

## Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)

### Report to Executive Board

**Date: 20 January 2016**

**Subject: Storm Eva – Recovery Plan**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Adel and Wharfedale, Armley, Beeston and Holbeck, Bramley and Stanningley, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, City and Hunslet, Guiseley and Rawdon, Harewood, Horsforth, Kippax and Methley, Kirkstall, Otley and Yeadon, Rothwell, Wetherby		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

### Summary of main issues

1. On 26/27<sup>th</sup> December 2015 Leeds experienced an unprecedented flooding event in various parts of the city that has had a big impact on those businesses and residents affected. Local communities, volunteers, local and regional public services responded in an incredible way, using press, PR and social media to engage anybody who could help. At the same time, there were similar flooding incidents in other areas of Yorkshire. We are working with key partners and other councils through the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum, and liaison with various government departments on issues relating to flood recovery but also in regard to future requirements for flood alleviation.
2. The assessment of properties affected in the hours after the flood event occurred was between 300-400 businesses and approximately 2000 residential properties. These figures change daily as services assess those affected and more people report the impact of the floods. The figures as of 12 January indicate that 519 businesses have been affected, 1732 residential properties and 14 other properties (e.g. sports clubs, churches etc.) have been flooded or have been affected by flooding. That's 2265 properties affected in total. Some specific examples are included in the main body of the report to illustrate the range of impacts ranging from minimal disruption to complete devastation to people's livelihoods and businesses. Flooding of this nature causes significant issues beyond just water

penetration with impacts on the sewerage system and silt from overflowing rivers leaving a significant mess to clean-up with the obvious smell and hygiene issues that are left once the water has receded. Important infrastructure was also affected, such as bridges, roads, ICT/data cables, as well as some council buildings being flooded. The longer term economic impact of Storm Eva is also a significant concern. Work is ongoing to quantify the full impact and costs and also to develop a regeneration plan for the main areas affected as well as understanding the requirements for further flood alleviation measures.

3. Staff from the local authority, emergency services and specialist bodies such as the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water, worked with volunteers from the businesses and communities affected to address the immediate impacts. This work continues as the impact is better understood, with extensive support and advice being offered. Early priorities for the recovery approach include: grant schemes to enable financial support to those affected; ongoing clean up; community engagement; repair of key infrastructure; audit and assessment of the impact on individuals, businesses, residential and infrastructure; advice and guidance to those affected; learning lessons to be better prepared for any reoccurrence; liaison with partners about recovery, and liaison with Government.
4. Inevitably there will be lessons to be learned for all agencies as a result of this major event for the city, about the response to the incident, about recovery and about future resilience. We will undertake our statutory Section 19 responsibilities and complete a Flood Incident Report and also produce a lessons learned report for Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. The context of austerity is relevant in learning these lessons, as is our ambition to be a compassionate city with a strong economy.
5. Given the fast moving pace of developments, it is likely that supplementary information, including photographs, will be tabled at Executive Board, that will update on the impact and also provide a more comprehensive and coherent city recovery plan.

## **Recommendations**

Members of Executive Board are recommended to:

1. Thank staff, partners, local ward members, community representatives, volunteers and all those affected by the floods for their efforts in supporting the recovery operation;
2. Note the implementation of a Council Flood Emergency Management Team, led by the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities), which met for the first time on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016.
3. Note that we are working with other councils and partners, especially Calderdale Council, West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, the Environment Agency and other key partners on the recovery work at both a local and West Yorkshire level.

