

CYNGOR CYMUNED DINAS POWYS COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Response to NRW Outline Business Plan Re Flood Prevention in Dinas Powys.

Background

Dinas Powys Community Council (DPCC) has been aware for many years of the threat of flooding in parts of the village. Particularly at risk are Elm Grove Place, parts of the Sunnycroft Estate and Caer Odyn in Southra Park. It was therefore with great interest that the Council noted the initial Consultation that NRW instigated on 8th November 2017, where a number of options were proposed. These included,

1. Flood defence walls along the course of the Mill Stream/Cadoxton River through the village.
2. Making use of the deep, natural gullies on Mill Farm as natural water storage sites for the Eastbrook.
3. A dam/bund to retain potential flood water immediately upstream of the village in the Longmeadow adjacent to the Mill Field.

Dinas Powys Community Councillors were surprised at the scale, cost and environmental implications of the third option and together with the Michaelston le Pit Councillors requested a meeting with NRW officers, on site, to review the proposal. NRW agreed this and the site visit took place on Wednesday, 6th June 2018. It became clear that the dam/bund could only be built at huge environmental cost and that it would mean a permanent loss of one of the villages most important amenities. (It should be noted at this point that the site of the dam/bund would fall outside the curtilage of DPCC, being entirely within Michaelston and Leckwith Community Councils (M&LCC) boundaries.)

Since that time DPCC have received regular updates on the progress of the NRW study from their officers, particularly Gavin Jones and Tim England. For their hard work and courteous, diligent willingness to liaise with the DPCC, we are extremely grateful.

At successive Council meetings DPCC has discussed the NRW schemes in the light of any new information that has come forward, not only from NRW itself but also from other interested parties. These include The Woodland Trust (who are major landowners at the proposed site for the dam/bund), M&LCC, the pressure group Save Dinas Powys Woods and Prevent Homes from Flooding, and residents of the village. DPCC councillors have also attended Public Meetings called by the Save Dinas

Powys Woods group, one of which was specifically held to canvas opinion from residents who live in areas of the village affected by flood risk.

As these enquiries and discussions progressed it became evident that NRW were favouring the dam/bund option. It therefore became necessary for DPCC to consider the implications and impacts that this proposal might have on the village.

Implications and Impact

It was clear that, however the dam/bund was constructed (NRW had put forward various scenarios depending on soil substrata and access to the site.) there would be serious implications for our community.

1. It became obvious at an early stage that there would be considerable damage and loss of environmental resources and habitat. The area under consideration is rich in flora and fauna some of which are protected species. This is considered important to DPCC even though the site falls within the curtilage of M&LCC because :-
2. The loss of one of the most valued and used amenity sites available to the village residents. The Mill Field and The Long Meadow have long been used by walkers, dog walkers, adventuring children and many others and their loss would be a huge blow to the community.
3. As the only viable access to the proposed dam/bund site is via Mill Road or Lettons Way it is clear that construction will cause considerable disruption to one of the busiest routes through the village. Although NRW have indicated that it may be possible to procure most of the building material for the dam/bund from the vicinity of the site (depending on the substrate) there will still be a need for the heavy plant, workforce and specialised material and equipment to be imported via the access outlined above.
4. NRW have stated that the dam/bund is the most comprehensive solution to the risk of homes flooding in the village (but even this solution would not be a guaranteed safeguard for all homes). The DPCC has to take this under consideration and decide whether this assertion outweighs the many arguments against this option. NRW have also indicated that the cost benefits of the dam/bund option are marginal.

The Way Forward

After considerable discussion DPCC would like to tender these responses and suggestions for the way in which they would like to see flood risk in Dinas Powys managed in the future.

1. There was unanimous agreement that “Do nothing” or “Business as usual” was not an option. NRW have indicated that there is a real risk of a serious flooding event in Dinas Powys and as a Council DPCC cannot ignore that advice.
2. DPCC were unanimously agreed that, as a Council, they were not happy about the proposals for flood management in Dinas Powys being used by NRW being based on a section of the River Ely catchment rather than on data gathered from the Cadoxton River catchment itself. Therefore, as a first step DPCC would like to see NRW mount a comprehensive study of flow rates throughout the Cadoxton catchment at times of peak rainfall. This could then be used to inform future decisions on flood management.
3. DPCC were impressed by the arguments in favour of Natural Flood Management measures put forward by Save Dinas Powys Woods and Prevent Homes from Flooding and the references to successful schemes of this type that have been implemented in England (with special reference to the project in Stroud, Gloucestershire). As a Council they agreed that they would like NRW, in concert with other environmental groups such as the Woodland Trust and with the negotiated support of local landowners, to fully investigate and then implement such measures in the Cadoxton catchment area. However, it should be noted that one Councillor argued that as the dam/bund scheme offered the most immediate and comprehensive solution to the risk of flooding in the village, that this was the option that should be progressed.
4. In the short term DPCC would like to see considerably more maintenance work carried out on the Cadoxton both along its course through the village and across the Barry Moors. There is considerable evidence that the stream is frequently heavily silted and that rubbish, including household appliances, vegetation and even bicycles are allowed to restrict the flow of the stream. The river channel is very narrow throughout most of its length, down to 1.5 metres in three places. It is felt that there is adequate opportunity to widen and deepen the channel throughout its passage across the moors. The quality of the agricultural land on the moors is poor and lends itself to the construction of large storage ponds either to take flood water through constructed gullies from the river or in the form of fishing lakes which could be made a permanent feature. These would be able to hold surplus water at times of flood.

5. Recent near flood events have indicated that there are a number of homes in Dinas Powys that are at far greater risk than others. These are in the vicinity of the Sunnycroft Estate, Southra Park Estate and Elmgrove Place. The Community Council would like NRW to consider the increased use and improvement of hard flood defences such as walls and revetments in these areas. Councillors suggested the use of the type of transparent flood defences similar to those used on the River Walk in Cowbridge. Another possibility would be the provision of portable flood barriers which could be put in place when needed as in Hereford town centre. One councillor also suggested that there should be a study into the reintroduction of beavers to the area upstream of Dinas Powys as these creatures are known to have beneficial impacts on potential flood risk downstream of their habitats.
6. There has been some discussion in the Community Council about the active removal of flood water at the sea wall end of the Cadoxton River. At present, it is understood, two flaps allow egress of the Cadoxton River into the sea. When there is a high tide the pressure of the sea holds these flaps in a closed position. If this coincides with heavier than usual rainfall in the Cadoxton catchment area it has been identified as a flood risk. Some members of the DPCC have asked whether it would not be possible to install a high capacity pump to carry excess water over the sea wall.
7. The culvert/bridge adjacent to Bryn Y Don playing field on the A4055 has been identified as a "pinch point" on the flow of the Cadoxton because of its orientation at virtually 90 degrees to the natural flow of the stream. DPCC are aware of the difficulties in addressing this problem as the A4055 is a key arterial route between Barry and Cardiff. The DPCC would like NRW to put pressure on the Welsh Government to give the go ahead for the Dinas Powys Bypass so that the A4055 becomes a secondary route and the necessary remedial works can be carried out on this bridge.
8. If all the above issues are addressed and the works carried out and there is still a perceived risk of catastrophic flooding in the village then the DPCC would, reluctantly, agree to the dam/bund scheme being revisited but only as a last resort.