

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Special Meeting of **Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 1A, County Hall, Durham on **Friday 2 February 2018 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor E Adam (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors O Milburn, D Bell, J Clare, J Clark, P Howell, P Jopling, L Maddison, R Manchester, C Martin, A Simpson, L Taylor and M Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr T Bolton and Mr D Kinch

1 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Avery, L Brown, R Crute, A Gardner, A Patterson, P Sexton and S Zair.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor L Maddison substituted for Councillor Gardner.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

4 Items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

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

5 Water Management and County Durham Plan

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 a presentation from Spatial Policy providing an overview of the Water Management Policies within the County Durham Plan and presentations from the Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) for County Durham (Durham County Council (DCC), Northumbrian Water Ltd (NWL) and the Environment Agency (EA)), detailing activity

undertaken in the county (for copy of report and slides of presentations, see file of minutes).

County Durham Plan – Water Management Policies

The Committee received a presentation from the Principal Policy Officer, Spatial Planning and Policy, Regeneration and Local Services that highlighted the following points:-

- County Durham Plan timetable
- Water Management Policies – policies developed in partnership, 2 policies water management and water infrastructure
- Water Management Policy – Flood Risk, SuDS and Water Quality
- Water Infrastructure – Disposal of foul water in new developments, sewerage and waste water infrastructure, flood defence infrastructure
- Evidence Bases – Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and Water Cycle Study (WCS)

Mr Kinch sought clarification as to whether the information in the presentation was taken from the 2010 County Durham Plan (CDP) or the emerging CDP. The Principal Policy Officer responded that he thought the information was taken from the emerging document but would confirm this.

Councillor Clare referred to the requirement for all new developments to take flood mitigation into account and asked for reassurance that this requirement was included in the planning process. He then referred to SuDS and the issue of maintenance and asked for clarification as to who would be responsible for maintenance in the future.

The Principal Policy Officer indicated that once the County Durham Plan is adopted then the water management policies will have more teeth and will stipulate to developers what is required from them in relation to flood mitigation and will allow the planning authority to say no to developments on the basis of flood risk. The Head of Technical Services advised Members that he would cover SuDS in his presentation.

Environment Agency

The Committee received a presentation from the Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview, Environment Agency that highlighted the following points:-

- The Six year Flood and Coastal Risk Management Committee (FCRM) Investment Programme - £135m 6 year programme, £72m grant in aid, requiring £46m partnership contributions, 231 schemes, 5626 properties better protected from flood risk and 688 properties better protected from coastal erosion
- Indicative Programme 2018 – 2021 for Northumbria Wide - the remaining 4 year capital programme totals £71.4m, £32m FCRM GiA, £9m Local Levy and £30m other sources
- Indicative Programme 2018 – 2021 for Durham County – 8 schemes by DCC, 1 EA scheme with a total of £11.3m including £1.9 m FCRM GiA, £2.1m NFM GiA and £1.0m local levy

- Northumbria Wide Indicative Programme Allocation for 2018/19 – Overall FCRM capital programme for 2018/19 is £32m, £13.7m FCRM GiA, £3.3m Local Levy, £9.1m public contributions and £6m private contributions
- Durham County – Indicative Programme Allocations for 2018/19 – 6 projects (1EA) with a total of £4.2m, £0.6 m FRCM GiA, £0.4m NFM GiA, £0.4m local levy and £2.7m public
- Durham County – Indicative 2018/19 programme allocations – Chester-le-Street Deculvert; Dipton SW Flood Management works; Dunelm Walk, Leadgate; Lanchester surface water; NFM – Weardale NFM Demonstrator (EA) and Shotley Bridge SW Flood Management
- Progress with EA Flood Alleviation Schemes in 2017/18 including Chester-le-street, Weardale Natural Flood Management Demonstrator
- Investment Pipeline Development
- Asset Maintenance – 168 Assets in County Durham, 107 defence walls and flood embankments and 57 FCeRM Structures and 2 land drainage pumping stations; 24km of maintenance channel and £216K allocation 2018-19
- The Future – Demonstrating new ways of working; contribution to economic regeneration/growth; integrated management of flood risk; preparing for the next investment period and Brexit.

