

**8 February 2016**

**Flood Risk Management Authorities for  
County Durham**

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**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Assistant Chief Executive**

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**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).

**Background**

- 2 Members will recall that as part of the refresh of the work programme for 2013/14 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 together with 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 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 this 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 the review report).
- 8 On the 4 February 2015 the first annual meeting was held with the RMAs for County Durham where members received presentations from DCC, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency providing an opportunity for members to both engage with and ask questions of the RMAs.

### **Current position**

- 9 The Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee continues to receive updates on the progress made in relation to the recommendations contained in the Flooding Scrutiny Review Report, with the last update provided to members at the meeting on the 12 October 2015. A further update will be included within the work programme for 2016/17.
- 10 Arrangements have been made for representatives from the RMAs for County Durham to attend the special meeting of Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on the 8 February 2016 at which members will receive presentations from the RMAs for County Durham (DCC, Northumbrian Water and the Environment Agency) focusing 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.

### **Recommendations**

- 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 note and comment upon the information provided in the respective presentations.

- 12 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 in February 2017.

**Background papers:**

Flooding scrutiny review report 2014

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**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**