

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TRANSPORT, ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 JULY 2013

LOCAL STRATEGY FOR FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

PROGRESS UPDATE

Report of the Corporate Director – Business and Environmental Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a progress update on the development of the North Yorkshire Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 North Yorkshire County Council is identified by the Flood and Water Management Act as the Lead Local Flood Authority for the North Yorkshire administrative area.
- 2.2 The Flood and Water Management Act requires Lead Local Flood Authorities to develop and deliver a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for their area.
- 2.3 As a minimum, the local strategy is required to cover flooding from ordinary watercourses (main rivers are the responsibility of the Environment Agency), surface water and ground water.

3.0 KEY FEATURES OF THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The North Yorkshire County Council Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is being developed with the following features, both in accordance with the requirements of the Act, and tailored to the specific flood risks faced by communities in North Yorkshire. It is intended that the local strategy will therefore:
- Cover all forms of flooding, including main rivers and coastal flood risk. We will achieve this by working closely with partner organisations to ensure that opportunities for multiple benefits and value for money are maximised

- The strategy will contain policy statements relating to each of our key duties and responsibilities under the Act, and also a strategic management plan. The strategic management plan will assist with the identification of priority areas, and will form the basis of future funding and investment proposals
- The strategy will be delivered in a range of formats, including easy to digest summaries and guidance notes.

4.0 PROGRESS TO DATE AND KEY NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The data collection and review phase has been completed, and interviews and workshops with key stakeholders have been carried out. A verbal update on the outcome of these will be provided at the meeting of the committee on 17 July.
- 4.2 Development of policy statements and processes is in progress.

5.0 TIMETABLE FOR DELIVERY

- 5.1 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has not set a specific timetable for the development and completion of the local strategy, and they acknowledge that it is a significant undertaking for local authorities.
- 5.2 The flooding events that occurred in 2012 have had an impact on the delivery timetable. The Flood Risk Management team has been heavily involved in the flood response and recovery activity, which has inevitably put pressure on resources.
- 5.3 It is also critically important for the credibility of the strategy that conclusions drawn from the data and information on the flooding incidents that occurred in 2012 are taken into account by the strategy.
- 5.4 A revised outline timetable for the production of the North Yorkshire Flood Risk Management Strategy is set out below:
- Data collection and review – June to December 2012
 - Initial stakeholder interviews and workshops – August 2012 to January 2013
 - Policy development and drafting – August 2012 to July 2013
 - Stakeholder reviews – May to June 2013
 - Formal consultation and sign off – September to December 2013
 - Adoption and publication – March 2013

6.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required at this stage, but a screening exercise has been carried out which determined that the proposed strategy will have a significant positive impact on all people affected by flooding, regardless of their characteristics.
- 6.2 Communications activities, which include consultation exercises, will need to actively ensure that any messages and opportunities are accessible to all. This will be achieved by working closely with internal and external partners and community representatives.

7.0 FINANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 At this stage, the strategy has no direct financial implications. However, failure to develop a strategy for flood risk management may have an impact on the level of funding we can attract in future years.
- 7.2 The County Council receives a grant from government currently totalling £204k annually to discharge its responsibilities as Local Flood Authority. The work to develop the strategy is funded from this grant along with other flood risk management activities and resources. Any unspent grant is allocated to a Flood Risk Management Reserve which is intended to help fund the future work programme that will result from the strategy.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The development of the strategy is consistent with our statutory duties for flood risk management, and as such it provides strong supporting evidence that we are discharging those duties.

9.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 The Committee are asked to note the report and provide feedback.

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Author of Report - Mark Young

Background Papers - None