The Chairman referred to the strategic work and partnership working demonstrating proactive work by FRMAs in County Durham and this partnership working had resulted in the county receiving a lot of grant funding for flood mitigation projects/schemes.

Councillor Clark referred to the excellent work in relation to Weardale Natural Flood Management Demonstrator and asked what work was being undertaken to promote/.publicise the scheme as we need to celebrate the project.

The Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview responded that they were initially talking with Farmers as they were hosting the work and that there would be a programme of community engagement including discussions with Area Action Partnerships (AAPs), active partnerships, local meetings with residents and councillors etc. and active partnerships.

Councillor Howell sought an explanation of the graph on the mitigated flood flows asking for clarification as to whether the objective of the graph is to move from the blue line to the red line and continued by asking what the benefit would be to the local community.

The Team leader partnership and Strategic Overview explained that measuring rainfall is complex and that the model looked at Upper Weardale where the impact is greatest and then moved down the catchment, looking downstream, however, it is difficult to say how significant the impact would be downstream. He concluded by highlighting that the Weardale Natural Flood Management Demonstrator project will identify the impact of the project at mitigating flood risk in Weardale including properties identified as being at flood risk.

Mr T Bolton referred to the flash floods in the 1980's which cost the council a considerable sum of money and asked if the impact of flooding on the infrastructure including bridges was taken into consideration when looking at funding/grants available. The Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview responded that they look at impact generally including

how much damage could be caused and the impact on houses, roads and businesses. However, Government gives much less grant to infrastructure rather than households although more funding is becoming available in the future for infrastructure.

Councillor Maddison referred to a development in her area on the hillside which had flood prevention measures in place consisting of water being stored in two ponds via a culvert however there had been no maintenance arrangements put in place which had resulted in the culvert becoming blocked and the areas around the ponds not protected. Residents further down the hill believed that the development had caused their area which previously had been dry to now be wet.

The Team Leader Partnership and Strategic Overview responded that he did not know the development but flood prevention was considered in the planning process and that maintenance was essential. The Head of Technical Services DCC advised the Member that he would look into the matter, if she could give him further details at the close of the meeting.

Councillor Jopling asked whether the Environment Agency and the Coal Authority engage with each other in relation to flood risk from the Coal Authority no longer pumping out the mines.

Members were advised that the Environment Agency and Coal Authority do engage and actively monitor groundwater levels. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager (DCC) commented that the Coal Authority monitor the situation and if water comes to the surface then the relevant partners work together to remedy the issue.

Durham County Council – Drainage & Coastal Protection Team

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

- Review for 2017/18 – 43 schemes; 141 requests for flood investigations since 1 April 2017; 4 kms of highway ditches cleansed; significant number of A-road issues investigated and resolved; 434 planning application drainage designs vetted; 3 SuDS adoption agreements signed off
- Grant Funded Schemes for 2017/18 – Chester-le-Street – study and Murton Attenuation Scheme
- Going Forward – 27 Schemes and studies are in the EA programme for 2017/26; Lanchester flood prevention scheme construction phase; Chester-le-Street flood prevention scheme currently undertaking a public consultation
- Medium Term Investment Plan 2017-2026 – Total value £4,474m
- Partnership Working
- Lanchester Flood Prevention Scheme
- Chester-le-Street Flood Prevention Scheme
- Murton Flood Prevention Scheme
- Joint Studies with Northumbrian Water at Barnard Castle, Sedgfield and Bowburn A177 Culvert

Councillor Clare referred to the Chapter Homes site where the developers had made a feature of the SuD scheme by way of a nature reserve.

