

Report of the Strategic Director of Place to the meeting of the Regeneration and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 4th March 2020

BR

Subject:

BRADFORD BECK PILOT STUDY

Summary statement:

The Bradford Beck Pilot Study was first discussed by members in April 2013 and has been before the Environment & Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis since then. It was resolved on 16th April 2019 that the ongoing collaboration between officers and Friends of Bradford Beck be supported; also that the Friends of Bradford Beck be congratulated for the work they have undertaken throughout the years. This report outlines progress made in the financial year 2019- 2020.

Strategic Director:

Steve Hartley
Strategic Director of Place

Portfolio:

Regeneration, Planning & Transport

Report Contact:

Edward Norfolk
Principal Drainage Engineer
Phone: (01274) 433905
E-mail: edward.norfolk@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Regeneration and Environment.

1. SUMMARY

Since the Committee meeting of April 2019 there has been cooperation on a range of projects between Council officers in various sections and Friends of Bradford's Becks (FOBB). This report outlines the work carried out over the last year in collaboration to the catchment plan produced by FOBB that was supported by the Environment and Waste O&S Committee in 2013.

2. BACKGROUND

During the course of the year there have been work streams and developments involving FOBB and Council Officers in relation to Bradford Beck. An update on existing and emerging projects and initiatives are discussed below:

Local Levy Funded Projects

As discussed in previous reports, following the floods of December 2015 it was recognised that there was a need for a long term strategic approach to managing flood risk and associated environmental impacts across the Bradford district. In identifying this need the Council worked with the Environment Agency to scope and develop a Bradford Flood Programme Board. The Programme Board were able to secure local levy funding from the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to help deliver a range of aspirations. Following the success of the River Stewardship pilot project in 2016/17 and 2017/18, in collaboration with FOBB and the Aire Rivers Trust, further funding was secured to appoint a Project Officer to work with the Aire Rivers Trust. The post was filled in February 2018 and has worked on a range of projects through 2019/20. The Project Officer has assisted with the River Aire Care Project with an aim in creating a sustainable and active network of citizens looking after Bradford's rivers and supporting flood resilience activities on behalf of the community.

Bradford Beck River Restoration Project

CBMDC, The Environment Agency (EA), The Friends of Bradford Beck and the Wild Trout Trust are working in partnership to deliver a £90,000 EA funded scheme to re-naturalise the northern length of Bradford Beck. This includes the removal of Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), habitat creation works, pedestrian access improvements and works to improve fish passage. Fish passage works will include the installation of baffles on existing barriers to slow the flow of water in key areas. Habitat works will include the planting of wetland species in areas cleared of invasive species, together with the enhancement of woodland ecology on surrounding river banks. Improved footpaths and signage will help walkers access the beck and raise its profile amongst local residents. The main update is that the fish pass works are now on site with some complete and wetland planting and habitat creation works and taking place. The project is also looking at engaging with the market to design and build another larger scale (£25-30k) fish pass on the Environment Agency weir close to Leeds Road in Shipley.

Renaturalisation of Bradford Beck

Working with the Highways Majors Team in the Bradford to Shipley Improvement Scheme, a section of Bradford Beck between Poplars Road and Briggate has been identified to be renaturalised by diverting the watercourse around a dilapidated culvert. The Highways Scheme has recently been given West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) and

Council assurances to progress to a full business case. The culvert is in severely poor condition with life expectancy already passed. Failure of this culvert will result in an unacceptably high risk of flooding to surrounding properties, the highway network and infrastructure. Bradford Beck will be realigned to create additional flood water storage which will reduce the impact of climate change through mitigation and adaptation by managing the risk of flooding along the Corridor. This will also open up opportunities for measures to improve the river health of Bradford Beck that will recover water quality in accordance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and in accordance with the aspirations of the management plan 'Bradford Beck- A New Lease of Life' undertaken by the Aire River Trust in conjunction with the Friends of Bradford's Becks. The stabilisation of habitats by the naturalisation of the channel will also enhance biodiversity and green infrastructure by strengthening ecological networks particularly within and connecting to Bradford's Wildlife Habitat Networks. The Project will increase the species and habitat diversity by introducing a variety of grassland, woodland and wetland habitat and thus enable the area to support a wider range of species than at present. In this way, the conservation status of the site will be elevated. In addition, the proposal is a key ecological link in Bradford's Wildlife Habitat Network

A Peer Review Group will be established to evaluate the designs and ideas of the Project to ensure that the Project delivers multiple outcomes whilst achieving its main objective to reduce flood risk in the catchment. The Peer Review Group will monitor the Project during key milestones. It is intended that FOBB will sit on the Peer Review Group to include other stakeholders from the environmental community.

