

Rising Brook Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme

Progress Update

This is an update on progress of the Rising Brook Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme.

Background

The Rising Brook rises in Hednesford before flowing through Cannock Chase and into Rugeley. The Brook is culverted in Rugeley before entering the River Trent to the east of the town centre. Flooding from the brook occurs when the culvert is full and from overtopping upstream of Hagley playing fields. This causes water to back up and then flow over land through the town. In addition, surface water can't drain into the culvert and backs up on highways. Historical records show flooding in 1845, 1950s 1960s, and 1980s. Flooding in 2012 was thought to be solely due to intensity of rainfall. This is a constraint to the planned redevelopment of Rugeley Town Centre. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2012) produced by Cannock Chase District Council for the local plan recommends a flood storage area upstream of the town centre to enable development. There are 114 residential properties and 159 commercial properties currently at risk from flooding from Rising Brook.

Most recent activity

Access tracks on the embankment are currently under construction. (First photo). The heritage trail is being reinstated where necessary (Second photo). Top soiling of the field and embankment shoulders has progressed and the toe drain at the bottom of the embankment is being installed.



The grass seed has not been sown. We decided to leave this until spring as there is the risk of seeds rotting in wet soil. This will not affect timescales for playing fields re-opening as the seed will have lied dormant until spring anyway. We still anticipate a re-opening of the playing fields in late 2018.

Some works to the Eel pass on the bridge is required, railings will be added in the New Year.

Forthcoming activity

Works to the embankment will be finished and there will be some excess mud/clay being taken away in the next few weeks. The final parts to the upstream flow control structure will be added. The site compound will then be decommissioned and the access to the site off Western Springs Road will be removed. Construction will cease at the end of December and it will become a formal flood defence.



Communications

A final newsletter was sent out in October and there have been some positive articles in the Express and Star.

In January, an information board will be put up on Western Springs Road and in the community centre car park explaining that construction is finished, no housing will be built and that the playing fields will re-open to the public later in 2018.

Quarterly updates will be given in 2018 to report on monitoring of grass growth and likely timing of reopening of playing fields and the heritage trail.

Invites will be sent out shortly for an opening event on the morning of 18th December.

Re-opening of Playing fields, Heritage Trail and Skate Park

The playing fields will be re-opened later in 2018 when the grass grows back and Staffordshire County Council agree that they are in an acceptable condition to be handed over. Closure includes the Heritage trail and the Skate Park. We would have liked to open these before but the risk of vandalism means that this is not possible.

Future Maintenance

The following shows who is responsible for post scheme maintenance on the playing field.

End of Construction (December 2017) -Handover to Staffordshire County Council late 2018

- The Environment Agency- Responsible for mowing the playing field and the embankment and maintaining its structures. Also maintains upstream flow control structure and downstream screen.
- Staffordshire County Council- No responsibility
- Cannock Chase District Council- Responsibility for the area of land under its ownership including the bridge and the heritage trail.

After Handover to Staffordshire County Council late 2018)

- Environment Agency- Mow the grass on the embankment approximately 4 times a year. Sports pitches to be reinstated at a later date, approximately late 2019.
- Staffordshire County Council- Mows the playing field and maintains hedges.
- Cannock Chase District Council- Responsibility for the area of land under its ownership including the bridge and the heritage trail.

Benefits Realised

A planning application for the demolition of 2 existing employment buildings and the erection of 2 buildings forming 20 light industrial units on Power Station Road has come into the Environment Agency via Cannock Chase District Council. We have been able to reply with no objections. Prior to the scheme we would have objected as the site would have been in the flood plain.

Environmental works

Some works to improve the habitat of the Mill Leat will take place from April 2018. Works will take approximately 3 weeks. The Mill Leat suffers from slow flowing water and the result is lots of silt. We will put measures in to speed up flow which will aerate water and provide further habitat for the abundant white claw crayfish population. The crayfish that were moved at the start of the scheme will remain in their protected site on Cannock Chase allowing the remaining population from Elmore pool to spread out in the new channel. We had planned to do some works to Elmore Pool but due to the rising costs of the scheme these won't be happening.

Information for the public and Councillors

The public liaison officer will stand down at the end of December. For all post scheme enquiries please contact william.groves@environment-agency.gov.uk.

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