Councillor Martin referred to the cost of SuDS for new builds and commented that this resulted in owners of new builds having an additional fee to pay which resulted in some residents paying this additional fee on top of their council tax, he continued that he was aware that this was a countywide issue. He then referred to the Civic Heart area in Chester-le-Street and asked whether consideration was given in relation to flooding issues. Officers responded that they had found documents dating back to 1894 which referred to flooding in this area which was a long term issue. In 2009 money was made available for residents for flood defence to their properties but not all residents took up the offer and the area flooded again in 2012.

Councillor Martin sought clarification on plan B if they weren't successful with the funding for the Chester-le-Street flood prevention scheme. The Officer advised that a flood wall was the other option.

Councillor Howell referred to the 4 kms of highway ditches cleansed and asked how many kms of ditches the Council have in the county. Officers responded that it is an ongoing programme and last year 24 kms had been cleansed. The officer agreed to get back to Councillor Howell with the total kms of ditches in the county.

Councillor Jopling commented that a lot of development is taking place on green areas in the county which causes drainage issues currently and in the future. The Head of Technical Services responded that historically development has taken place without full regard to flood risk however the 2010 Flood Water Management Act strengthened flood prevention with new controls to prevent flooding. Development can only proceed if it does not increase flood risk. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Team check data from developers to ensure that the proposed flood preventions were adequate.

Councillor Maddison commented that there are drainage issues where new development schemes feed into existing drainage systems which had resulted in a 'waterfall' appearing in the middle of the road due to a build-up of soil in the pipes and asked how frequently the maintenance of pipes is undertaken.

The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that if the development had not been adopted by Durham County Council then the maintenance responsibility would be with the developer. He agreed to speak to Councillor following the conclusion of the meeting to get detail of the specific incident to which she was referring.

Councillor Clare referred to the drainage of new developments being better, the problem was patios and the front of houses being tarmacked (urban creep) and asked if there was anything in the County Durham Plan to control this. He also asked if in relation to the flood prevention schemes such as Murton scheme does it have to be a green space with depressions to capture the water or could it be concrete with depressions such as a skate park. Officer responded that one of the elements in a flood prevention scheme is infiltration into the ground however skate parks could be used to disguise a flood prevention scheme. In relation to urban creep Durham County Council now asks more from developers in flood risk areas by limiting what can be used for patios, driveways etc. so that they use materials which can be infiltrated by water.

Councillor Milburn referred to the Lanchester Scheme and asked if this scheme would end all flooding problems in Lanchester. The Drainage and Coastal Protection Manager responded that they had undertaken a study with the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water and had looked at all aspects including water from the cycleway and were confident that the scheme would resolve the problems but they could not guarantee. Councillor Milburn responded by referring to the scheme put in place in Lanchester by Derwentside District Council which flooded 10 years later.

Councillor Howell referred to the Medium Term Investment Plan for 2017-2026 and commented that he would like to see the list prioritised.

The Drainage and Coastal Protection Officer explained that the projects listed are all priorities and that the order in which they are progressed/actioned is dependent upon the project/scheme meeting funding criteria and funding becoming available for that particular scheme.

Northumbrian Water

The Committee received a presentation from the Sustainable Sewerage Manager that highlighted the following points:-

- Interactive portal – www.nwlcommunityportal.co.uk
- Update on completed sewer network schemes within County Durham
 - Park View, Chester-Le-Street
 - Pelaw Wood, Durham
 - Forrest Park, Aycliffe
 - Durham Road, Spennymoor
 - Murton Flooding
- Update on planned sewer network schemes within County Durham
 - Flass Vale
 - Elvet Waterside
 - Walkergate
- Sewerage treatment works investment
 - Barkershaugh Sewage Treatment Works
 - River Gaunless, Bishop Auckland
- Joint Working
- Update on adoption of SuDS
- Rainwise Areas – Crook, Seaham, Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Stanley & Annfield Plain and Easington
- Slowing the Flow – Using rain – not the main and rain garden planters

The Chairman referred to SuDS adoption scheme and sought clarification if the Committee could feed into the consultation. The Sustainable Sewerage Manager responded that it was a national consultation and she would share the link with members so that they could feed into the consultation.

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 and 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 arranged for February 2019.