product meets industry standards

## Where to find out more:

- **Call us** – Floodline 0845 988 1188
- **Visit our website** – [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood)
- **Email us** – [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Your flood warning service

The Environment Agency provides a flood warning service throughout England and Wales in areas at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. Using the latest available technology, our staff monitor rainfall, river levels and sea conditions 24 hours a day and use this information to forecast the possibility of flooding. If flooding is forecast, we issue warnings using three different warning types.




### How are warnings issued?

- **Direct to you** – receive warnings by phone, text, email or fax. Find out if you can sign up for our FREE Floodline Warnings Direct service by calling Floodline or visiting our website.
- **On our website** – view up-to-date flood warning information, monitor the river or sea levels in your area and check out the latest flood risk forecast for your county by visiting our website [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood)
- **By calling Floodline on 0845 988 1188** – listen to recorded information on the latest warnings and predictions or speak to an operator for more general information 24 hours a day. Our operators can also provide a quickdial number which gives you faster access to information for your area.
- **Through the media** – you may see or hear our warnings on television and in radio broadcasts. You can also view the latest warnings on BBC Ceefax page 419 and Digital Ceefax page 405.
- **Flood Wardens** – in some areas Flood Wardens are there to alert and support their local community when a flood warning is issued. Call Floodline to find out if this service is available where you live.
- **Sirens/loudhailers** – in some areas we use loudhailer or siren systems to warn people that a flood warning has been issued. Call Floodline to find out if this type of service operates where you live.



## Know your flood warning service

Our new warning service has three types of warnings - Flood Alert, Flood Warning and Severe Flood Warning - that will help you prepare for flooding and take necessary actions.

Online flood risk forecast	 <b>FLOOD ALERT</b>	 <b>FLOOD WARNING</b>	 <b>SEVERE FLOOD WARNING</b>	<b>Warning no longer in force</b>
<b>What it means</b> Be aware. Keep an eye on the weather situation.	<b>What it means</b> Flooding is possible. Be prepared.	<b>What it means</b> Flooding is expected. Immediate action required.	<b>What it means</b> Severe flooding. Danger to life.	<b>What it means</b> No further flooding is currently expected in your area.
<b>When it's used</b> Forecasts of flooding on our website are updated at least once a day.	<b>When it's used</b> Two hours to two days in advance of flooding.	<b>When it's used</b> Half an hour to one day in advance of flooding.	<b>When it's used</b> When flooding poses a significant threat to life.	<b>When it's used</b> When river or sea conditions begin to return to normal.
<b>What to do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check weather conditions.</li> <li>• Check for updated flood forecasts on our website.</li> </ul>	<b>What to do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be prepared to act on your flood plan.</li> <li>• Prepare a flood kit of essential items.</li> <li>• Monitor local water levels and the flood forecast on our website.</li> </ul>	<b>What to do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place.</li> <li>• Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so.</li> <li>• Put flood protection equipment in place.</li> </ul>	<b>What to do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay in a safe place with a means of escape.</li> <li>• Be ready should you need to evacuate from your home.</li> <li>• Co-operate with the emergency services.</li> <li>• Call 999 if you are in immediate danger.</li> </ul>	<b>What to do</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be careful. Flood water may still be around for several days.</li> <li>• If you've been flooded, ring your insurance company as soon as possible.</li> </ul>



## **2.6 Sandbags**

2.6.1 The Council has no legal duty to provide sandbags unless due to flooding from the highway or other Council owned land. The responsibility for flood protection of property is the sole responsibility of the property owners. As a result, all such owners must assess the risk of flooding to their property and take the necessary precautions to protect it. This may include installing physical flood protection barriers and joining the Environment Agency's FLOODLINE warning system. Information regarding the flood risk of properties in relation to river flooding can be found on the Environment Agencies website.

2.6.2 However, in the event of severe flooding the Council may provide sandbags to vulnerable residents, having regard to any financial constraints.

2.6.3 Where sandbags are provided, they become the absolute responsibility of the person receiving them. The council will accept no liability for positioning them or any subsequent repositioning, nor will we be responsible for collecting and disposing of sandbags after the flooding.

2.6.4 WBC's sandbag policy can be found at:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/search/?q=sandbags>

2.6.5 Information can be found on the council's web site which gives further clarification on the council's position regarding drainage and flooding. This can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/search/?q=sandbags>

2.6.6 Useful information on how to use sandbags can be found on the following Environment Agency web page: <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/PDF/FLHO0309BPSL-E-E.pdf>

### **3. WIND**

- 3.1 After severe gales etc. the council will review any likely damage caused to highway (and other council owned) trees. Trees adjacent to the highway, which could collapse onto, or cause damage to the highway will be included in the review.
- 3.2 The Arboricultural team leader will instigate the review. The highways inspectors may be called upon for support during or after major events.
- 3.3 The council has at its disposal, several arboricultural contractors who can carry out tree surgery or removal. A list of suitable contractors is maintained by the arboricultural officers.
- 3.4 Trees that are situated on private land, but which could have an impact on the highway are the responsibility of the landowner. Wherever possible the landowner will be contacted to make private arrangements to ensure that the safety of the highway is not compromised.

### **4. HEAT**

- 4.1 After severe heat etc. the council will review any likely damage caused to the highway.
- 4.2 Where temperatures are high enough to cause 'bleeding' (excessive bitumen rising to the road surface) the contractor may be instructed to carry out remedial works to alleviate the condition. (An example of remedial action is to spread granite dust on severely affected surfaces.)