4. Endorse the financial support and advice arrangements that have been put into place to support affected householders and businesses.
5. Note the funding provided by Government to support the schemes at paragraph 3.1.2 and ask the Deputy Chief Executive to keep a record of all relevant expenditure associated with responding to Storm Eva.
6. Require the Director of City Development to work with the Environment Agency to bring a report to Executive Board as soon as possible on the city's flood alleviation developments including plans for seeking Government support to progressing phase 2 and 3 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.
7. Request that the Chief Executive write to the relevant Secretary of State requesting the urgent approval of £3m to allow for preparatory and design work to commence on Phase 2 of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme with a firm commitment being provided by Government to support both phases 2 and 3.
8. Require the Director of City Development to work with the Environment Agency to identify measures that could be undertaken to increase flood resilience for all communities affected Storm Eva.
9. Require the Director of City Development to complete a full assessment of all impacts of Storm Eva on city infrastructure and develop proposals for the necessary repair and rebuild work that maybe necessary, including work required on Linton Bridge.
10. Request that the Director of City Development consider the development of a regeneration based approach to help Kirkstall recover from Storm Eva.
11. Require the Director of City Development to make arrangements to undertake a statutory Section 19 investigation into the causes and impacts of the Storm Eva flooding event.
12. Require the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to oversee the development and delivery of a Storm Eva Strategic Recovery Plan and report back to Members on this plan as well a further update on recovery efforts in March 2017.
13. Require the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to undertake a lessons learned exercise and provide a formal report on this to the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.
14. Require the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to ensure experiences and impacts in Leeds are fed into the national review of flooding.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To describe the impact of Storm Eva in Leeds taking into account the immediate response and the short-term recovery work, within the context of previous reports on flooding and relevant flood alleviation schemes.
- 1.2 To secure agreement to the strategic recovery approach for the short, medium and longer term especially financial support, advice and guidance, community engagement, infrastructure repair and flood alleviation proposals.
- 1.3 To outline the approach to learning lessons about the effectiveness of our arrangements to respond and recover to incidents of this nature.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Flooding is not a new issue to Leeds. In 2000, the city centre was only centimeters away from flooding with further near misses in 2004, 2007 and 2008. These events also affected communities beyond the city centre. More recently, Leeds has also faced a wide range of local flooding incidents (particularly in August 2014 and August 2015) in various areas of the city, sometimes caused by river water, at other times by surface water, or a mixture of both. Through our statutory Section 19 reports, the nature of these incidents is described in the relevant Flood Incident Reports which are published on the council's website.
- 2.2 Previous estimates by the Environment Agency were that over 4,500 residential and commercial properties were at risk of approximately £400m of direct damage were there to be a major flood from the River Aire in Leeds. There were relevant reports to Executive Board between 2009 and 2014 on this matter with the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme report dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2012 informing Members that the proposed £188m flood defence scheme, providing a 1 in 200 year standard of flood protection, would not be funded in the near future. In light of that a phased approach had to be adopted and a report to Executive Board on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013 proposed implementation of phase 1 of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme which has the aim of defending the City Centre against a 1 in 75 year flood event. That £45m scheme has since commenced development with advance mitigation works in Woodlesford having been completed and the main scheme in the city centre projected to complete in 2017.
- 2.3 Storm Eva hit the UK on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2015, causing an impact in various parts of the country and particularly the North of England. The full impact of the Storm was first felt on the 26<sup>th</sup> December in communities around the Wharfe. In the early hours of 27<sup>th</sup> December, the River Aire reached a level of 3.3m, causing extensive flooding, stretching from Kirkstall Bridge Road, through the city centre, and all the way to Crown Point. Some of the flooding gauges on the Aire and the Wharfe could not be used because they had reached their maximum possible readings and the water was still rising. In Armley, there was a peak of 5.2m on the 27<sup>th</sup> December which compares to a typical level of 1.5m and the previous highest ever recorded level was 4m in 2000.

- 2.4 In other areas Otley recorded levels of 2.014m, Pool 3.978m, Arthington 4.321 and Collingham 5.21m, the majority of which were the highest levels ever recorded. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that both the River Aire and River Wharfe were the most ferocious people had ever witnessed.
- 2.5 A map is attached at annex 1 showing the principal areas affected, although this will be subject to change as further information becomes available.
- 2.6 In summary the story of the Storm Eva flooding event is as follows:
- On the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> December water levels on the Wharfe were exceptionally high and flooding occurred in Otley and other areas of the Wharfe during the day.
  - In the early hours of 27<sup>th</sup> December, the Armley flood gauge of the River Aire reached 5.2m which compares to a typical level of 1.5m (the previous highest ever reading at Armley was 4.03m in 2000).
  - Key areas in the city centre including dwellings close to Royal Armouries, The Calls and Bridge Street were flooded. Some residents were evacuated but made their own arrangements. Kirkstall Road was closed, with much of it affected by flooding from Wellington Street up to beyond the Cardigan Arms, the Bridge and the new Kirkstall Forge shopping area.
  - Further flooding associated with the River Aire occurred in Stourton and in Methley and Mickleton. The Wharfe flooded at Otley, Pool and Collingham.
  - Early estimates by the Environment Agency of properties affected suggested 300-400 businesses and up to 2000 residential properties. There were more than 70 requests of help from the Fire Service and between 400-500 calls into the council's contact centre for assistance, e.g. for sandbags or other help.
  - Industrial units of all sizes, warehouses, smaller offices and studio spaces were affected, as well as retailers, restaurants and farms having been affected, with a severe impact on machinery, stock, premises, infrastructure, and many facing food hygiene issues as well. Some larger employers in the city centre were also affected.
  - Other businesses were disrupted rather than devastated, with significant damage to telecoms and internet infrastructure. Business was most adversely affected in the Kirkstall Road area and Hunslet and Stourton, with some city centre and Otley businesses affected as well.
  - Significant risks on key infrastructure sites were identified, including flood protection for both the VodaPhone site off Kirkstall Road which provides important communications for Council, Police and NHS and the Power Sub Station on Redcote Lane, Kirkstall which provides power for 50,000 properties.
  - Linton Bridge, near Collingham, suffered significant structural damage and will be closed for some time whilst repairs are undertaken. Diversions are in place.

