

## Place Select Committee

A meeting of Place Select Committee was held on Monday, 11th July, 2016.

**Present:** Cllr Derrick Brown(Chairman), Cllr Sonia Bailey(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Chris Barlow, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Bill Woodhead MBE, Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Lisa Grainge

**Officers:** Alan Smuk (Senior Engineer Flood Risk), Jane Salisbury (Principal Engineer Flood Risk), Graham Birtle (Scrutiny Officer), Gayle Nertney (Governance Officer)

**Also in attendance:** Phil Marshall (Environment Agency), Linzie Pentleton (Northumbrian Water), Cllr Norma Stephenson

**Apologies:** Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Rachael Proud, Cllr Sylvia Walmsley

### **PLA 13/16**      **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **PLA 14/16**      **Draft Minutes - 13th June 2016**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2016.

AGREED that the following amendments be made:

- Members requested that it is stressed within the minutes, their concern for the loss of car parking at the old dairy site and the impact on SBC staff.
- Members asked that it be stressed within the minutes that local labour should be employed wherever possible, unless unable to do so.

### **PLA 15/16**      **Scrutiny Review of Flooding Resilience**

The Committee took evidence from Jane Salisbury, Principal Engineer for Flood Risk Management at Stockton Borough Council.

The background was discussed including the introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, and the new duties and powers for Stockton Borough Council as Lead Local Flood Authority.

The Committee was advised that standards had been agreed as to what would trigger a formal investigation, which is 5 properties or 2 businesses being flooded internally, the closure of a main highway for 10 hours or more, or a major infrastructure such as a hospital being affected.

Recent investigations into local flood incidents were discussed including Lustrum Beck and Port Clarence.

In 2015, Stockton Borough Council became a statutory consultee to the planning process, and are able to comment on planning applications and give advice to Planning Officers of major applications (10 properties or more).

The Committee took evidence from representatives of the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water.

Linzie Pentleton, Sewerage Network Controller at Northumbrian Water provided information to the Committee.

Flood alleviation schemes have seen investment to reduce the number of properties affected. Between 2005 and 2010 £104m was spent on 776 properties and between 2010 and 2015 £126m was spent to provide for 1000+ properties.

£2m per annum is spent on mitigating flooding for 200-300 properties annually which includes providing flood doors, non-return valves on pipes, and air brick covers as simple measures to prevent water getting into properties. Members learned that flooding must be alleviated and not moved to another location.

Local Flood Risk management partnership opportunities are now an established form of engagement with the Environment Agency and Local Authorities with Operational Liaison Meetings held to improve planning against flooding.

Members enquired on Northumbrian Water and Environment Agency's contributions in relation to Planning Applications. It was confirmed that the Local Lead Flood Authority would provide information on behalf of NW and EA in relation to planning in order to avoid conflicting information i.e. NW would advise a developer what flow their systems are capable of taking, but the LLFA would advise what discharge they can have into the water course in order to control flood risk.

Members asked what would happen when sewers were under private land and required repairs. It was confirmed that NW had Rights of Access in order to work on their pipes.

Members queried as to whether there were any Community Action Plans for the Tees Valley, and were advised that enquiries will be made outside of the meeting and to report back.

Members asked how the Asset Management Plan (AMP6) budget was set, whether it was the amount required to meet needs or a total that had to be applied to achieve as much as possible. They were informed that the figure used to be based on outputs stating the number of properties that would be taken out of risk and the average cost per property. For AMP6 it is refocused to outcomes reducing the flood risk to 8000 properties checked by the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) who release the monies to deliver the outcomes and how much can be charged to the customer.

Members enquired about the success of supplying water butts, and encouraging residents not to pave/tarmac over garden areas. They were advised that a number of options were being explored, including water butts, but that these needed to be emptied before the floods in order to create any benefit. Wet gardens within chicanes for traffic calming were also being explored, as well as sustainable gardens.

Members asked whether the popularity of water meters had made an impact, and they were advised that NW had had a reduction in the amount of water used across the region, however work still needed to be done to educate people

on water conservation.

Phil Marshall, Senior Advisor to the Partnerships and Strategic Overview team at the Environment Agency provided information to the Committee regarding the Agencies role in relation to Flood and Coastal Risk Management.

The changes to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 were discussed, and how the Act drives how flood risk management activities are delivered jointly.

The Act enables the Environment Agency to pay grants in connection with flood or coastal erosion risk management in England, and to issue a levy (known as the Local Levy) to a Lead Local Flood Authority in respect of flood and coastal risk management work undertaken in the area.

There is a national budget of £2.3b for the next 6 years in order to protect, or improve the protection to 300,000 properties, £48m of which is to be spent in the North East.

The Environment Agency also carries out flood risk management works by adding new provisions already in the Water Resources Act 1991.

The EA provide a general supervision role, known as the Strategic Overview, in order to provide leadership and guidance on all types of flooding i.e. that work undertaken by one local authority would not have an impact on another.

There were currently 2 schemes within the borough which were discussed – Port Clarence and Lustrum Beck.

Members asked whether predictions were taken into account when carrying out protection work in relation to global warming, and were advised that defences were calculated with the current required, a predicted need and also an additional allowance known as a 'freeboard'.

Members queried whether wildlife were taken into account, when areas were made drier i.e Seal Sands, and were advised that discussions were made with Natural England and the RSPB on what the best options were. Members were also advised that funding was available from the Government should habitat be created.

Members asked who is the lead of the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, and were advised that the Chair is John Hargreaves who is appointed by Defra, and that representation is made up of one elected member for each area.

Members questioned how the local levy worked and were advised that the levy was raised on each local authority and was based on how many Band D properties that authority had. £157,000 was the levy for Stockton, and it was confirmed that Stockton had received more than its levy.

Members enquired about the strategic overview, and whether there was any cause for concern from neighbouring authorities plans, and were advised that current plans will help the area and not pass water downstream.

Members asked what the process was for rights of access for private landowners, and were advised that legal notices would be served if needed, and if necessary, any blockage would be removed by the EA and recharged to the landowner.

**PLA**      **Work Programme**

**16/16**

Site visit to Lustrum Beck 12 July 2016. All interested members were invited to attend.

**PLA**      **Chair's Update**

**17/16**

The Chair had nothing to update.