

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 8 November 2021

Title: Lakeside Allotments - Topographical survey

Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

Lakeside allotments have flooded several times at periods of high rainfall, caused by Queen Emma's Dyke running alongside.

Following comments from the Allotment Association earlier in the year, the recommendation from the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee on 24 May was that Officers commission a topographical survey around the Lakeside allotments to determine the extent of a bund required to prevent flooding to the allotments.

Current Situation

Officers have received the topographical survey with a proposal and a quotation for work. This is attached for member's information and consideration.

The proposal is to drive sheet piles and trench sheets to form a barrier to the flood water and raise the bank levels by 450mm. This would be 40m on the south side of the site, 60m along Queen Emma's Dyke and 100m on the north side. The location of the allotments is not ideal.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

The environmental impact of the proposal is mixed – whilst it would help prevent flooding to the allotments which is likely to be ever more prevalent due to climate change, it would slow drainage. Additionally, the works would require a clear 4m strip along the length of the piling, which would involve the removal of sheds and fencing, which would be extremely disruptive to allotment tenants. Additionally, access would be required for a 6-wheel tipper adjacent to the entrance – again this would be disruptive for plot holders.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

From the information received, notwithstanding the cost, full flood prevention is unlikely to be achieved, even with the scale of the proposed works. If the works were carried out, the bund would be likely to retain any floodwater meaning that the drainage from the allotments would be worse than it currently is, and it may exacerbate flooding further downstream.

There may also be some permanent loss of land.

Financial implications

- A quote is attached for the work described above for budgetary purposes should the Council wish to pursue this course of action in the next financial year. This price is likely to change rapidly due to the volatile cost of steel.
- There would also be additional cost to the Council for removal of sheds and fencing.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following options:

1. Whether to proceed with the proposal for reducing flooding at lakeside allotments;
or
2. Leave the allotment site as it currently is.