- Some council buildings have been significantly damaged. The Assisted Living Centre saw four feet of water in the office, with fleet vehicles lost floating down the river, a huge loss of equipment and supplies, and power failure. At the Industrial Museum in Armley, the flood water was four feet above the metal sign which signifies the highest previous flood - in 1868, and there has been a gallant effort to recover collections and clear up. It was similar at Thwaite Mill.
- There has been no damage to other schools or children's centres.
- Leeds Rhinos faced significant disruption to its 80 staff, 120 pro players and everyday community use of indoor and outdoor facilities. Everyone from Rhinos, Carnegie and Leeds Rugby Foundation had to be transferred elsewhere and it is likely to take 6 to 12 months to recover at a cost of £1m+. This is one example of a wider ongoing issue about inability to get insurance without a flood solution.
- The floods also caused major impacts on other sporting facilities including, for example, Wetherby Ings.
- In Allerton Bywater whilst there was no flooding in the village itself, there was severe internal flooding to properties along Barnsdale Road which is an area prone to flooding.
- In Mickeltown there were significant concerns about potential flooding and with the risk being so high preparations were made to evacuate 600 properties including arrangements for a rest centre. Thankfully water levels receded before an evacuation was commenced, however, the fact it came so close is a cause for concern.
- Members will be aware that the first phase of the flood alleviation scheme has been completed at Woodlesford. The flood protection measures that have been implemented did withstand the river flooding caused by Storm Eva. However, it is the case that the river did flood into the Canal further upstream, which did cause some flooding to occur in the Woodlesford area.

2.7 Council services, partners and volunteers provided the best service they could to help with the clean-up operation, demonstrating the council values and a strong community spirit. The response was limited by the fact that it was the closedown period, however, this also meant fewer people were trying to get around the city and more people were available to volunteer. We estimate that there were more than a thousand volunteers helping across the city and well over a hundred council staff supporting the response.

2.8 It is a point of significant note that had this flooding event occurred on a normal working day there would have been significant disruption to a major regional centre with thousands of people unable to get to work - Leeds' workforce amounts to 469,000 people with a large number of people travelling into the city from other local authority areas. Key road networks would have been closed as a consequence of the flooding causing significant disruption to public transport, and resulting in thousands of people unable to access work, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and other vital services. The economic cost of Storm Eva is

yet to be calculated and will be a significant figure, however, had this occurred on a normal working day the economic cost would have been far greater.

2.9 Some of the highlights that illustrate the level of response include:

- extensive council services deployed with road signage, the clean-up, gully cleansing, community engagement, customer services and website changes;
- councillors meeting those affected, galvanising volunteers and helping with the clean-up;
- weather warnings, situation reports and communications updates issued;
- a swift, decisive and effective response to council ICT failures caused by flooding in a third party provider data centre;
- council's Emergency Control Centre operational and additional on-call staff;
- hundreds of media enquiries handled;
- senior staff and councillors overseeing the situation and in regular contact;
- deployment of sand bags to key sites;
- support from the Army, as well as an extensive range of partners;
- planning for Storm Frank on 31 December, which thankfully didn't materialise in this region;
- skips and other equipment provided free by commercial providers;
- rest centres made operational ready for potential major evacuation, and;
- various services involved in visiting those affected, such as environmental health, economic services and council tax/benefits.

