

Subject: Flood Risk Management
Lead Officer: Steve Haresnape
Contact on 01789 260854

**Lead Member/
Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Jackson**

Summary

To provide the Joint Committee with an update on the work being undertaken by the Environment Agency and other agencies following the July 2007 floods and to seek the Committee's views on what additional information would be required.

RECOMMENDED:

That, in light of the information presented, the Committee determines whether any specific aspect of flood risk management activity should be the subject of a future report.

1 Background/Information

1.1 This report brings together updates from the Environment Agency, the Warwickshire County Council, Severn Trent Water and the District Council on action being taken to reduce the risk in flooding in the district since the July 2007 floods as follows:

1.2 Environment Agency

The following is an extract from a briefing paper issued by the Environment Agency in June 2008:

Our role in Flood Risk Management

We are the lead agency for providing flood risk management and warning of flooding from 'main' rivers. Other bodies are responsible for the standards and maintenance of smaller watercourses, culverts, drains and sewerage systems. During and following floods we

- maintain and repair flood defences
 - monitor river levels and rain gauges
 - gather information from flood events to improve forecasting model and mapping
 - raise awareness of flood risk and how to prepare for flooding
-

- provide flood warning services

Review and recommendations from the Government Review

After every major flood we conduct a review to identify lessons and good practice. Our review was complete in December and fed into the Government Review led by Sir Michael Pitt. The final report from Sir Michael is expected in June 2008 and will examine both the emergency response to the floods in June and July 2007 and how to reduce the risk and impact of floods in the future given that climate change is making such weather events more likely.

We are pleased that the government will consult on legislation (Floods and Water Bill) to implement the recommendations of the Pill Review.

We particularly welcomed Sir Michael's interim review and recommendations on:

Environment Agency taking the lead strategic role on all flood risks. We believe that this would provide welcome clarity and provide the framework for local authorities and other partners to plan locally and work together to manage urban flooding from any source.

Providers of critical public services, including electricity and water companies, need to take their role safeguarding their services from flooding more seriously. They should have a duty under the forthcoming Climate Change Bill to take account of climate change impacts when providing their services. We are working with Ofwat to develop a framework for assessing critical asset resilience to flooding to inform water companies business plans. Severn Trent have already carried out a flood risk assessment of their critical infrastructure and prepared a business case and bid for Ofwat. We have worked with the Energy Networks Association on a report to Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform Ministers on substations resilience to flooding.

Develop flood warnings. Providing surface water flood warnings to individual homes and properties is likely to be technically challenging and costly. The Met Office and ourselves are examining what broader warnings about severe weather and potential floods can be provided.

We support Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Select Committee (Efra) and Sir Michael Pitt's suggestion of a full opt-out flood warning service for communities. We are working closely with British Telecom and Ofcom to progress efforts to transfer data from the Emergency Services Database to Flood Warnings Direct. We can't stop flooding, so we need to ensure that the public, businesses including farmers and our professional partners receive and act on flood warnings.

Building in flood plains

We have a legacy of building on flood plains, so more houses are at risk of flooding, and we have built over more of the land where water could have drained away. We welcome the government planning policy (PPS25) on 'development and flood risk' which directs development to lowest flood risk areas first and seeks to reduce flood risk overall.

Since 1 January 2007 if local planning authorities over-rule Environment Agency flood risk advice on major development applications this can be referred to Government Office, who can decide if this should be called in for determination by central government. We need to make sure homes

are built in a safe place, and that people and the environment are protected.

Funding for flood risk management

The increase in government funding for flood risk management is a welcome move in the right direction. Climate change models predict an increased flood risk due to more extreme rainfall. Consequently commentators agree that funding should continue to steadily increase over successive government spending reviews.

Recent flood events have highlighted the urgency of adapting to the potential effects of climate change to protect lives, property, the economy and the environment. The Environment Agency is on the frontline of managing and adapting to the effects of climate change such as flooding.

Specific Work Programme affecting the Joint Committee's area

The attached fact sheets contain summaries of the specific work being undertaken within the Joint Committee's area.

1.3 **Warwickshire County Council**

A number of medium sized capital schemes totalling £220k will be completed within the next 12 months.

The rolling programme of minor highways drainage schemes has been doubled.

A new guide, in consultation with NFU — 'Farming and the Public Highway' - has been published. Resulting in more ditch clearing by farmers and installation of overflow flood spillways, such as in Brailes.

A small number of landowners are being pursued for enforcement action.

Schemes at Wootton Wawen to provide a new storm water culvert and Long Compton to provide flood relief works to the village are to be commenced.

1.4 **Stratford-on-Avon District Council**

£281k has been given to residents who suffered internal flooding last July as a direct grant.

£60k has been granted to Environment Agency as joint funding for the Alcester scheme.

£60k has been granted to Warwickshire County Council to joint fund two drainage schemes at Wootton Wawen and Long Compton as referred to in 2.5 above.

Various improvements and enforcement during Autumn 2007 to Spring 2008:

- Dredging watercourse on Council owned land in Studley.
- Enforcement work to ditches in Quinton, Wixford, Rushbrook, Salford Priors and Ladbrooke.

£50k capital and £37k revenue funding is being spent on the Land Drainage Improvement programme, initially for alleviation measures at

- Ladbrooke £2.1k;
-

- Aston Cantlow £13.5k;
- Long Compton £25k;
- Long Marston £30k;
- Quinton £5k.

Schemes for Marlcliff, Wellesbourne, Brailes, Ilmington and Gaydon are costed and awaiting funding next year.

£100k is available for Town/Parish Council grants for small schemes, these are currently being evaluated.

The Council's Environmental Quality and Climate Change Panel will be looking at the updated Land Drainage Improvement Programme at its next meeting.

1.5 **Severn Trent Water**

Sewer jetting and root clearance in Alcester.

2 Options available to the Committee

- 2.1 The Committee, in light of the information now presented, is asked to determine whether there are any specific aspects of flood risk management activity that it wishes a report to be presented to a future meeting.

3 Members' Comments

- 3.1 None received.

4 Implications of the proposal

- 4.1 Legal/Human Rights Implications

None.

4.2 ***Financial***

The Council's financial costs are as detailed under Section 1.4.

4.3 ***Environmental***

Section 1.4 above outlines the Council's environmental implications.

4.4 ***Corporate Strategy***

None.

4.5 ***Equality Impact Assessment***

None.

Robert Weeks
HEAD OF Environment
