

REVIEW OF PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

To: **Economy and Environment Committee**

Meeting Date: **1 June 2017**

From: **Executive Director of ETE, Graham Hughes**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **Not applicable** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To consider a report that the County Council is required to produce under national and European legislation:**

- 1. Cambridgeshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) Review 2017.**

Recommendation: **That Committee approve:**

- a) The Cambridgeshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Review 2017, as set out in Appendix 1.**
- b) The new Flood Risk Areas, with the recommendation that the County Council be allowed to amend the boundaries of these areas to make them more meaningful. These areas are currently as set out in Appendix 2.**
- c) Delegate authority to the Director of Economy Transport and Environment to make minor final amendments to the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Review 2017 ahead of submission to the Environment Agency in June 2017.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire County Council is a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) with responsibility for managing flood risk from surface runoff, ordinary watercourses and groundwater. The Environment Agency remain as the competent authority for flood risk from main rivers, reservoirs and the sea.
- 1.2 Wide scale surface water flooding experienced during 2007 precipitated the publication of the Pitt Review, which contained 92 recommendations for Government to consider. The Pitt Review recommendations were transposed into UK law in the form of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The Act gave LLFAs statutory duties and powers to manage surface water flood risk. Additionally, there are over 60 Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), four District Councils, and a City Council within the County that play an important role in local flood risk management.
- 1.3 As part of the County Council's role as a LLFA it must meet the requirements of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 that implement the European Floods Directive (2007/60/EC). The regulations seek to provide a consistent approach to managing flood risk across Europe, through a six year planning cycle. This legislation was being developed at a similar time to the Pitt Review and hence overlaps in numerous places. Appendix 1 illustrates the links between the different flood risk management legislation and plans that are relevant to the County Council.
- 1.4 The primary framework used for managing surface water risk in Cambridgeshire is that set out in the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy (illustrated by Appendix 1's blue column). However in addition to this the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 requirements need to be met.
- 1.5 The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 required each LLFA to undertake three elements of work:
 - 2011 - preliminary flood risk assessment including identification of flood risk areas;
 - 2013 - preparation of flood hazard and risk maps (for those LLFA that had designated Flood Risk Areas;
 - 2015 - preparation of flood risk management plans.
- 1.6 The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 state that each of the above three steps must be reviewed and updated every 6 years. Therefore the upcoming deadlines are:
 - 2017 - review of Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment including identification of new Flood Risk Areas;
 - 2019 - preparation of updated flood mapping; and
 - 2021 - preparation of Flood Risk Management Plans for the Flood Risk Areas.
- 1.7 A Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment is a high level screening exercise that brings together easily available information from various sources to assess

local flood risk. The key stages of Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment involve collecting information on past (historic) floods and future (potential) flood risk; considering the impacts of these on Cambridgeshire; identifying how the Lead Local Flood Authority would manage this information and assembling the details into a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment report.

- 1.8 In 2011, the County Council developed the Cambridgeshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment. At the time, based on national criteria, no Flood Risk Areas were designated. As required by legislation, the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Risk Areas now need revisiting and updating to reflect new data, information and evidence.
- 1.9 An Environment Agency guidance document on the production of Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments was issued to LLFAs in February 2017, and the guidance has been adhered to in the development of this Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment.

2. MAIN ISSUES

Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Review

- 2.1 There are several reasons why a review is needed. Since 2011, Cambridgeshire has experienced several significant flood events; flood mapping in the UK has improved; and systems and processes used by LLFAs have been further developed. The significant updates in Cambridgeshire since 2011 include:
 - Widespread surface water flooding in 2012, 2014 and 2015;
 - New mapping is available aiding better understanding of future risk; and
 - Better understanding of local issues and risk developed through having undertaken a number of surface water management plans.
- 2.2 Rather than prepare a new full Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment report it was agreed by the national Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment steering group (which included Cambridgeshire County Council) that it would be more efficient to develop a simple self-assessment proforma. This review template was supplied to LLFAs by the Environment Agency in February 2017 and the completed version for Cambridgeshire is attached in Appendices 2 and 3.

Identification of Flood Risk Areas

- 2.3 One of the outputs of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment is the identification of Flood Risk Areas. The process of selecting the areas is undertaken at a national level based on European criteria. The areas are selected based on comparing the probability of flooding against the potential consequences it would have in an area. Updated flood risk mapping is used for this purpose alongside records of population and national and local receptors (hospitals, schools, critical infrastructure etc.). In Cambridgeshire there are many areas at risk of surface water flooding, however the Flood Risk Areas focus on those locations where flooding could have the most significant impacts on large populations and public services based on national criteria.