The Council has had an outline European Social Innovation Fund (ESIF) bid accepted and is currently working to submit a full ESIF application that will provide match funding so the project can realise its potential.

European Projects

The Council are within their fourth year of the sixth year BEGIN (Blue / Green infrastructure through social innovation) project which was approved in early September 2016 to EU North Sea Region Secretariat; The Lead Partner being the Municipality of Dordrecht in the Netherlands. The project is progressing and will help support the aspirations of the Council's Green Infrastructure Study. The emerging approach in respect of Green Infrastructure and flood risk is based on the creation of a Linear Park along the length of Bradford Beck, restoring the natural character of the beck, retaining areas of natural floodplain, introducing new areas and enhancing existing areas of greenspace whilst incorporating sustainable drainage within new developments. The BEGIN projects also aims to engage with communities to increase awareness of the Beck and its catchment.

Fish on a Bike Land Art

The Council's Drainage and recycling team worked with the Aire Rivers Trust and community volunteers to create "Fish on a Bike" land art alongside the River Aire in Shipley for the UCI World Road Cycling Championships (27/08/19). The 50m x 40m Fish on a Bicycle design was painted out by the artists 'Sand in Your Eye' and volunteers laid out recyclable waste on the image. The recycling team provided the waste during National Recycling Week to highlight the kind of items that can be recycled, rather than discarded or dumped, but which are all too often found in our local rivers. Not only do items discarded on or in rivers create a flood risk, but they cause pollution and blight areas. It highlighted the invaluable efforts of the local communities and their river stewardship work and the Developing the Natural Aire (DNAire) project: a project to revitalise one of

Yorkshire's longest rivers by reconnecting the ecology of the river through building fish passes on the last four high weirs below Gargrave, including Saltaire; allowing salmon to return to the river for the first time since the Industrial Revolution and at the same time reconnecting communities to the River Aire. This art project utilised the excitement in the build up to Bradford hosting a worldwide event and enabled us to connect community, sport, culture and the environment whilst raising awareness.

Monitoring and Data

The Council are in discussion with Bradford College and FOBB about future Beck monitoring including pollution monitoring. This aligns with Yorkshire Water's proposals for their Bradford Beck Catchment Investigation in Yorkshire Water's Price Review 2019 Water Industry National Environment Plan (PR19 WINEP) and the Council alongside FOBB has been consulted by Yorkshire Water in drafting these proposals.

The Council's SCORE team has released historical rainfall data and the Bradford Beck 2D Infoworks model as open data and this has been published by ICT on the Council's Datahub. The project is also currently looking at opening up and publishing near real time data from the Council's 12 rain gauges across the District.

Sediment Control

Following a series of sediment pollution incidents involving new developments, the Council met with FOBB to discuss if there were any opportunities through the development control and planning process to help prevent future pollution incidents. Although the policy and responsibility for sediment control is complicated, it was agreed that guidance and warnings could be included in pre planning application advice and as footnotes on planning application decision notices with the intention of raising awareness to developers of these types of pollution incidents.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Friends of Bradford Becks have provided an update to their work streams during 2019/20 and the report is included as appendix 1.

The Environment Agency has been approached on pollution incidents that have been reported on Bradford Beck and its tributaries during 2019/20. This data is included as appendix 2.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

None

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

None

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

None

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

None

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

None

7.6 TRADE UNION

None

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

None

7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

None

7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

None

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

None

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Friends of Bradford's Becks and the Strategic Director, Place be requested to work jointly on studies and proposals for the Canal Road Area.
2. That the Friends of Bradford's Becks be invited to report back in a year's time.
3. That this report be noted and that the ongoing collaboration between officers and the Friends of Bradford's Becks be supported.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Friends of Bradford Becks summary of activities 2019/ 20

Appendix 2 - Environment Agency Pollution Incidents 2019/ 20

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Bradford's Becks – a New Lease of Life

Available online from:

<http://bradfordbeckdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/bradfordsbecksfinalweboptimised.pdf>