

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S STRATEGY FOR FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT (2015 – 2020)**

*To:* **Economy and Environment Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **8<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

*From:* **Executive Director: Economy, Transport & Environment**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/a**

*Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To seek members' approval to the update of Cambridgeshire's Strategy for Flood Risk Management (2015 - 2020) referred to as the 'Strategy' in this report.**

*Recommendation:* **The Committee is asked to:**

- a. Approve Cambridgeshire's Strategy for Flood Risk Management 2015-2020; and.**
- b. Delegate the approval of responses to Environment Agency and DEFRA consultations on the Strategy to the Executive Director, Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economy and Environment Committee.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing counties in the country with an estimated 50% of the County's land at risk of flooding. The Environment Agency estimates that 23,100 homes in Cambridgeshire are susceptible to surface water flooding in a 1:200 year flood event (a particularly severe degree of flood event, with a 0.5% chance of occurring in any given year).
- 1.2 The County has suffered from surface water flooding, notably in August 2014 when several roads and an estimated 296 properties flooded. Cambridgeshire also experienced flooding in July 2015 when an estimated 32 homes were flooded internally.
- 1.3 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires Cambridgeshire County Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority, to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to provide the framework for managing local flood risk within the County.
- 1.4 Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the District Councils, Anglian Water Services, Highways Authority and Internal Drainage Boards are designated as Risk Management Authorities, and have a duty to act consistently with the content of the Strategy.
- 1.5 The first strategy was published in 2013, following extensive stakeholder and public consultation, and approval by Cambridgeshire County Council's Cabinet.
- 1.6 It was planned that the original strategy would require an update in 2015, to reflect the availability of more up to date information, and the implementation of new legislation.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 The revised strategy continues to focus on the following objectives:
  - Understanding Flood Risk in Cambridgeshire;
  - Managing the likelihood and impacts of flooding;
  - Partnership working;
  - Helping Cambridgeshire's citizens to manage their own risk;
  - Ensuring appropriate development in Cambridgeshire;
  - Improving flood prediction, warning and post flood recovery; and
  - Funding
- 2.2 The revised strategy contains an action plan which is reviewed quarterly by the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership (CFRMP), whose members include the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Cambridge City Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Internal Drainage Boards, Anglian Water Services, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and the Fire and Rescue Service. An annual update on progress is provided to members, and the Government.
- 2.3 The updated strategy contains two key changes:

- A revised assessment of areas in the County vulnerable to surface water flooding. This update was approved by the Economy and Environment Committee in 13th January 2015.
  - A section on the new duties placed on the Council as a statutory Consultee for Sustainable Drainage. A report updating members on this duty and the planned approach was approved by the Economy and Environment Committee on the 26th May 2015.
- 2.4 Input for the update came from a variety of sources including, but not limited to the Environment Agency, District Council and Parish Council, local members, Internal Drainage Boards, the County Council's Highways team, Emergency Management Team, Anglian Water Services and members of the public.
- 2.5 A detailed Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was undertaken for the original strategy in 2012. This strategy update includes minor amendments, therefore it has been agreed that the revised strategy will not require a new SEA as the original one is still relevant. Following consultation, the key stakeholders for an SEA - Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England - have all agreed this approach.
- 2.6 A detailed Community Impact Assessment (CIA) was undertaken for the original strategy in 2012. This update includes minor amendments, therefore it has been decided that the original CIA is still appropriate and does not require updating.
- 2.7 A public consultation was undertaken between June and July 2015. Copies of the strategy were made available in libraries, and District Council offices, in the County, along with consultation response sheets. The consultation was promoted online via the Council's online consultation pages. Information on the consultation was also sent to County Councillors, District Councillors, and Parish Councils.
- 2.8 The stakeholder consultation was well received. The response rate was very good for stakeholders (49%). National guidance states that a response rate over 22% is very good. The public and Parish Council response rate was lower (16%), but we received responses from those in the most at risk areas, so it was deemed to be positive consultation overall. The comments from the respondents were generally positive and supportive, and only minor amendments were required.
- 2.9 In the future, the County Council may be asked to respond to consultations on aspects of the strategy, by DEFRA and the Environment Agency. The timescales set by them to respond to a consultation, are usually very short. Typically four weeks, therefore owing to this tight timescale it would not be possible to present the proposed consultation response to Economy and Environment Committee for approval. Officers therefore wish to propose that the approval of the response to a consultation is delegated to the Executive Director, Economy, Transport and the Environment in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Economy and Environment Committee.

