**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE SELECT COMMITTEE: FLOOD RISK**

MINUTES of a meeting of the re-convened Select Committee on Flood Risk, held on Thursday 13 November 2008 in Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mrs S V Hohler (Chairman), Mr I T N Jones, Mr J I Muckle and Mr F Wood-Brignall.

IN ATTENDANCE: Miss E Holliday, Team Leader, Natural Environment & Coast, and Miss T A Grayell, Democratic Services Officer.

**UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

## 1. Introduction

Mrs Hohler made introductions and spoke about the ongoing small cross-party Flood Risk Group which was planned to report back to the Environment & Regeneration Policy Overview Committee, which would be Chaired by Mr R E King. She referred to several threads of work which linked together around the work being done by the Select Committee and the Pitt Review:-

(a) On 18 November there would be a conference about flooding, with reference to the Pitt Review, which Mrs Hohler and Miss Holliday both hoped to attend. The Select Committee wanted to ensure that it was known that their work had preceded the Pitt Review! Mrs Hohler undertook to write a report of the conference and feed it into the work of the new Flood Risk Group. *A copy of a report of the Conference is attached to these minutes at Appendix 1*

(b) Mrs Hohler referred to a Lord Lieutenant's Rural Group on which she had served for 3 years, which the Environment Agency had attended this year. This also tied in with the Select Committee's work.

## 2. Update on KCC Flood Risk Select Committee Recommendations

Members stated that they were very impressed with the progress made and the clarity of the report. They discussed progress made against each recommendation, as set out in the action plan. *A copy of a report is attached to these minutes at Appendix 2.*

**Recommendation 1:** Mention should be added of the Flood Risk Officer (FRO) post which the Select Committee had recommended be created. This was not in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP) as no formal proposal had yet been made. The Select Committee would formally propose this to the Leader at the same time as stating the need for a permanent, ongoing Flood Risk Group to carry on the work recommended by the Select Committee, and that the Flood Risk Officer (FRO) post should support the work of the new Group. The single point of contact that this would establish should also be well publicised.

*It was agreed that a copy of the report be sent to the Confederation of Cinque Port Towns.*

**Recommendation 2:** the Select Committee was satisfied that, at this point, there was no need to do any more with this recommendation.

**Recommendations 3, 4 and 5:** the Select Committee agreed that progress on all these recommendations was fine, but added a note to Recommendation 4 to say that the budget for gulley clearance had been increased.

**Recommendation 6:** the Select Committee was impressed with the work done in Thameside and was happy with the progress on this recommendation.

**Recommendation 7:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 8:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 9:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 10:** there was a link between Recommendations 10 and 30. A report from Emergency Planning to the new Flood Risk Group was needed, so evidence could be provided of what work was being done with reference to both recommendations. Members asked for more information and evidence of how Kent Highways Services (KHS) were contributing to the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF), as well as more information on how the vulnerable were to be identified.

Mr Muckle emphasised that monitoring was a key issue and that the new Flood Risk Group and the FRO post would help with this.

Mrs Hohler said that the Select Committee must lobby the Cabinet Member to get the new Flood Risk Officer post created and filled as soon as possible.

**Recommendation 11:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine but that action needed to have high priority, as the work had been started but had stalled. This issue needed taken up by the Kent Planning Officers Group (KPOG) to get all District Councils on board. *It was agreed that Miss Holliday remind planners of the need to pursue this.*

**Recommendation 12:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 13:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine, but this should also be referred to KPOG.

**Recommendation 14:** this Recommendation linked into Recommendation 25, which required an addition; that the Select Committee felt that the Fire and Rescue service (FRS) should be given this duty, as well as suitable funding to cover it.

**Recommendations 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against these recommendations was fine. *It was agreed that Miss Holliday provide a report to the new Flood Risk Group on the Government's response to the recommendations of the Pitt Review once these were published.*

**Recommendation 20:** there had been a good outcome to work at Jury's Gap, but there had been a complication about achieving a balance between the need to protect the power station and the many nature conservation designations which existed locally, as well as the need to satisfy planning requirements. Joint work was going on between Natural England and the Environment Agency.

