

4 February 2015

**Update: Flooding Scrutiny
Review**

**Joint Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive
and Terry Collins, Corporate Director, Neighbourhood
Services**

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The attached Appendix 2 describes the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained within the 'Flooding' Scrutiny Review report published in September, 2014.

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 met on 8 occasions which included a visit to various flood mitigation schemes within the County and a meeting where members of Durham County Council provided detail of the impact of flooding within their localities.
- 4 The Flooding scrutiny review report was considered by Cabinet at the meeting on the 10 September, 2014. At that meeting Cabinet agreed the recommendations contained within the review report which included a recommendation for a six monthly update on progress against recommendations contained in the report. It is therefore considered timely for an update to be given to members at the special meeting of the committee arranged for the 4 February when members will also receive presentations from the Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham.

Terms of Reference of Review

5 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?

Recommendations of the Review

6 The Scrutiny review made the following recommendations:

- That DCC 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.
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- 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.

Current position

- 7 The attached Action Plan (Appendix 2) provides information on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny review report.

Next steps

- 8 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the systematic review process will receive a further update of progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the review report at a future meeting of the Committee.

Recommendations

- 9 Members of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to consider and comment upon the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Review report.

- 10 That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further report detailing progress made against the recommendations contained in the Scrutiny Review report at a future meeting of the Committee.

Background Paper(s)

Flooding Scrutiny Review Group Report - 2014

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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 and 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. 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