

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

At a Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 6 February 2017 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor B Graham (Chairman)**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors E Adam, J Armstrong, J Clark, J Gray, B Kellett, A Liversidge, P May, O Milburn, S Morrison, J Shuttleworth, P Stradling and L Taylor

**Also Present:**

Councillor T Smith

### **1 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, J Clare, D Hall and I Jewell.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

### **3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

### **4 Any items from Co-opted Members or interested parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

### **5 Flood Risk Management Authorities for County Durham - Updates**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided background information 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 Ltd (NWL) and the Environment Agency (EA)) (for copy of report and slides of presentations, see file of minutes).

## **Durham County Council**

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Technical Services and the Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager, Regeneration and Local Services that highlighted the following points:-

- Review for 2016/17 – 48 schemes with a total value of £1.2m
- Grant Funded Schemes for 2016/17 – including Lanchester and Great Bridge and risk money schemes at Etherley, Witton Gilbert and St. Johns Chapel.
- Going Forward – EA programme of 21 schemes with a total value of £1.3m
- Medium Term Investment Plan 2015-2026 – total value of £4m with significant contributions from DCC
- Partnership Working – Examples of the various forums for partnership working-current partnership working is positive and constructive at all levels
- Lanchester Scheme – holistic scheme developed with a hydraulic model to help recover more quickly from floods in the future. Landowners involved in the process.
- Sunnybrow Scheme – flood waters coming off fields and overwhelming the highway drainage – investigations found that minewater was being diverted into the NW sewer system
- Barnard Castle Bridge End – flood event 13 September 2016- investigations identified significant issues with highway drainage.
- Murton – flooding problems due to highway drainage and sewer capacity issues.
- Middleton in Teesdale – Flooding problems in Storm Desmond and Storm Eve – winter 2015/16 – residents received funding for installation of property level protection and work with landowners to clear surface water, culverts and ditches.

Councillor Shuttleworth made reference to the grant funded schemes for 2016/17 and asked for clarification as to the meaning of risk money for schemes at Etherley, Witton Gilbert and St. John's Chapel. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager explained that risk money relates to a contingency element included in the funding of some schemes which could be drawn down should unexpected issues arise on site.

Councillor T Smith commented on the excellent partnership working in the county undertaken by the Risk Management Authorities and then highlighted the importance of County Council members reporting flooding incidents in their localities. She continued that funding was available for flood alleviation schemes however the relevant DCC officers need to be made aware of flooding incidents to then instigate the necessary investigations to be undertaken. Councillor Smith then continued by providing details of how she had reported local residents using sand bags, which had resulted in an investigation by DCC officers and it had been determined that the flooding issue was the result of blocked gullies which were then cleaned and the issue resolved.

The Chairman responded that members of the committee were aware of the need to report flooding incidents and the contact details of the relevant DCC officers.

Councillor May commented that in relation to the Medium Term Investment Plan 2015-2026 mention was made of a scheme at Cherry Banks, Chester-le-Street and as a local member he was not aware of this scheme. He asked if it was possible to inform local members of any scheme in their localities detailing the nature of the scheme, what work was entailed and the amount of funding available. The Drainage and Coastal Protection

Manager responded that local members would be provided with this detail in future and that in relation to the proposed scheme at Cherry Banks, there had been no recent communication received from the resident so it was possible that the recent flood mitigation work undertaken on the A167 had solved this flooding issue.

Councillor Milburn informed members that Councillor Nearney and herself had recently been involved in an interview process regarding a flooding study and had provided detailed information of local flooding incidents however she had received no feedback concerning the input she had provided and assumed this had been shared with the appropriate DCC officers and partners. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that the interview was part of a dissertation and that the information provided had not been shared with DCC officers. The Head of Technical Services responded that members could speak to his team directly and report flooding incidents as there was an issue of under reporting. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager, NWL commented that the data in any dissertations they were involved in was fed into their data collection systems..

The Chairman requested clarification as to whether the turning off of pumps in local collieries had resulted in any flooding incidents in the county. The Team Leader Partnerships and Strategic Overview, EA commented that the Coal Authority had to undertake a full evaluation of the implications of reducing the pumping of mine water.

Councillor Kellett commented that in relation to Low Pittington there was a regular problem with flooding involving a mixture of sewerage and water, work had been undertaken to alleviate flooding which had required the cleaning of a culvert. An application had now been submitted for open casting in the same area which potentially could cause further flooding issues. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that the planning application had been put back so that further investigations could be undertaken regarding the proposed site.

