

Report of the Director of City Strategy

## **PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **Summary**

1. This report informs Members of the Council's duty to complete a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and of the required timetable.

### **Background**

#### **The Pitt Review and New Legislation**

2. Sir Michael Pitt's review of the flooding that affected many parts of the UK in 2007 stated that "the role of local authorities should be enhanced so that they take on responsibility for leading the co-ordination of flood risk management in their areas". As a result two new pieces of legislation, The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, have been enacted which confer new duties on Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) which are County Councils and Unitary Authorities.

#### **The Flood and Water Management Act 2010**

3. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires a LLFA to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management in its area and be responsible for ensuring that the strategy is put in place. Local flood risk, which the LLFA is responsible for managing, includes surface runoff, groundwater, and ordinary watercourses (including lakes and ponds). The Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for managing flood risk from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs.
4. The Act sets out the minimum that a local strategy must contain, and the LLFA is required to consult with risk management authorities and the public. Risk management authorities are identified as district councils, internal drainage boards, highway authorities, water companies and the EA. LLFAs need to consider the full range of measures consistent with a risk management approach in developing their local flood risk strategy. Resilience and other approaches which minimise the impact of flooding are expected to be a key aspect of the measures proposed.

## **The Flood Risk Regulations 2009**

5. The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 implement the requirements of the European Floods Directive, which aims to provide a consistent approach to managing flood risk across Europe. The approach consists of a six year cycle of planning based on a four stage process of:
  - i) Undertaking a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA).
  - ii) Identifying flood risk areas.
  - iii) Preparing flood hazard and risk maps.
  - iv) Preparing flood risk management plans.

## **Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment**

6. The PFRA will provide a high level summary of significant flood risk, i.e. where the risk from local sources of flooding are greatest. It is intended that this will be based on available and readily derivable information, describing both the probability and harmful consequences of past and future flooding. The development of new information is not required, but new analysis of existing information may be needed.
7. To complete the PFRA the LLFA must determine the location and extent of flood risk areas. To assist in this process the EA has produced Indicative Flood Risk Area maps based on various national datasets and Defra have set the significance thresholds. LLFAs are required to test the information provided against local knowledge and data.
8. The report is required to include:
  - i) Preliminary assessment written report - the length will vary depending on the size of the LLFA and the amount of information available. In general it may be about 10-20 pages, but it could be longer.
  - ii) Preliminary assessment report spreadsheet - records of flooding events must be in the specified format in a spreadsheet and this forms the basis for the information which will be reported to the European Commission.
  - iii) GIS layer of the Flood Risk Area(s).

## **Timetable**

9. LLFAs are responsible for carrying out their PFRA and are required to produce an approved and scrutinised report and accompanying data to the EA by 22 June 2011. The EA has a duty to review, collate and publish the required reports by 22 December 2011. In order to comply with this timetable is proposed to bring the report to this committee on 8 March 2011.

## **Consultation**

10. No external consultation has taken place as the purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Council's new duty to carry out a PRFA.

### **Options**

11. There are no options to consider as the PFRA is a statutory duty on the Council.

### **Corporate Priorities**

12. The completion of the PFRA will make a contribution to three of the Council's Corporate Priorities, the Sustainable City, The Thriving City and the Safer City, by identifying existing and potential flood risk areas, ensuring that development takes into account the restrictions thus imposed, and managing the impact of flooding on the economy.

### **Implications**

13. There are no financial implications as Defra has provided funding through a grant of £10,000 for carrying out the PFRA. There are no Human Resources, Equalities, Legal, Crime and Disorder, Information Technology or Property implications.

### **Risk Management**

14. There is a risk to the Council's reputation if it does not complete the PFRA in accordance with the required timetable.

### **Recommendations**

15. It is recommended that Members note this report and that the PFRA will be brought to their meeting on 8 March for consideration before submission to the EA.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on progress that has been made.

### **Contact Details**

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**Report** ✓  
**Approved** **Date** 10/01/11

**Specialist Implications Officer(s):**

None

**Wards Affected: All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

**Background Papers:**

**Flood and Water Management Act** - Report of the Director of City Strategy to the Executive. 2 November 2010