

**Environment and Sustainable
Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**



11 July 2014

**Flooding – Scrutiny Review
Report**

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The attached report presents the findings and recommendations of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committees Flooding Scrutiny Review.

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 The review 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 the Neighbourhood Services Service Grouping 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.
- 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) 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 landowners.
 - Lessons learned from flooding incidents.
- 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 investigates the possibility of 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, we will be pleased to provide updates to members of progress made in relation to the various recommendations contained within the review report.

Next steps

- 7 It is intended that the report will be considered by the Corporate Management Team at the meeting on the 23 July 2014 with the report then considered by Cabinet on 10 September 2014.

Recommendations

- 8 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee agree the report of the Flooding Scrutiny Review Group.
- 9 That the report of the Scrutiny Review Group is submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

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 – In accordance with its agreed Equality and Diversity strategy, the Council will undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of the implications of flood risk upon vulnerable groups within County Durham. The report identifies groups that will be more at risk during flooding incidents. This includes older people, people with disability and younger people.

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. 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