2.10 There was significant media interest locally, as well as national and international interest in the floods. During the response phase, we worked with West Yorkshire Police to provide information through to Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBRA). The Council Leader was in close touch with Secretary of State Greg Clarke, including securing his visit to the city on 30<sup>th</sup> December to raise awareness of the impact and issues about the effectiveness of flood defence schemes and resources. The HRH Duke of York also visited the city on 7 January to talk to those affected by flooding and involved in the response. The newly appointed Flood Minister for Yorkshire, Robert Goodwin MP, will be visiting the city on 14 January 2016. Some of the key communications statistics are as follows:

- Significant local, national and international coverage of flooding in the media, reaching a peak 922 articles on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> December with a potential reach of 1.33billion people.

- Key messages delivered by the Leader of Council featured in various publications on topics including: the flood alleviation scheme in Leeds and the decision by Government in 2011 to just fund phase 1 (a £45m scheme) of the previously proposed £188m scheme that had been prepared and included in the Environment Agency's work programme, subject to further discussions on funding; the need for Leeds to receive the same level of financial support as other areas considering the significant risks and impact of flooding on businesses in the city centre; support available to businesses and homeowners; and the response to events and updated reactive activity.
- 73 tweets from @lcc-news between 24/12/15 and 04/01/2016 resulting in 581,442 Impressions and 14,124 Engagements, with a peak on 27/12/2015. Notable tweets included on the number of properties affected, support for businesses, appeals not to drive on Kirkstall Road and council support for affected residents.

### **3 Main Issues**

#### **3.1 Immediate recovery**

3.1.1 The immediate recovery process overlapped with the emergency response, in the last days of 2015 and the very early part of 2016. The main areas of focus have been:

- developing grant schemes to enable financial support to those affected;
- ongoing clean up;
- community engagement and communications;
- assessment and repair of key infrastructure;
- audit and assessment of the impact on individuals, businesses, residential and infrastructure;
- responding to enquiries through the council's contact arrangements including the flood email address and telephone helpline arrangements;
- giving advice and guidance to those affected;
- learning immediate lessons to be better prepared for any reoccurrence, and;
- liaison with key partners and other councils through the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum, and liaison with various government departments about recovery and preparedness for subsequent incidents.

3.1.2 Leeds received an initial payment of £2.86m on 30<sup>th</sup> December as part of the Government Scheme, to help residents and businesses. Indications are that this £2.86m equates to approximately 25% of what Leeds will be due if the estimates on the number of households and businesses affected are accurate. If they are,



Leeds could receive a total of approximately £11.44m to support recovery from Storm Eva. We received a further £1.8m on 11<sup>th</sup> January taking the total received to date to £4.66m. This budget provision is to fund the grant schemes available. Separate provision is being made available for council tax and business rate relief. £40m has been set aside by Government for the areas affected by Storm Eva, which covers a range of authorities in the North of England, to fix flood defences that were overwhelmed which will include repairs to pumping and barriers and clearing blockages in rivers.

- 3.1.3 The grant funding received from Government has been used to provide households affected by flooding with a £500 cash payment to help with recovery costs; £2,500 grants to businesses affected to help with recovery; and a £5000 grant scheme for businesses and householders to make their properties more resilient to future flooding events. In addition to these cash grant schemes, those householders and businesses who have been particularly affected will be entitled to claim/receive council tax or business rate relief for a minimum of three months or longer if needed.
- 3.1.4 Following these early commitments, schemes were published for both residents and business grants on 7<sup>th</sup> January and communicated to councillors, staff and the public. We also refer to related schemes (e.g. Yorkshire Water) on our webpages. The first payments to those most affected have been made and we anticipate the rate of payments being made to increase significantly the next two weeks.
- 3.1.5 We will be publishing a further scheme as soon as possible for the £5,000 resilience grants.
- 3.1.6 Leeds Community Foundation, at the request of the Council, has also established a fund raising appeal so that they can administer grants to those residents, charities or social enterprises who need it. Donations can be made online and grant applications can be made. The Government have also committed to match-fund any funds raised in appeals of this nature. The City Council have also requested that grants from the fund raising appeal be used to support residents and communities not specifically affected by Storm Eva, but nevertheless are communities who have previously been flooded.
- 3.1.7 Ward member briefings and discussions with senior politicians took place on the first working day back so that there could be active engagement in the recovery work and lessons learned. Community engagement events are taking place in affected areas with councillors, officers and relevant partners.
- 3.1.8 The West Yorkshire Resilience Forum, a statutory body to cover our responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act, which is jointly chaired by Police, Fire and the Council, met on the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to ensure there is an effective framework for partnership working to deal with the recovery issues. Leeds will play a key role in this, and has already established an officer group to support the recovery arrangements, as well as using local arrangements for recovery, such as business and community impact, infrastructure, understanding the financial impact, communications, lobbying and lessons learned.

