

NOTICE OF MOTION – CLLR E NICHOLSON – RETROSPECTIVE SURFACE WATER ACTION

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 30 March 2023, the Council referred the following Notice of Motion to the Executive.

Councillor E Nicholson

“Retrospective Surface Water Action

The latest State of the UK Climate report indicates the UK has become wetter over the last few decades, although with significant annual variation. 2011-2020 was 9% wetter than 1961-1990. From the start of the observational record in 1862, six of the ten wettest years across the UK have occurred since 1998.

The recent UK climate projections (UKCP18) provide the most up-to-date assessment of how the UK climate could change over the 21st century. Overall, the UK is expected to experience wetter winters and drier summers.

However, rain that does fall in summer will likely be more intense than what we currently experience. For example, rainfall from an event that typically occurs once every 2 years in summer is expected to increase by around 25%. This will impact on the frequency and severity of surface water flooding, particularly in urban areas.

In towns and cities, flash floods are a growing problem. Concrete can't soak up rainwater, so in heavy downpours it has nowhere to go except into drains, overloading sewers and setting off flash floods. During the recent heavy rainfall, the water caused slippages within the station underpass and led to pooling of water within areas of the town centre.

Therefore this motion proposes that this Council:

1. Engages with South West Trains to seek to secure surface water drainage systems are retrospectively fitted to the two entrances to the station underpass and /or other measures to capture rainwater are installed to reduce the excess water overspill causing slippage within the underpass.
2. That Woking planning applications continue to be assessed with surface water drainage systems in mind and that the County, as the lead flood authority is consulted on planning applications where required.
3. That Woking Borough Council work proactively with the partners to green Victoria Square, and introduce features such as rainwater gardens in line with the aspirations of the town centre Masterplan.”

Notice of Motion – Cllr E Nicholson – Retrospective Surface Water Action

Revised Motion

“As South West Trains has been replaced by South Western Railway, and to reflect the parties with responsibilities for the station, Councillor Nicholson supports amending the Motion to replace the words ‘South West Trains’ with the words ‘Network Rail and South Western Railway’. Revised Motion set out below:

Councillor E Nicholson

“Retrospective Surface Water Action

The latest State of the UK Climate report indicates the UK has become wetter over the last few decades, although with significant annual variation. 2011-2020 was 9% wetter than 1961-1990. From the start of the observational record in 1862, six of the ten wettest years across the UK have occurred since 1998.

The recent UK climate projections (UKCP18) provide the most up-to-date assessment of how the UK climate could change over the 21st century. Overall, the UK is expected to experience wetter winters and drier summers.

However, rain that does fall in summer will likely be more intense than what we currently experience. For example, rainfall from an event that typically occurs once every 2 years in summer is expected to increase by around 25%. This will impact on the frequency and severity of surface water flooding, particularly in urban areas.

In towns and cities, flash floods are a growing problem. Concrete can't soak up rainwater, so in heavy downpours it has nowhere to go except into drains, overloading sewers and setting off flash floods. During the recent heavy rainfall, the water caused slippages within the station underpass and led to pooling of water within areas of the town centre.

Therefore this motion proposes that this Council:

1. Engages with Network Rail and South Western Railway to seek to secure surface water drainage systems are retrospectively fitted to the two entrances to the station underpass and /or other measures to capture rainwater are installed to reduce the excess water overspill causing slippage within the underpass.
2. That Woking planning applications continue to be assessed with surface water drainage systems in mind and that the County, as the lead flood authority is consulted on planning applications where required.
3. That Woking Borough Council work proactively with the partners to green Victoria Square, and introduce features such as rainwater gardens in line with the aspirations of the town centre Masterplan.”

Notice of Motion – Cllr E Nicholson – Retrospective Surface Water Action

Officer Comment

- “1. *Engages with Network Rail and South Western Railway to seek to secure surface water drainage systems are retrospectively fitted to the two entrances to the station underpass and /or other measures to capture rainwater are installed to reduce the excess water overspill causing slippage within the underpass.*

This Council funded the recent improvements to the underpass using grant funds but recognise that there is more that could be done to improve the environment for users. Proposals to say, retrofit drainage systems, would require an extensive discussion with Network Rail’s Basic Asset Protection team and funding from them or South Western Railway. In addition to retrofit works, Network Rail and the train operator could be encouraged to measures such as installing green roofs on subway structures such as station building to help capture rainwater and reduce runoff and / or the possibility of retrospectively installing permeable paving in car parks, pavements or other areas to help reducing runoff and allow rainwater to infiltrate into the ground.

2. *That Woking planning applications continue to be assessed with surface water drainage systems in mind and that the County, as the lead flood authority is consulted on planning applications where required.*

With regards to surface water drainage, the current criteria used for consultation is based upon the type of development proposed and its location. Householder development of up to 30sq.m is covered by the Building Regulations. However, in areas where the surface water risk is very high (1 in 30 year event), a standard condition would be used.

Planners would consult the County for developments comprising of 1-5 dwellings, buildings between 30-100sq.m, sites up to 0.5ha and householder extensions greater than 30sq.m in areas designated as high risk (1 in 100 years) and very high risk (1 in 30 years). Where such proposals are in medium surface water risk areas (1 in 100 years) or within 20m of a very high surface water risk area, the standard condition would be used.

For all proposals involving 5 dwellings or more, a building of more than 100sq.m, or where the site area is greater than 0.5ha, we would consult drainage colleagues at Surrey County Council where the proposals are in a medium (1 in 1000 years), high risk (1 in 100 years) or very high risk (1 in 30 years) areas or are within 20m of a very high risk area.

3. *That Woking Borough Council work proactively with the partners to green Victoria Square, and introduce features such as rainwater gardens in line with the aspirations of the town centre Masterplan.*

As you have already mentioned, the draft Town Centre Masterplan highlights opportunities for further integration of green infrastructure into Woking town centre. It states ‘Woking Town Centre will be... a place where it is expected that development will be of exemplary design within the framework of the Townscape Strategy for the Town Centre and with green infrastructure and biodiversity embedded as an essential and integral part of the design’.

The Masterplan notes the ‘significant public realm and wayfinding improvements already achieved, with good quality and quantity of pedestrian-priority spaces’ but also recognises further scope; for example, ‘more trees and planting on streets and in public spaces would help soften and green streets and spaces in a number of locations’ as well as other facilities; ‘...this may require enabling improvements to the public realm, such as more seating and improved spaces for performance’.

Additional urban greening will assist air quality and in terms of adapting to effects of climate change but any proposals would need to be resourced; their careful planning, delivery and ongoing maintenance. Council Officers will continue to discuss options for the greening of the

Notice of Motion – Cllr E Nicholson – Retrospective Surface Water Action

town centre and continues its current programme of work including the installation of rainwater gardens, funded by grant.”

- Background Papers:** None.
- Reporting Person:** Councillor Ellen Nicholson
Email: cllreellen.nicholson@woking.gov.uk
Beverley Kuchar, Acting Strategic Director - Place
Email: beverley.kuchar@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3473
- Contact Person:** Tracey Haskins, Green Infrastructure Manager
Email: tracey.haskins@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3477
Thomas James, Development Manager
Email: thomas.james@woking.gov.uk, Extn: 3435
- Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Peter Graves
Email: cllrpeter.graves@woking.gov.uk
Councillor Liam Lyons
Email: cllrliam.lyons@woking.gov.uk
- Date Published:** 7 June 2023