

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Scrutiny Board – City Development

Date: 30th March 2016

Subject: Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
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 type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. Under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010, Leeds City Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority is required to have a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
2. The Strategy for Leeds was adopted by Full Council on 26th March 2014.
3. At their meeting on 21st January 2014 the Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) considered the Council's draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and it was agreed that they would review the Strategy on an annual basis.
4. The Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) last reviewed the Strategy on 17th March 2015.
5. This past year Leeds suffered a number of flooding events culminating with Storm Eva bringing an extreme flooding event. With nearly 3,400 properties flooded or affected by the flooding and also causing major infrastructure damage such as to Linton Road Bridge.
6. This report examines the implementation of the Strategy over the last 12 months.

Recommendations

7. That the Board reviews the progress made with regard to the Strategy and makes comments.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Allow for the scrutiny of the Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy.

2 Background information

- 2.1 Following major floods during 2007, Government set up the Pitt Review to look into the way flood risk management agencies dealt with such a major event. This review came up with 93 recommendations, which Government accepted.
- 2.2 A number of these recommendations needed legislation to give the agencies the powers or duties necessary and hence the introduction of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 (F&WMA). One of these duties was for all Lead Local Flood Authorities (Leeds City Council for this area) to prepare a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS).
- 2.3 Following Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) review of the draft Strategy, on 21st January 2014, it was adopted by the Full Council on 26th March 2014.
- 2.4 The Strategy was last reviewed by Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) on 17th March 2015.

3 Main issues

3.1 Leeds Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

The Strategy is intended to outline the approach the Council and other agencies will take with regard to flood risk management. The Strategy contains:

- a. The Objectives for managing flood risk.
- b. The measures proposed to achieve those objectives.
- c. Timeframe for any measures.
- d. Costs and benefits of the measures and how they are to be funded.

The specific measures are contained in Appendix C of the Strategy, which is to be updated regularly to ensure it is reactive to latest priorities.

Progress against priority measures identified in Appendix C of the Strategy for 2015 is included in Appendix 1.

Other actions that have been taken and continue to be taken are

- Ongoing maintenance of watercourses and flood alleviation features
- Partnership working with other key agencies
- Close working with Flood Groups – increase awareness of flood risk
- Develop and maintain a comprehensive Register of flood risk features
- Manage flood risk generally
- Investigate flooding events – where necessary producing a Section 19 Report

- Promote sustainable development – particularly with regard to Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)
- Support Planning with determining the impact of development on flood risk

3.2 South East Leeds Flooding in August 2015

In the report considered by Scrutiny Board (Sustainable Economy and Culture) last year it was noted that the South East of the District had been suffering a disproportionate impact from flooding over a number of years and that during heavy rain on 8th August 2014 in excess of 100 properties were internally flooded. Unfortunately the same area was affected again with a similar event during heavy rainfall on 22nd August 2015.

A Section 19 (of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010) Report examining the cause of the flood and its impact in August 2014 was published in 2015 and found the rainfall overwhelmed all drainage systems in the area.

Assessment of work that could potentially be done to reduce the risk of flooding are ongoing, but some schemes have been identified and have been added to the specific measures contained in Appendix C of the Strategy.

3.3 Flooding Across Leeds in Winter 2015

Storm Eva on December 25th/26th caused widespread flooding across all of Leeds with nearly 3,400 properties flooded or affected by the flooding from both the River Aire and River Wharfe coming out of its course. This was following storms in November and early December which also caused flooding across Leeds.

The cause and scale of the flooding is not thought to be due to the size of storm Eva, or it having the heaviest rainfall, but was from the accumulation of continual wet weather from November being the third wettest month on record and December being the wettest month on record to make the ground wet and impermeable.

The full impact of the Storm Eva flooding is still being quantified, particularly to long term reputational and commercial damage to Leeds. As well as estimated 2,711 homes being flooded or affected by the flooding there were an estimated 678 businesses flooded or affected by the flooding, some indicating they will not reopen or move away from Leeds.

Following a meeting of the Leader of Council and the Leeds MPs with the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, a commitment has been received from the Secretary of State to fund the feasibility study for the next phases of the Leeds (River Aire) Flood Alleviation Scheme which aims to provide Kirkstall the same level of protection as currently under construction for the City Centre and to provide enhanced standard of protection for both schemes.

Damage to infrastructure such as roads, structures, paths, flood alleviation assets and Canal and Rivers Trust assets are estimated to cost around £9m. Linton Road Bridge being the single largest asset affected in Leeds. It is estimated that it will take a year to strengthen and reopen at a cost of over £4m.

Community engagement events have been taking place in affected areas with councillors, officers and relevant partners. To date engagement events have taken place in Kirkstall, Otley, Methley and Mickletown, Collingham, Hunslet and Stourton. There has also been a three day event organised by the Flood Advisory Service together with the Garforth Flood Support Group.

Leeds City Council as the lead Local Flood Authority has committed to undertake a Section 19 report into the causes and impact of Storm Eva which is underway; given the scale of the event it is expected to be published later this year.

Assessment of work that could potentially be done to reduce the risk of flooding will be done during and from measures identified in the Section 19 report. However some measures have been identified and have been added to the specific measures contained in Appendix C of the Strategy.

3.4 Proposed Capital Works on Flood Alleviation

Appendix C – The List of Measures in the Strategy (included as Appendix 2 & 3 in this report) has been updated on the progress made and includes new priorities already identified following the flooding events in 2015.

Also these Measures are being used to form the Medium Term Programme, for bids to the Environment Agency for Grant in Aid.

Last year Leeds included £1m in the Council's Capital Programme to be spent over three years in the bidding process as partnership/match funding to secure financial support and to deliver flood mitigation works that would not be eligible for other funding.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 A wide consultation was carried out for the adoption of the Strategy. Further local consultation will be undertaken on individual schemes.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An EDCI screening (Appendix 4) has been completed and indicated that an Equality Impact Assessment is not required for what is being proposed.

It should be noted that by carrying out flood alleviation works the Council will be ensuring the safety of the local community and particularly those residents that have children and members of the families have a disability, where these benefits will be greater – as currently these individuals may struggle to get to safety if flooding occurred.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The approach to flood risk management is in keeping with Council Policies and City Priorities - to reduce the risk of flooding to various communities, industrial premises and the environment.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The implementation of the LFRMs will potentially have an impact in the Council's budgets but the Strategy will ensure that any expenditure is prioritised. Furthermore it will allow stronger cases to be built for future Grant applications

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 The F&WM Act places a requirement on Leeds to prepare and manage the LFRMs.
- 4.5.2 The Act requires Scrutiny of the Council's activities in this area

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The Strategy allows the Council to prioritise its work on Flood Risk and lead to reduced overall risk of flooding.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Flood Risk is a key threat to the wellbeing of the residents across Leeds and in order to ensure action is taken it is important that Council continues a proactive approach to mitigating the impact of flooding.
- 5.2 There has been good progress in the delivery of projects identified in the Strategy in 2014. However priorities will need to be reviewed following an evaluation of the exceptional flooding events in 2015.
- 5.3 The allocation of a Capital budget in 2015 is already helping in achieving the proposed aims set down in the Strategy by securing match funding for works to be delivered this year.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Board reviews the progress made with regard to the Strategy and make comments.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 Leeds Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Progress on LFRMS Appendix C (2015)
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Updated version LFRMS Appendix C (i) Measures (2016)
- 8.3 Appendix 3 – Updated version LFRMS Appendix C (ii) Measures (2016)

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.