

4 February 2015

**Flood Risk Management Authorities for
County Durham**

Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide background information for members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the role and responsibilities of the committee as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham prior to receiving presentations from the Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) for County Durham (Durham County Council (DCC), Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency).
- 2 Members will recall that as part of the refresh of the work programme the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny identified flooding as the topic for 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 Durham County Council (DCC) and partners had in place to deal with flooding were 'fit for purpose'.
- 3 The review commenced in October 2013, consisted of 8 meetings and a visit 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 which are DCC, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency. The report and recommendations were considered by Cabinet at the meeting on the 10 September, 2014.

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee

- 4 At the meeting of the review group 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 Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been designated the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham as a result of the above legislation.

- 5 The legislation requires that Overview and Scrutiny Committees in Lead Local Flood Authorities to hold RMAs to account with RMAs under a duty to comply with a request made by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information or a response to a report in relation to its flood or coastal risk management function.
- 6 The Environment and Sustainable Communities in the past had taken a reactive approach in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham receiving reports and presentations following flooding incidents detailing how DCC and partners had responded.
- 7 It was felt by the scrutiny review group that in addition to receiving reports and presentations following flooding incidents within the County there was a need for the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Committee for County Durham to be proactive in approach. It was therefore recommended within the scrutiny review report that the committee engage with the RMAs for County Durham on an annual basis (Recommendation 2 of report).

Current Position

- 8 A special meeting of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee has been arranged for the 4 February, 2015 at which members will receive a progress update on the recommendation contained in the Flooding scrutiny review report together with presentations from the RMAs for County Durham (DCC, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency) providing an opportunity for members to engage with the RMAs. The presentations will focus on:
 - An update on flood mitigation schemes within the County.
 - Future flood mitigation schemes together with detail of funding.
 - Any issues in relation to current and future flood mitigation schemes within County Durham.
- 9 The Flooding scrutiny review report also recommended that those County Council members who had experienced incidents of flooding within their communities should be kept updated on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the scrutiny review report and therefore an invitation has been sent to these members providing an opportunity for them to attend the meeting on the 4 February, 2015 (Recommendation 7 of report).

Recommendations

- 10 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 in the respective presentations.

- 11 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 scheduled for February 2016.

Background papers

Flooding scrutiny review report 2014

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Appendix 1: Implications

Finance – None

Staffing – None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity – None.

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation – None

Procurement - None

Disability Discrimination Act – None

Legal Implications –None