- 3.1.9 The city has over 150 structures (bridges, culverts, retaining walls) that will need investigation to assess the extent of any damage. All key and high risk pieces of infrastructure have been initially assessed with no major causes for concern being identified other than Linton Bridge. All key infrastructure assets will be subject to review to see if there is any further damage identified, however, continuing high water levels will impede the full and detailed investigation of many pieces of infrastructure, particularly bridges. There were a number of minor carriageway impacts distributed across the affected areas. These are no longer causing any traffic impacts but will need to be addressed as part of our maintenance obligations.
- 3.1.10 A further infrastructure issue which continues to cause traffic congestion in Otley relates to the closure of the A59 at Kexgill by North Yorkshire County Council due to a potential landslide.
- 3.1.11 We are also aware of significant impacts to other infrastructure including power generation, drainage and sewers and retaining walls on private land and property which will also need to be fully considered as part of the flood recovery and flood alleviation work that is now being progressed.

## 3.2 **Business Impact and Recovery**

- 3.2.1 The flooding has had a severe impact on many businesses in Kirkstall and Hunslet, and has caused disruption to several businesses in the city centre and in Otley. Several businesses, including some large manufacturers, have suffered significant damage to their premises, plant and machinery.
- 3.2.2 In addition to the substantial support from the Council's cleansing team, other emergency response bodies, and volunteers the main actions have included:
- a package of support to businesses has been designed and is operational comprising advice and property searches for firms needing urgent alternative accommodation, a webpage and email and telephone contact service for businesses has been established, and a financial support scheme launched;
  - around 200 businesses have been contacted directly, most of them face-to-face;
  - the Manufacturing Advisory Service have been commissioned to make contact with and provide support to the manufacturers that have been affected;
  - an application form and process has been implemented for the Government business financial support scheme, and;
  - the visit to affected businesses in Leeds on 29th December 2015 by Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Communities, was organised, and subsequent liaison has been undertaken with CLG's Emergency Planning team and BIS.

- 3.2.3 Whilst the flooding did have a major impact on the city centre, it did not impede the main retail and business core of the city, however, those in close proximity to the River Aire and associated watercourses (e.g. sewerage and drainage systems linked to the River Aire) were significantly affected. However despite this impact the overwhelming majority of the city centre retail, business and cultural quarters continued to function as normal in the immediate aftermath of Storm Eva.
- 3.2.4 We are also working with the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership to secure support to help businesses recover. Along with Calderdale, who also face significant challenges, we are also making the case for a specific scheme to support manufacturers.
- 3.2.5 Whilst a lot of support is being provided to businesses affected, the challenges are significant and work will continue for many months to support full recovery. In Kirkstall, there are specific challenges considering the nature of many small and medium enterprises and a regeneration type approach is being considered to provide the level of support that may be required to help small businesses in Kirkstall fully recover. Without such a plan there are significant risks regarding the viability and sustainability of both individual businesses and the wider economic area.
- 3.2.6 For some businesses there will be an impact on employees, particularly in the short term as businesses are unable to trade or recover to the extent of their previous operations. The council's employment and skills service will work closely with such businesses and those employees affected to help people find alternative work both in the short, medium and longer term.
- 3.2.7 There are also significant insurance issues for businesses and many, particularly in Kirkstall, were unable to get insurance so were uninsured, and many may struggle to renew insurance policies without adequate flood protection being in place. There are also issues with delays in the attendance of loss adjusters to assess claims quickly which is hampering some businesses in their effort to recover quickly. The council through its Chief Officer for Economy and Regeneration is liaising with the Association of British Insurers on these issues.

