

Section 60 response to *For a rainy day* – the Mayor’s role in managing London’s flood risk in case of severe rainfall

Recommendation 1: The Mayor should ensure that the Drain London flood risk data are available to the public, alongside information about what householders can do if they live in a flood risk area. Ways to make the data available could include the Water and/or Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, the London Datastore, the Environment Agency’s existing publication of river and coastal flood risk maps and local borough publication.

Response: The Drain London flood risk data is in the final stages of being proofed by the boroughs and their consultants. Strategic, Londonwide data, such as that presented in Fig 34 in the Mayor’s Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, will be made publicly available via the London Datastore. Local flood risk information will also be available through the respective boroughs, either as they make their surface water management plans available or, through the Local Flood Risk Management Strategies that each borough has to produce. The Drain London Portal, an online tool for professional flood risk management partners, will also provide the information via a web browser and GIS database.

Recommendation 2: The Mayor should extend the applicability of the Green Roofs Fund to include other forms of sustainable drainage to support more exemplar projects to stimulate commercial interest.

Where possible, the Mayor should also ensure that the GLA Group estate exemplifies sustainable drainage in its own property works.

Response: To date, the funding has been used to fund the retrofit of two green roofs (Museum of London and Kemp House) and to undertake a green infrastructure audit of Victoria Business Improvement District. The audit identified significant opportunities for sustainable drainage (SUDs), including 26 green roofs, and is expected to lead to at least £100k of projects in the short term. Given the success of working with Victoria BID, the Drain London Board has approved the spending of the remaining Green Roof Fund on undertaking further green infrastructure audits in up to 10 additional BIDs. In this way, the available funding should have a greater leveraging effect. I am keen that GLA Group properties utilise sustainable drainage. This should be a consideration in future maintenance and repair projects. Whilst not being a directly GLA Group property, West Ham Bus Depot will have a green roof and rainwater harvesting, which will collect rain to be used for washing buses.

Recommendation 3: The Mayor, in his final Water and/or Climate Change Adaptation Strategies and their implementation, should raise awareness of the environmental impacts of garden paving and awareness of environmentally sustainable surface materials.

Response: This is done in both Strategies; see Chapter 5 in the Water Strategy and Chapter 3 in the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

Recommendation 4: The Mayor should retain the target to restore 15km of rivers in the final version of his Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, and set out a plan for how this can be realised.

Response: This target is now included as Key Performance Indicator 23 in the London Plan, along with a target of a further 10km by 2020. There is always an element of windfall opportunity in achieving such a target, so I have not set out a definitive plan for how this will be realised but GLA officers have helped to produce the London Rivers Action Plan which identifies many of the opportunities for river restoration.

Recommendation 5: The Mayor should join the Assembly in calling for the forthcoming Water White Paper to address Thames Water's need to work directly with households to rectify misconnected drains.

Response: The Water White Paper is expected to cover many issues. I support the current ConnectRight campaign by Defra, but I recognise that this is a long standing, difficult and recurring problem, that will require further action. The Environment Agency has commenced a more targeted programme of working on the Lower Lee catchment in the Lee Valley with the aim of linking action across different partners to tackle issues including mis-connections. I will support this process and aim to spread any positive results to other parts of London.

Recommendation 6: The Mayor should set out, in the final Water and/or Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, steps to identify and secure sources of short, medium and long-term funding from public, private and third sectors for the delivery of priority flood protection projects, including those in the Drain London, London Rivers Action Plan and London Green Grid programmes.

Response: There are two significant sources of funding available, Environment Agency Flood Defence Grant in Aid, administered by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and Thames Water's capital programme. Officers are in close contact with both the Environment Agency and Thames Water about priorities for these funds. Furthermore we are using Drain London information and funding to develop a pipeline of projects that can be funded by FGDIA. We are also working through the 'Greenstreets' project to develop the business case for using 'green infrastructure' to complement 'grey infrastructure' in flood risk management and seek very significant funding from Thames Water through helping them present the case to Ofwat in the next round of business planning (2014 and beyond). We are also working with the insurance sector to incentivise and reward flood risk management activity through the pricing and coverage of insurance premiums.

In terms of direct funding that I control, the Drain London Tier 3 funding is secure and I have spread its funding over a longer time frame to ensure that it is used to the best effect. This means that there will be approximately £1m available during 2012-13 and £450k in 2013-14 on top of the £1.75m that will have been spent to the end of March 2012.

There will of course be future funding sources, including from new development and it is important that relevant flood risk management organisations maintain awareness about where those may come from, the Drain London Forum will assist with this.

Recommendation 7: The Mayor should set out, in the final Water and/or Climate Change Adaptation Strategies, what steps he can take to support a mechanism to develop partnerships to take forward flood risk mitigation works.

Response: The key role here is really with London boroughs as Lead Local Flood Authorities. Nevertheless the GLA should act as a co-ordinating body. Through the hard work of officers we have a well established Drain London network across the boroughs and other flood risk management authorities such as TfL, Environment Agency and Thames Water. I would like to see this role continue as I understand that everyone benefits from sharing the knowledge that is available amongst all the bodies and from pooling resources that are available. We are working closely with London Councils who currently have two Environment Agency helping boroughs build their capacity and establish partnerships.