Councillor Armstrong asked how the Brexit decision would affect the funding of flood mitigation schemes. The Head of Technical Services commented that those schemes identified in the Medium Term Investment Plan 2015-2026 were funded from the Local Levy and Government. It was the schemes which required EU funding that could be affected. For example, Environment Agency led schemes such as the Chester-le-Street (NELEP) culvert scheme. However, this scheme would be pursued as far as possible until a decision was made regarding funding and should EU funding not be available then alternative sources of funding would be investigated.

### **Northumbrian Water Limited**

The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager gave a presentation that included detail of the following:-

- Interactive portal – [www.nwlcommunityportal.co.uk](http://www.nwlcommunityportal.co.uk)
- Completed Sewer Network Schemes 2016
- Planned Sewer Network Schemes 2017– Murton Phases 1 and 2
- Sewage Treatment Works Investment
  - Completed – Tudhoe Mill
  - Commencing investment – Tanfield, Browney and Aycliffe
  - Investment currently planned in the next 24 months – Wolsingham, Ramshaw, Butterknowle, Cockfield, Chilton Lane, Windlestone, Bishop

Middleham, University, Aldin Grange/Bearpark, Seaham, Consett and Barkers Haugh

- Joint Working – Lanchester integrated hydraulic model
- The Future – more sustainable approach
  - Dwaine Pipe – talks in the community and app created for mobile phones
  - Every Drop Counts – water conservation projects
  - Super Splash Heroes – 100 primary schools across the North East involved in play and short workshop sessions
  - More Sustainable Approach
  - Blue Green Pledge
- Coming Soon – the Green Light of Durham City

Councillor Milburn commented that Stanley and Tanfield had been involved in the 'Every Drop Counts' project and asked about take up. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager (NWL) commented that take up had been good and that experience had shown that where projects resulted in a saving for customers then take up was always good.

Councillor May commented that the Government were currently encouraging more housing development and it was anticipated that Government's Housing White Paper would place further requirements on local authorities to further increase housing development. He asked if we had any detail on what the increase would be in the White Paper and if NWL would be able to cope with the additional flood mitigation requirements resulting from increased housing development. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager (NWL) commented that NWL see further housing development as an opportunity not a problem as there were so many different options available to deal with flood mitigation resulting from increased development including Retention Basins and Swales. The Senior Policy Officer, DCC added that it was still not known as to how the White Paper would affect housing development in County Durham as the formula to be used by local authorities to calculate the number of new homes to be provided in the county had not been released.

The Chairman commented that she was pleased to see the investment of £3m in the Tudhoe Mill sewage treatment works as she had previously expressed concerns about capacity following the approval of further housing development. The Assistant Sustainable Sewerage Manager (NWL) responded that NWL had worked with the developer and phased the further development of the sewage treatment works with the housing development.

### **Environment Agency**

The Committee received a final presentation from the Team Leader Partnerships and Strategic Overview that highlighted the following points:-

- Indicative Allocations 2017-2021
- Six Year FCRM Investment Programme – Wolsingham, Stanhope, Staindrop, Tindale Beck, Chester-le-Street, Weardale, Barnard Castle and Chester Burn
- Completed EA Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS) in 2016/17
- Developing FAS in County Durham
- Asset Maintenance – 168 assets in County Durham with £460k allocation for 2017-18
- The Future

- Integrated management of flood risk
- Strong partnerships
- Funding challenges
- Local Flood Risk Action Plan

Councillor May asked that in relation to the Chester-le-Street (NELEP) culvert, what would the cost be and the timescale for the project. The Team Leader Partnerships and Strategic Overview (EA) responded that the project was currently being assessed and that part of this process would be determining the cost of the project although it was currently known that Government funding would not be enough to meet the total cost and that EU funding would be required. It was anticipated that the project could take between 3 to 5 years for completion.

Councillor Armstrong commented that the strong message coming through from all three presentations was the excellent partnership working between the RMA's.

The Chairman agreed that the presentations had shown how excellent partnership working had resulted in the development and delivery of successful flood mitigation schemes in the county however she highlighted the need for RMA's to ensure that local members were kept updated on schemes and projects in their local communities.

The Chairman thanked Officers for their presentations and asked Members to agree the recommendations outlined in the report.

**Resolved:**

- (i) 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 the information provided in the presentations.
- (ii) That the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in its role as the Flood and Coastal Erosion Management Committee for County Durham receive further presentations from the Risk Management Authorities at a future special meeting of the committee in February 2018.