

**Place Select Committee
Scrutiny Review of Flooding Resilience**

Findings	Emerging Recommendations
<p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>The original scope of the review was to address the number and level of flooding incidents that are of increased concern to residents.</p> <p>Following the severe floods that occurred in England and Wales the government requested an independent review to examine flood risk management in the UK and identify what could have been done differently. On conclusion the review called for an urgent and fundamental change in the way the country dealt with the likelihood of more frequent and intense periods of rainfall with a number of recommendations.</p> <p>The Government's response to the review was the introduction of new legislation, the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 which implements many of the changes recommended in the review. The Act aims to reduce the flood risk for people, homes and businesses. The Act also clarifies who is responsible for managing all sources of flood risk, requires effective partnerships to be formed between partners whom are responsible for flood risk management and encourages more sustainable forms of drainage in new developments. It also provides new statutory duties and powers to risk management authorities, including local authorities, Environment Agency and water and sewerage undertakers. Local Authorities also became Lead Local Flood Authority's (LLFA) and therefore Stockton Borough Council has a statutory duty for managing local flood risk.</p> <p>The Committee has undertaken the following key lines of enquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's resilience in terms of resources to deal with highway drainage, gully cleansing. • General maintenance of SBC owned ordinary watercourses; risk of flooding relating to trash screen blockage and surface water flood risk mitigation. • The Council's new statutory duty in relation to new development, 	

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<p>the planning process, surface water discharge, sustainable urban drainage systems and resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's emergency response and capacity to deal with all sources of flood related incidents. 	
<p>DETAIL</p> <p>On 21 April 2016 Cabinet approved the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and its objectives for the future management of flood risk within the Borough. The strategy set out five key objectives for managing flood risk within the Borough, these were:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing flood risk to communities severely affected by recent flooding. Reducing the incidence of surface water flooding. Ensuring flood risk is managed in new developments. Keeping our highways safe and passable. Delivering wider benefits. <p>The new statutory consultee role placed additional responsibility on the Authority in relation to providing technical approval for sustainable drainage systems and an ongoing role in site supervision and inspections. As part of the lead authority arrangement with Darlington Borough Council also requested that SBC take on the statutory consultee role for their Authority.</p> <p>The new statutory consultee role to the local Planning Authority and delivering the sustainable urban drainage system remit has put further responsibility on the Council particularly as an increased level of planning applications have been received than was originally envisaged. It is recognised that the new statutory consultee role is key to being proactive in reducing flood risk, across the Borough. The review recognises the extent of the new duties and the pressure on resources this has produced.</p> <p>The Committee has also taken evidence by way of presentations from representatives of both the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water. The presentations detailed the roles and responsibilities of the</p>	

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<p>respective organisations.</p> <p>The representative from Northumbrian Water advised the Committee, that investment in flood alleviation schemes has increased over the last 10 years, reducing the number of properties affected, within its area. In addition to the flood alleviation schemes the company invests in property level protection mitigating flooding for 200-300 properties annually, throughout its area. Property level protection includes providing flood doors, non-return valves on pipes, and air brick covers as simple measures to prevent water getting into properties.</p> <p>The Environment Agency (EA) representative highlighted that particular focus is on the co-operation with other risk management authorities to manage flooding and this has been developed by way of the now well established Northern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (NRFCC). The NRFCC which is composed of Elected Members and Officers from local authorities, the EA and NW and has a remit under the Flood and Water Management Act to co-operate with each other in exercising their flood risk management duties. The committee is responsible for raising and administering the local levy funds to be used for flooding projects and for approving the EA's regional works programme. Stockton Borough Council as LLFA has both officer and member representation on this committee by way of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Housing.</p> <p>The Flood and Water Management Act also enables the EA to issue a levy (known as the Local Levy) to a LLFA in respect of flood and coastal risk management work undertaken in the respective area. Members were particularly interested in this element and enquired further how the levy worked.</p> <p>The Committee was informed that it was based on the number of Council Tax Band D properties in each local authority area therefore each area contributes a different amount with the largest contributors in the region being Durham and Sunderland Councils respectively. Overall the Local Levy is approximately £2.1m each year for the north east. It was noted that Stockton has received significantly more than has been contributed for a number of flood mitigation schemes, with the most high profile</p>	

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<p>being the Lustrum Beck flood alleviation scheme.</p> <p>Stockton Council also hosts the Tees Valley Strategic Flood Risk Management Partnership, which is attended by Officers and relevant Cabinet Members from the Tees Valley Local Authorities, Emergency Planning, the Environment Agency, and Northumbrian Water and has been highlighted by the EA as a beacon of good practice for the work the group has undertaken.</p> <p>To better understand the scale of work being undertaken for the provision of flood defences within Stockton Officers arranged a site visit for Committee members to Lustrum Beck so members could see the works currently ongoing, including Londonderry Bridge, trash screen replacement works and flood defence improvements. Members were impressed by the level and scale of the flood defence works being undertaken and felt the site visit was of great benefit.</p> <p>A presentation was also given by the Councils Commercial and Technical Services Manager which detailed the Council's operational procedures in dealing with flooding instances. It was highlighted that during winter months there is generally sufficient operational staff to deal with potential flooding issues however, during the summer months there is no official call-out procedure in place and therefore responses to flooding instances relies on staff goodwill.</p> <p>The Committee felt that SBC would benefit from having a team of suitably trained operational officers with appropriate equipment whom deal with flooding issues all year round.</p> <p>There are approximately 49,000 highway gullies within the Borough and it is generally found that older areas of the Borough have smaller gullies which could potentially increase the risk of surface water flooding during extreme weather events. There are approximately 5,000 of this type of gully.</p> <p>In order to assist with the above there are a number of computerised software systems available which are able to provide a robust evidence base, assist with future cleansing and maintenance programmes in</p>	<p>Further develop the expertise of the operatives currently engaged in dealing with flooding issues.</p> <p>Produce a formal programme of replacement for older style gullies within the Borough in line with the principals of asset management and routine maintenance.</p> <p>A number of bespoke software systems are available which can assist and these should be evaluated to ascertain if they would be suitable to use in this area moving forward.</p>

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<p>addition to providing an asset management based replacement programme of gullies which would ultimately assist in reducing surface water flood risk.</p> <p>There is a large amount of work being undertaken in the area of flood risk management and Members felt that there could be more awareness and publicity of this work.</p> <p>The Committee observed the Stockton Borough Council Emergency Planning Unit's Exercise on 10 November which was based on dealing with a major flooding event in the Borough. It was a table top exercise with the following aims and objectives to test the Major Incident Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To test the Ground Floor Conference room suitability as a Borough Emergency Centre. • To test the roles and responsibilities within the plan. • To test the lines of communication within the plan. • Test recording of decisions and information 	<p>Expand the annual report currently produced on flooding to ensure all flooding activities are formally recorded.</p>