- 2.4 Following the recent national review, three areas have been designated for Cambridgeshire, these are:
- Cambridge City;
 - March; and
 - Huntingdon.
- 2.5 As a result of identification of these three areas the County Council will have to prepare three future Flood Risk Management Plans for June 2021. However, separate to the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 process, the County Council has already developed the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy. This strategy provides the key framework for delivery of flood risk management in Cambridgeshire. It identifies several locations in the County at risk of surface water flooding including Cambridge City and March, which have experienced significant flooding in recent years. As a consequence detailed surface water management plans have already been developed for several locations. The County Council is working to deliver the recommendations of these plans alongside its other statutory duties. The information and data from the Surface Water Management Plans can be used as part of the evidence base for the development of the future Flood Risk Management Plans for Cambridge and March.
- 2.6 It should be noted that, these areas are not selected on the basis of the size of the town, or the area with the most overall flood risk, but those specifically with the greatest chance of surface water flooding affecting critical infrastructure. The larger towns of Wisbech and St Neots which have significant Main River flood risk are dealt with by the Environment Agency under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009.
- 2.7 A detailed surface water management plan has not already been developed for Huntingdon, so this exercise will help to further develop our understanding of risk in the town. Fewer recent flooding events have been recorded in Huntingdon as in other parts of the county. However due to the density of population and services, should surface water flooding take place the impacts would be of concern. For this reason the recommendation is that the County Council accepts the designation of these Flood Risk Areas and prepares, in future, to do a plan for Huntingdon to join the suite of existing management plans for other areas of Cambridgeshire. (It should be noted that delivery of management plan actions is undertaken on the basis of risk and deliverability).
- 2.8 While small changes can be suggested to the Flood Risk Area boundaries, designation could not be rejected without significant reason. It is proposed to amend the indicative boundary for Huntingdon Flood Risk Area to better reflect the shape of the town. No changes are proposed to the Cambridge or March boundaries. The indicative and amended Flood Risk Areas are shown in Appendices 4-7.
- 2.9 Once approved by E&E Committee the statutory Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Review needs to be submitted to the Environment Agency by 22nd June 2017.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

In addition to aligning with Corporate Priorities, it should be noted that this work enables the County Council to comply with its statutory duties under the Flood Risk Regulations (2009) and Flood and Water Management Act (2010).

3.1 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people when they need it most

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in the following ways: Flooding has considerable social, environmental and economic impacts on communities. For example health and social consequences of flooding can include: drowning, infection, injury and loss of sleep, plus difficulty accessing family and friends, healthcare, schools and other local services. Loss of possessions plus costs of recovery, re-building and increasing insurance will create economic impacts on communities. The stress incurred can also contribute to a risk of developing mental health issues.

The Cambridgeshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment and Flood Risk Area designation identifies areas and infrastructure at significant risk of flooding. Although the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment exercise has no impact on this, the future Flood Risk Management Plan development process will contribute towards managing the risk and the consequences.

3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives in their communities

The following implications have been identified by officers: Flooding has considerable social, environmental and economic impacts on communities. Through highlighting areas where flooding will have significant impacts the County and its partners can work with communities to make them more resilient to flooding and therefore more independent. See section 3.1 for examples of the impacts of flooding.

3.3 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

The following implications have been identified by officers: Through highlighting areas and infrastructure where flooding will have significant impacts the County and its partners can develop plans to help make the local economy more resilient.

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

The following points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

4.1 Resource Implications

The designation of the Flood Risk Areas creates the need to prepare Flood Risk Management Plans for the three new Flood Risk Areas by June 2021. Resources will need to be available to research and prepare new information, update existing information and prepare these plans in consultation with other flood risk management partner organisations. It is estimated that there are sufficient resources to undertake the work with current budgets, subject to the nationally derived specification for the Flood Risk Management Plans not significantly increasing. This is because the work that the Council has carried

out so far in developing Surface Water Management Plans for Cambridge and March will provide considerable efficiency in the development of Flood Risk Management Plans.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Any future procurement will be undertaken according to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules

4.3 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

Preparation of the three Flood Risk Management Plans is legally required and failure to do so could place the Council at risk. However the future status of the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 after EU exit could change the exact requirements placed upon the Council. When the Flood Risk Management Plans are prepared in 2020 they will come to Committee for approval.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications within this category

4.5 Engagement and Communication Implications

At this stage the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment review is a very high level exercise.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

When the Flood Risk Management Plans are developed local members will be consulted on the process and asked to assist with the provision of local information.

4.7 Public Health Implications

Please see section 3.1 for examples of the impacts that flooding can have on communities.

5. Appended reports and source documents

Appended reports for consideration	
1	Diagram of relevant legislation and plans
2	Cambridgeshire Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Review 2017
3	Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment review spreadsheet annexes
4	Map of the proposed Flood Risk Area - Cambridge indicative area
5	Map of the proposed Flood Risk Area - March indicative area
6	Map of the proposed Flood Risk Area - Huntingdon indicative area
7	Map of the proposed Flood Risk Area - Huntingdon amended

Source documents	Location
PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE 2011	Documents are available from Shire Hall, room 302, Cambridge.
ENVIRONMENT AGENCY GUIDANCE	

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Sarah Heywood
Have the procurement/contractual implications been cleared?	N/A
Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan
Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?	No Name of Officer: Tamar Oviatt-Ham
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Eleanor Bell
Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?	No Name of Officer: Tamar Oviatt-Ham
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Iain Green