### 3.3 **Strategic recovery plan**

- 3.3.1 The Council is the lead agency locally for recovery. Councillor Richard Lewis, Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning, is the Executive Member with responsibility for leading the recovery and especially improving the city's resilience to the impact of flooding. James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) is the named Strategic Recovery Officer in the Council's Emergency Handbook and he is leading the officer work to develop and deliver the recovery plan.
- 3.3.2 It is worth noting that national guidance and experience suggests that strategic recovery:
- is a complex and long running process involving many more agencies and participants than the response phase;

- is about rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community, but it is more than simply the replacement of what has been destroyed and the rehabilitation of those affected;
- needs arrangements that recognise the complex, dynamic and protracted nature of recovery processes and the changing needs of affected individuals, families and groups within the community over time;
- is best approached from a community development perspective, conducted at the local level with the active participation of the affected community and a strong reliance on local capacities and expertise. Recovery is not just a matter for the statutory agencies - the private sector, the voluntary sector and the wider community will also play a crucial role;
- is most effective when agencies involved in human welfare have a major role in all levels of decision-making which may influence the wellbeing and recovery of the affected community, and;
- will cover humanitarian/welfare, economic, infrastructure and environmental aspects to the plan.

3.3.3 The West Yorkshire Resilience Forum (WYRF), a statutory body to cover our responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act, which is jointly chaired by Police, Fire and the Council, will need to ensure that there is an effective framework for partnership working to deal with the recovery issues. Leeds will play a key role in this, and has already established an officer group to support its own recovery arrangements. Work with partners so far has been done at a West Yorkshire level or through existing bilateral arrangements, however, arrangements are currently being made to establish a Leeds Strategic Recovery Group which will include all key partners.

3.3.4 A Leeds Strategic Recovery Plan will be developed to guide our recovery work and the plan is expected to be based around the following headings:

- business recovery
- community recovery and capacity
- infrastructure repair and development
- communications, media, public affairs
- city resilience and preparation for future incidents

3.3.5 An important aspect of being prepared for future events is to take the opportunity to learn lessons about the effectiveness of the city's resilience and emergency planning arrangements. There is a great opportunity to use this incident to improve our responsiveness as a council and a city to emergencies. Two of the standing risks on the corporate risk register are about a failure in council services and business continuity in the city, so it is a good opportunity to use this to refresh those action plans as well. There is government guidance on best practice on learning lessons and also extensive literature from the Emergency Planning College, which we will draw on during our process, as well as using own

Emergency Planning Handbook. We will undertake this process during January and February. We will use the following headings to consider the lessons learned:

- people
- process
- ICT
- Culture
- communications

3.3.6 We will use the following questions to prompt contribution and provide a framework:

- what went well?
- what could have gone better?
- how can we improve the effectiveness of our arrangements and our resilience?

### 3.4 **Flood Alleviation**

- 3.4.1 Previous estimates by the Environment Agency were that over 4,500 residential and commercial properties were at risk of approximately £400m of direct damage were there to be a major flood from the River Aire in Leeds. There were relevant reports to Executive Board between 2009 and 2014 on this matter with the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme report dated 10<sup>th</sup> February 2012 informing Members that the proposed £188m flood defence scheme, providing a 1 in 200 year standard of flood protection, would not be funded in the near future. The £188m scheme had previously been subject to significant preparatory work and had been included in the Environment Agency's work programme, subject to further discussions on funding.
- 3.4.2 In light of that a phased approach had to be adopted and a report to Executive Board on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2013 proposed implementation of phase 1 of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme which has the aim of defending the City Centre against a 1 in 75 year flood event.
- 3.4.3 That £45m scheme has since commenced development with advance mitigation works in Woodlesford having been completed and the main scheme in the city centre projected to complete in 2017. The Woodlesford aspect of the scheme was completed some months ago.
- 3.4.4 The new defences have been designed to provide additional protection for the city centre and over 3,000 homes and 500 businesses with protection against flood events from the River Aire and the Holbeck, extending 4.3km between Leeds train station and Thwaite Mills. Phase 1 at Woodlesford was completed in 2014 to give protection to residents against a 1 in 200 year flood event from the River Aire and it is believed that without this scheme, Woodlesford would have seen more significant flooding during Storm Eva.
- 3.4.5 The council is of the view that urgent work needs to now be progressed on phases 2 and 3 of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme. Officers estimate that £3m is urgently needed to fund preparatory and design work for

phase 2 and this report proposes that Government be requested to urgently provide funding to allow this work to commence.

