

3 February 2020

**DCC's proposed Water Management Policies
and activities of the Flood Risk Management Authorities
for County Durham**

Report of John Hewitt, Corporate Director of Resources

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide background information for Members on the role and responsibilities of the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC (ESC OSC) as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham prior to receiving a presentation on the water management policies within the County Durham Plan and presentations from the Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) for County Durham.

Executive summary

- 2 The ESC OSC has been designated by DCC as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham to comply with the requirements of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Localism Act 2011.
- 3 In 2014, the committee carried out a scrutiny review of flood risk management arrangement in County Durham and made several recommendations. The review report included a recommendation that in addition to receiving reports and presentations following severe flooding incidents in the county, the ESC OSC in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee engages with the RMAs for County Durham on an annual basis.

- 4 The first annual meeting with the RMAs was held in 4 February 2015 where members received presentations from Durham County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority for County Durham), Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) and the Environment Agency (EA). Subsequently, the committee when considering its future work programme in July ensures that a special meeting with the RMAs is scheduled in February. In addition to the RMAs attending this meeting arrangements have been made for the meeting to provide detail of progress in relation to the water management policies within the emerging County Durham Plan.
- 5 Arrangements have been made for representatives from the RMAs to attend the special meeting of ESC OSC on the 3 February 2020 with presentations providing detail of:
 - Investment programmes including detail of funding
 - Flood mitigation schemes undertaken including details of partnership Working
 - Future plans including detail of investment planned and various Schemes

In addition, arrangements have been made for an officer from Spatial Planning and Policy to attend the meeting to deliver a presentation providing an update on the proposed water management policies in the County Durham Plan.

A copy of the various presentations are attached as Appendix 2.

Recommendations

- 6 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham note and comment upon the information provided in the respective presentations.
- 7 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham receive further presentations from the Risk Management Authorities at a future special meeting of the committee arranged for February 2021.

Background

- 8 As part of the refresh of the work programme in 2013/14 the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny identified flooding as the topic for a focused scrutiny review. Members of the committee felt that flooding was a topical issue with flooding

incidents in the county causing damage to local communities and impacting on service delivery. The review focused on ensuring that the policies and plans that DCC and partners had in place to deal with flooding incidents were 'fit for purpose'.

- 9 The review commenced in October 2013, consisted of eight meetings together with visits to various flood mitigation schemes within the County and concluded in May 2014. The review process involved receiving information from the RMAs for County Durham, DCC, NWL and the EA. The report and recommendations were considered by Cabinet on the 10 September, 2014 and shared with the County Durham Environment Partnership Board in December, 2014.
- 10 At the review group meeting held on the 14 March 2014 members received a report detailing the specific role for Overview and Scrutiny Committees of Lead Local Flood Authorities (DCC is the Lead Local Flood Authority for County Durham) under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Localism Act 2011. Under this legislation Overview and Scrutiny within DCC has to designate an Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham. The Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC has been designated this role for the purposes of the legislation
- 11 At the meeting of the scrutiny review group held on the 14 March 2014, Members commented that they felt the ESC OSC had taken a reactive role receiving reports and presentation following flooding incidents in the county and that there was a need for the committee to be pro-active in its future approach.
- 12 It was therefore recommended by the scrutiny review report that the ESC OSC engage with the RMAs for County Durham on an annual basis (Recommendation 2 of the review report). In addition, the committee has also undertaken visits to see the progress and development of various flood mitigation schemes in the county and also receives the minutes of the Northumbria Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and the Durham Strategic Flood Prevention Group.
- 13 As a result of the recommendation, the committee when considering its future work programme in July ensures that a special meeting with the RMAs is scheduled in February. In addition to the RMAs attending this meeting arrangements have been made for members to receive an update on the water management policies proposed within the emerging County Durham Plan.

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Main implications

15 The ESC OSC in its role as the as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham will have questioned the RMAs for County Durham on projects/schemes undertaken, funding, challenges and opportunities and will have the opportunity to raise any issues.

Conclusions

16 The committee continues to be pro-active in undertaking its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham, engaging with the RMAs on an annual basis to determine whether their policies and programmes are 'fit for purpose' in mitigating flood risk in the county.

Background papers

- Flooding scrutiny review report 2014
- Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC – 8 February 2019 – Risk Management Authorities for County Durham

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Not applicable

Finance

Not applicable

Consultation

Not applicable

Equality and Diversity/Public Sector Equality Duty

Not applicable

Human Rights

Not applicable

Climate Change

Durham County Council has declared a Climate Emergency and the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a key role in monitoring the performance of DCC and partners in relation to key plans including the SUPs action plan, the Emergency Response Plan, the Carbon Management Plan and the Air Quality Action Plan. In addition, the role of the committee as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham ensures that the committee continues to engage with the RMAs for County Durham to monitor their activities to mitigate flood risk in the county.

Crime and Disorder

Not applicable

Staffing

Not applicable

Accommodation

Not applicable

Risk

Not applicable

Procurement

Not applicable