

Cabinet

10 September 2014

Flooding – Scrutiny Review Report



Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the key findings and recommendations of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee review group report on flooding.

Background

- 2 At the meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 21 June 2013 members as part of the refresh of the work programme for 2013-2015 identified flooding as a future Scrutiny Review project. It was felt by the committee that flooding was a topical issue and that as a result of flooding incidents within County Durham causing damage in local communities and impacting on service delivery there was a need to examine whether the policies and plans in place were 'fit for purpose' and minimised the impact of flooding within the County.
- 3 A review group was established consisting of ten members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The group has met on 8 occasions with an update on the progress of the review group given to members at the meeting of the committee on the 24th January 2014. In addition, the review group has visited various flood mitigation schemes within the County and received information from members of Durham County Council about the impact of flooding within their localities.
- 4 It was agreed by the group that the review would focus on:
 - What policies and plans are in place to manage flood risk in County Durham?
 - How Durham County Council (DCC) and partners work together to mitigate the risk of flooding.
 - Establish what emergency plans are currently in place in the event of flooding incidents occurring and the role and responsibilities of Neighbourhood Services and the Civil Contingencies Unit.
 - Establish the role of planning policies in mitigating the risk of flooding both in relation to new development and the capacity of an ageing sewerage and drainage system to cope with increased demand.

- Investigate funding available to DCC and partners in relation to preventing flooding incidents and alleviating the impact of flooding.
- Establish how we communicate with, engage and involve communities in flood risk management including vulnerable groups.
- Establish how DCC should discharge its statutory responsibilities regarding the specific role of Overview and Scrutiny in relation to flood risk management.

5 The key findings of the review group are identified in the attached report (Appendix 2) which resulted in the formulation of the following recommendations:

- That Durham County Council continue to maximise the funding opportunities available for flood prevention schemes through the Flood Defence Local Levy, the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid Scheme and the EU funding programme 2014-2020.
- That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in their role as the designated Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee formalise the process for engaging with the Flood Risk Management Authorities within County Durham by meeting on an annual basis. As part of this role the committee would receive information from Northumbrian Water Limited on sewerage treatment capacity within County Durham.
- That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive the minutes of the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC) and the Durham Strategic Flood Prevention Group (DSFPG) on a quarterly basis together with regular updates on:
 - The development of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems Approval Body (SAB).
 - Additional Drainage Area Studies (DAS) undertaken.
 - The development of the new approach to building community resilience.
 - Work undertaken with private land owners including detail of actions taken and any flood prevention measures implemented.
 - Lessons learned from flooding incidents.
- That the importance of Policy 46 in the emerging County Durham Plan is highlighted in relation to managing flood risk.
- That Durham County Council establishes the appropriate mechanisms to enable it to collect any charges in respect of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) that have been adopted by the Council.
- That Durham County Council as part of the Customer First Strategy introduces a flooding hotline number for use during flooding emergencies.
- That a review of this report and progress made against recommendations will be undertaken six months after the report is

considered by Cabinet and that those members who have experienced flooding incidents within their localities receive an update of the progress made against the recommendations.

Service response

- 6 The following comments have been received from Neighbourhood Services:

Neighbourhood Services welcome the key findings and recommendations of the Flooding Scrutiny Review Report and would like to thank the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for reviewing this issue and helping to raise the awareness of the work undertaken by DCC and partners to mitigate flood risk. The report highlights the close partnership working within County Durham which has resulted in the development of a strong policy and planning framework which we will continue to build upon, maximising the funding opportunities available to carry out further flood mitigation projects in the future.

In addition, the Service Grouping is pleased to provide updates to members of progress made in relation to the various recommendations contained within the review report.

Recommendation

- 7 That Cabinet notes the recommendations in the attached report (Appendix 2) and formulates a response within the six month period identified in the report for the systematic review of recommendations.

Background papers:

Flooding Scrutiny Review Group Report

Contact:	Tom Gorman	Tel:	03000 268 027
		E-mail:	tom.gorman@durham.gov.uk

Author:	Diane Close	Tel:	03000 268 141
		E-mail:	diane.close@durham.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – The report identifies the importance of Durham County Council utilising all funding opportunities available to mitigate flood risk within the County including the Flood Defence Local Levy, the Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant in Aid Scheme, DCC revenue and capital programmes, EU Funding Programme 2014-2020 and funding via Northumbrian Water Limited according to a specific criteria. In addition Durham County Council will need to establish the appropriate mechanisms to enable it to collect any charges in respect of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) that have been adopted by the council.

Staffing – None.

Risk – As Lead Local Flood Authority Durham County Council has responsibility for preparing a strategy for local flood risk management.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – The report identifies groups that will be more at risk during flooding incidents including older people, people with disability and younger people. The review report takes into consideration Equality and Diversity which has resulted in the necessary Equality Impact Assessment being carried out.

Accommodation – None

Crime and Disorder – None

Human Rights – None

Consultation – None

Procurement – None

Disability Issues – The report identifies groups that will be more at risk during flooding incidents which includes people with a disability and the elderly. During emergency flooding incidents Civil Contingency officers will be aware of local residents who will require more assistance ensuring that support is provided to the vulnerable.

Legal Implications - None