3.4.6 In addition to phase 2 and 3 of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme there is recognition that other areas of the city, particularly communities along the Aire downstream of the city centre and communities along the Wharfe, are particularly vulnerable to flooding. It is, therefore, essential that wider work is undertaken to seek to increase flood resilience for communities affected across the whole Leeds district.

3.4.7 Another area of flood resilience activity relates to supporting communities to develop their own capacity to better respond to the risk of flooding. There are good examples, particularly in Garforth, and one now developing in Kirkstall, where communities are coming together to develop locally based solutions. Colleagues in the council's locality teams will support communities with this work including sharing good practice across the city.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 The Chief Executive provided updates during the initial response to all members and Leeds MPs on 29<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> December, while additional member briefings, took place on the council's first working day back after the Christmas closedown, 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016, to ensure active engagement in the recovery work and lessons learned. There is regular liaison with partners and with government.

4.1.2 Community engagement events began during the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> January. At the time of writing community engagement events have either taken place or are being arranged in Kirkstall, Otley, Collingham, Methley/Mickeltown, Allerton Bywater and the City Centre/Holbeck. More will be arranged as required and requested by local members and communities.

4.1.3 Specific proposals to further mitigate the risk of flooding and its impacts upon residents, businesses and communities have been, and will continue to be, subject to specific consultation and engagement arrangements.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 Further initiatives to mitigate the risk and effects of flooding across the city will be subject to detailed Equality Impact Assessments to ensure that the most disadvantaged are not adversely impacted and that individual needs and the requirement to make reasonable adjustments where necessary are recognised.

4.2.2 Equality impact considerations are built into the council's own emergency and business continuity management arrangements.

### **4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

4.3.1 Under the council's renewed Best Council/Best City ambition agreed by the Executive Board in September 2015, Leeds aspires to be a compassionate city with a strong economy, supported by an efficient and enterprising local authority

that works effectively with partners and communities. The response to December's flooding in Leeds was a testament to this compassion and joined-up working while the commercial effects highlight the importance of managing the risk of flooding for individual businesses affected (owners and employees) and the wider economy of Leeds.

4.3.2 The arrangements detailed in the report form part of the council's Emergency Planning Policy, Business Continuity Management Policy and Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

#### 4.4 **Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 In line with the council value of 'spending money wisely', the council is committed to using its resources in the best possible way in both the initial response and longer-term recovery stages from a flooding incident. The report details how staffing and financial resources were deployed during the Christmas period to maintain service delivery and help residents and businesses affected and also the ongoing arrangements underway and planned.

4.4.2 The Government have pledged a £50m grant support package for businesses and householders across the North of England affected by Storm Eva. Leeds City Council has received £2.86m thus far with indications that this represents 25% of what will be received in total for the grant schemes subject to the numbers of businesses and householders affected being at the level currently projected. Therefore, Leeds currently expects to receive approximately £11.44m of support for householder and business grant schemes.

4.4.3 Additional funding to support council tax and business relief schemes will be funded separately by Government.

4.4.4 Government have also committed £40m to authorities in the North of England affected by Storm Eva to repair and maintenance costs affected by Storm Eva and the cost of repair to Linton Bridge is currently estimated to be £1m to £2m.

4.4.5 Individual proposals to further mitigate the risk of flooding will be supported by fully costed business cases.

4.4.6 Consideration is also being given to the extent to which the council can utilise the Belwin scheme to cover some of the costs incurred following Storm Eva, however, it should be noted that the conditions of the Belwin scheme are challenging and further work is needed on this issue.

#### 4.5 **Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report. The report is subject to call-in.

#### 4.6 **Risk Management**

4.6.1 The events of Storm Eva highlighted the risk the city faces from flooding. Unprecedented levels of rain fell in many parts of the country with river levels reaching new highs. However, the risk can be managed down with arrangements

put in place to mitigate both the potential causes and effects of a flooding incident. The report details the importance of a joined-up response from Government, the council, partner agencies and communities and individuals themselves to manage the risk.