### **3. Next Steps**

- 3.1 Following stakeholder consultation, the final version will be approved by the CFRMP, and then presented to the Economy and Environment Committee for approval. The CFRMP membership includes the District Councils, City Council, Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards and Anglian Water Services.
- 3.2 At the time of writing this report the strategy was going through the approval processes with CFRMP members. A verbal update on progress will be provided at the committee meeting.

### **4. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

#### **4.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

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

- Cambridgeshire's Local Flood Risk Strategy is crucial to the development of the local economy through the guidance and direction it provides to planning authorities, helping to encourage new development; and
- Where appropriate it will discourage investments that will disrupt the lives of local communities and consequently the local economy.

#### **4.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

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

- Flooding can occur at any time and anywhere and is expected to increase due to climate change. The strategy sets the framework for developing the necessary tools to plan and prepare for flooding;
- The strategy encourages and facilitates flood schemes to help protect homes and communities in Cambridgeshire. On occasions, flooding has been known to cause fatalities; and
- The local strategy provides us the framework for engaging with other organisations that provide useful service within the county to ensure that issues are dealt with in an integrated manner.

#### **4.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

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

- Within the strategy, a detailed surface water management plan has been produced to highlight areas at greatest risk from flooding. The strategy contains action plans for dealing with the areas identified;
- A Multi Criteria Analysis has been developed for ranking areas at greatest risk of flooding. The reports on detailed surface water

management plans contain recommendations for solutions; and

- This allows us to take a leadership role in support of the most vulnerable in our community.

## **5. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Resource Implications**

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

- The production of the Local Flood Risk Strategy is a statutory requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. As a Lead Local Flood Authority, the county council is responsible for managing flooding from ordinary watercourses; groundwater, and surface water; and
- Our local strategy has been developed in partnership with the members of Cambridgeshire Local Flood Risk Management Partnership. The strategy contains further duties imposed by the legislation and tracks the progress we have made so far in discharging some of those duties.
- DEFRA recently reduced annual grant funding for Lead Local Flood Authorities including the Council, while giving them the new statutory consultee role in the planning process on surface water flooding. This means resources will continue to be stretched on flood risk management (as elsewhere) and it will be important to continue explaining to the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how important it is to maintain funding levels.

### **5.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

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

- We have a statutory duty under the Part 1, Section 2 (9) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy; and
- The implication of failing to comply with any of these duties is that the County Council will be in breach of a legal requirement. This could severely damage the reputation of the County Council and jeopardize our position as a leading authority in flood and water management.

### **5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

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

- The Community Impact Assessment prepared under the Equality Act 2010 is contained in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

## 5.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

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

- The authority has carried out public consultations which have shaped the final report for the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

## 5.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications within this category.

## 5.6 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
<i>Cambridgeshire's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy</i>  <i>File Name: 150421 LFRMS v0.4</i>	<u><a href="\\ccc.cambridgeshire.gov.uk\data\ETE Growth &amp; Economy\Flood and Water Management\Project Dossier\Project - Local Flood Risk Management Strat\Revision for 2015">\\ccc.cambridgeshire.gov.uk\data\ETE Growth &amp; Economy\Flood and Water Management\Project Dossier\Project - Local Flood Risk Management Strat\Revision for 2015</a></u>  A copy of the strategy will also be made available in the members lounge.