

Report of Flood Risk Manager

Report to Scrutiny Board – Sustainable Economy and Culture

Date: 18th October 2012

Subject: Scrutiny of Flood Risk Management

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. The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 made amendment to the Local Government Act 2000, under Section 21F, requiring all Lead Local Flood Authorities to review and scrutinise the actions of Flood Risk Management Authorities that may affect the local authority's area.
2. This Report outlines the relevant Flood Risk Management Authorities, with regard to Leeds CC, and some of the issues the board may wish to consider.

Recommendations

3. That the Board note the information provided and then decide upon the level of scrutiny required.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This Report attempts to provide background for the work of the Board in Scrutinising Flood Risk Management Authorities on their work on flooding issues.
- 1.2 Provide information that 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 has become Flood Risk Management, and to Cleansing for an increased level 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 Flood & Water Management Act 2010.
- 2.4 Leeds has again suffered a considerable number of incidents of flooding during 2012.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Flood Risk Management has 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 assets and works on 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 and the Land Drainage 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 A Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Leeds 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.

3.3 The Council is now the Lead Local Flood Authority – 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.

3.4 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 Richard Lewis.
- 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 Lead Local Flood Authority – for Leeds CC that is Flood Risk Management. Flood Risk Management carryout ongoing roles that include commenting on Planning Application, maintenance of Council watercourses & flood hot spots, inspection of watercourses 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 Flood Risk Management Group – Working Group consisting of officers from all the key sections of the Council, examining the response to flood issues.
- 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 examine new issues that arise.

3.5 Suggested Flood Issues to be Considered

- The work being carried out by Flood Risk Management Section of the Council – how they are progressing with the new duties that were brought in under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010.

- Flood alleviation programme for the District - including an update on the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- The preparation of the Leeds Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.
- Preparations for the implementation of the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Regulation.
- The Planning Process and how flood risk management issues are dealt with.
- Highway Drainage with particular emphasis on gulley operation and maintenance.
- The role of Yorkshire Water in the effectual drainage of the District.
- The Environment Agency and their role for flood risk management in the District

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 carryout an assessment of the workings of the various Agencies and if necessary hold hearings with them present.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Leeds City Council
- 7.2 Draft Leeds Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

¹ 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.