- 4.6.2 The council has a specific role as the lead local flood authority for the city and, under the Flood Water Management Act (2010), has a duty to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS). Leeds' LFRMS was adopted in 2014 and describes the approach to reducing flood risk from surface water, ordinary watercourses, groundwater and small reservoirs. This is supplemented by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which collates information on all known sources of flooding, maps the areas with different probabilities of flooding within the district and informs the development of council policy on managing flood risk and the allocation of land for future development.
- 4.6.3 The risk of flooding in the city centre is being reduced through delivery of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme, however, the original £180m proposed scheme was not funded and only phase 1, an investment of £45m, has thus far been progressed with completion expected in 2017.
- 4.6.4 To extend the Flood Alleviation Scheme to such areas as Kirkstall would require significant additional investment. However, in light of the River Aire having got to a metre higher than ever before, the Environment Secretary has committed to reviewing this scheme to ensure that it can protect the businesses and communities in Leeds.
- 4.6.5 This report details therefore the need to urgently progress Phases 2 and 3 of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme and work will now be progressed to secure relevant Government and Environment Agency support for this.
- 4.6.6 The council's corporate risk register contains specific risks on a major flooding incident in Leeds, major ICT failure and the preparation and response to a major incident (both the external effects and the impacts on the council's ability to deliver critical services). Three key elements to managing the corporate flooding risk are to complete the planned schemes under the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy; develop the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme and develop local initiatives to improve the resilience of communities at risk of flooding.
- 4.6.7 The corporate risk register also includes risks around both the council's in-year budget and medium-term financial strategy. Significant financial risks arising from the initial response and recovery to this incident are also referenced in this report.
- 4.6.8 All corporate risks, and the action plans in place to mitigate them to an acceptable level, are reviewed on an ongoing basis and those related to flooding will be updated again in response to recent events.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The impact of Storm Eva was significant for Leeds and other areas in Yorkshire. Significant work has already been undertaken to help recovery and plan for the future but recovery work will continue for some time. We are still building a picture



of the full impact from this event. Immediate support is being provided to householders and business affected and many will also need longer-term support. Future flood resilience and flood alleviation is now a critical issue for the city.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Members of Executive Board are recommended to:

6.1.1 Thank staff, partners, local ward members, community representatives, volunteers and all those affected by the floods for their efforts in supporting the recovery operation;

6.1.2 Note the implementation of a Council Flood Emergency Management Team, led by the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities), which met for the first time on the 4th January 2016.

6.1.3 Note that we are working with other councils and partners, especially Calderdale Council, West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, the Environment Agency and other key partners on the recovery work at both a local and West Yorkshire level.

6.1.4 Endorse the financial support and advice arrangements that have been put into place to support affected householders and businesses.

6.1.5 Note the funding provided by Government to support the schemes at paragraph 3.1.2 and ask the Deputy Chief Executive to keep a record of all relevant expenditure associated with responding to Storm Eva.

6.1.6 Require the Director of City Development to work with the Environment Agency to bring a report to Executive Board as soon as possible on the city's flood alleviation developments including plans for seeking Government support to progressing phase 2 and 3 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.

6.1.7 Request that the Chief Executive write to the relevant Secretary of State requesting the urgent approval of £3m to allow for preparatory and design work to commence on Phase 2 of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme with a firm commitment being provided by Government to support both phases 2 and 3.

6.1.8 Require the Director of City Development to work with the Environment Agency to identify measures that could be undertaken to increase flood resilience for all communities affected Storm Eva.

6.1.9 Require the Director of City Development to complete a full assessment of all impacts of Storm Eva on city infrastructure and develop proposals for the necessary repair and rebuild work that maybe necessary, including work required on Linton Bridge.

6.1.10 Request that the Director of City Development consider the development of a regeneration based approach to help Kirkstall recover from Storm Eva.

- 6.1.11 Require the Director of City Development to make arrangements to undertake a statutory Section 19 investigation into the causes and impacts of the Storm Eva flooding event.
- 6.1.12 Require the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to oversee the development and delivery of a Storm Eva Strategic Recovery Plan and report back to Members on this plan as well a further update on recovery efforts in March 2017.
- 6.1.13 Require the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to undertake a lessons learned exercise and provide a formal report on this to the Council's Corporate Governance and Audit Committee.
- 6.1.14 Require the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to ensure experiences and impacts in Leeds are fed into the national review of flooding.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.