

**Report of Flood Risk Manager**

**Report to Scrutiny Board – Sustainable Economy and Culture**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2012**

**Subject: Flood Risk Management – an Update**

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 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 type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. This Report provides an update on Flood Risk Management (FRM).
2. It includes information on the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 (F&WM Act).
3. Attached is the final version of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA).
4. Outlines the various Agencies involved in flooding issues.

**Recommendations**

5. That the Board note the information provided and then decide the level of scrutiny required for 2012/13.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The Report attempts to provide background to the work on addressing flooding issues, particularly since the F&WM Act.
- 1.2 This information will allow the Board to decide on the level of scrutiny required regarding such issues.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds has suffered from a series of floods over the last 12 years, which have caused substantial damage and hardship to communities across the District.
- 2.2 Following a series of serious floods around 2005 the Council decided that flooding was an issue that should be taken seriously and additional resources were provided to Land Drainage, which was to become FRM, and to Cleansing for increased levels of gulley emptying and street sweeping.
- 2.3 Around the time that this was being implemented there were major floods across the country, during the summer of 2007. The results of this were devastating in many communities and the Government set up the Pitt Review into flooding. This came up with 93 recommendations, which led to the F&WM Act.
- 2.4 Furthermore European Legislation was introduced under the Flood Regulations 2009, which required local authorities to prepare a PFRA.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 FRM have been in existence for just over 2 years, when they replaced Land Drainage. Their duties include: -
  - Watercourse Maintenance for Council owned watercourses.
  - Clearance of Hot Spots, locations where grilles blocking will lead to high flood risk.
  - Watercourse Inspections for key watercourses across the District.
  - Surveys of drainage systems and culverted watercourses.
  - Investigate flood issues and try to address them.
  - Records of works and GIS.
  - Planning Application Consultations – assessing proposals for drainage related to developments, ensuring that flood risk is considered and where possible reduced
  - Considering applications for culverting of watercourses under the Public Health Act.

- Advise to other departments on the implications of their proposals for flood risk.
- Flood alleviation schemes utilising Grants.
- Property level protection schemes.
- Prepare strategies and flood risk assessments.
- Manage the Council Pumping Stations and Water Features.

3.2 Additional duties under the F&WM Act: -

3.3 The PFRA was produced last year and is available to the public. This provides base information about flooding in Leeds District and examines the risk of the impact from major floods. It is available as a background document.

3.4 The Council is now the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) – with the lead regarding surface water & groundwater flooding, as well as ordinary watercourses. Additional duties include:

- Develop a Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management.
- Investigate local flood issues – publishing those for key floods.
- Maintain a register of structures and features that have an impact on flood risk.
- Designate third party assets – that are key to flood risk management.
- Approval of works on Ordinary Watercourses – previously an EA role.
- Set up Scrutiny of the way **all** Agencies are dealing with flood risk issues.

3.5 Roles of the Flood Risk Management Agencies:

- The Environment Agency (EA) – provides an overall control of flood risk, with a lead regarding Main Rivers and managing Grants for flood alleviation schemes. They have prepared a National Flood Risk Strategy, which has been adopted by Government. Locally the works of the EA in flood risk management are directed by the Yorkshire Regional Flood & Coastal Committee – Leeds City Council's representative on this committee is currently Cllr Liz Nash.
- Yorkshire Water – are responsible for flooding from their sewer network.
- Highways – the draining of the highway network and issues with their systems.
- Highways Agency – The draining of motorways and issues with their systems.

- Internal Drainage Board – the maintenance of nominated watercourses within their boundary and any flood alleviation systems, such as pumping stations. Within Leeds District there is only one IDB and that is Ainsty IDB, which covers small areas in the north east of the District – around Wetherby and Thorp Arch.
- The LLFA – for Leeds CC that is FRM – see duties above. FRM also continues to carryout it ongoing roles that include commenting on Planning Application, maintenance of Council watercourses & flood hot spots, inspection of watercourse and implementation of flood alleviation schemes.

Now, more than ever before, the above organisations need to work in partnership to address the flood issues we all face. Therefore a number of working groups have been set up to move various issues forward and to ensure the partnership arrangements are robust, these include:

- The West Yorkshire Flood Risk Partnership – that looks at a strategy for all 5 of the districts in West Yorkshire and includes representatives from the Environment Agency; Yorkshire Water and the Regional Flood & Coastal Committee
- Leeds Planning & Flood Forum – that examines how planning and flood risk work and brings together Leeds officers from Planning, Development Control, Emergency Planning and Flood Risk Management, together with representatives from the EA & YW.
- Leeds Flood Technical Forum – where detailed flood issues are discussed between representative from Flood Risk Management, Highways, YW and the EA.
- West Yorkshire Land Drainage Officers – a forum where the various officers meet to discuss where land drainage and flood risk are going - this is attended by representatives from the surrounding authorities, YW & the EA.
- Yorkshire & Humber Learning & Action Alliance – a loose grouping of various interested parties involved in Flood Risk Management, where knowledge can be exchanged and working groups are set up to attack new issues that arise.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 This report is part of a series of consultations and engagements with a number of bodies and the public on how Leeds CC should approach the risk of flooding we face.

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

- 4.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion & Integration Screening exercise has been undertaken (please see background papers). No positive or negative impacts

were identified, and the screening determined that a formal Equality Impact Assessment was not required at this time

### **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 There are resources issues to the Council in ensuring that flood risk management is dealt with properly but it will provide value for money by reducing the risk/impact of flooding.

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

4.5.1 There are implications for the Council in these matters and this proposes that they are scrutinised.

### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 There are risks to the public from flooding and also risk to the Council from how we deal with these issues, this report suggests that the committee scrutinises how we are dealing with such issues.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 It is important that all the flood risk agencies work in partnership in order to address the serious impacts that can result from flooding.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 That this Scrutiny Board carry out an assessment of the workings of the various Agencies and if necessary hold hearings with them present.

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

7.1 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Leeds City Council

7.2 Flood & Water Management Act 2010

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<sup>1</sup> 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.