**Recommendation 21:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

Miss Holliday pointed out that Local Flood Defence Committees had now become larger, joint Regional Flood Defence Committees. Members considered that such large bodies might not be so effective, especially if participants were not well briefed before attending meetings of them. Members expressed the opinion that these committees should not be made any larger by adding any new partner organisations.

The Select Committee agreed to add a note to Recommendation 21 to say that participants' understanding of the issues needed to be strengthened and that they should be well briefed before attending regional committees, as the Local Authority Member participants had the responsibility of representing the interests of their local Internal Drainage Boards. Participants should then report back thoroughly to their Authorities after attending the meeting, KCC Members reporting back to the new Flood Risk Group.

**Recommendation 22:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 23:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine, but that the Environment Agency be requested to liaise with local landowners and farmers before determining the risk classification of any area of land, and where clearance was needed. This would be an issue for the new Flood Risk Group to take forward.

**Recommendation 24:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine, and that this was also an issue for the new Flood Risk Group to take forward. The new Flood Risk Group should send a representative to attend the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) Executive Board and report back.

Mr Jones said that putting up a sign saying "Road liable to flooding" was of limited help, and that something needed to be done to address the problem.

**Recommendation 25:** this was discussed under Recommendation 14.

**Recommendation 26:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 27:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 28:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine, but added a comment that a report from the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) be made back to the new Flood Risk Group.

**Recommendation 29:** the Select Committee agreed that progress against this recommendation was fine.

**Recommendation 30:** this was discussed under Recommendation 10, and also links to Recommendation 17

**3. Next Steps – the New Flood Risk Group**

In discussion, it was agreed that the roles of the current groups and bodies was not well co-ordinated. The new Flood Risk Group would need to be robust in getting other partner organisations to provide information on their activities, which would allow the Flood Risk Group to ensure that required action was being taken.

Mr King was known to be keen to move forward with the new Flood Risk Group as soon as possible, and discussion followed about the best size for the Flood Risk Group and the likely Membership. A 3:2:1 ratio was suggested. Mr R E King had been asked to chair it, and Mrs Hohler, Mr Muckle, Mr Jones and Mr Vye from the original Select Committee were all keen to continue as they had knowledge of the subject. In addition, it was suggested that Mr C Hibberd, as Chairman of the Highways Advisory Board, would be a suitable addition as, unlike the others, he also serves on the Environment and Regeneration Policy Overview Committee.

The new Flood Risk Group would need to identify a name, and the Flood Risk Group was suggested. An executive officer would be needed to attend meetings – the new Flood Risk Officer (FRO) could attend, once appointed. Administrative resources would need to be identified to support and service the new Flood Risk Group. *Mrs Hohler would speak to Paul Wickenden to address this.*

*Miss Holliday was tasked to write a memo (accompanied by a copy of these Minutes) for Mrs Hohler to present to the Leader* stating that the Select Committee was very keen to establish the new Flood Risk Group as soon as possible, emphasising its timeliness, as well as to achieve the appointment of a Flood Risk Officer, and that this should be in advance of the formal process arising from the Pitt Review. As the County Council had already approved the Select Committee's report at the time of publication, it was felt that there was already support for its recommendations.

Appendix 1

# THE FUTURE RISK OF FLOODING – REFLECTIONS ON THE PITT REVIEW

**LGA Conference, 18th November 2008**

***Notes from Conference – Liz Holliday, Natural Environment & Coast Team Leader, E&W, Kent County Council***

Copies of the presentations can be found at:
http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/core/page.do?pageId=1232339

## Summary – key messages for Local Authorities from the conference

### A lead role

- Local authorities will be taking on greater responsibility for flood risk management.
- LGA welcomes stronger role for local government and initial findings of Defra/LGA review find that 70% of local authorities welcome the lead role.
- Defra the final responsibility for flood risk management should lie with County Council. Upper tier authorities should take the local coordination role but local expertise from districts must be retained.
- Environment Agency considers that the strategic overview includes a bigger responsibility for local authorities, taking the lead role for local flood risk and retain coastal responsibility where they have the technical capability.
- There is the need to raise the priority of flooding and any work should be viewed in the context of climate change.
- Cannot wait for Flood and Water Bill – Local Authorities have to act now. LGA will be providing actions for Local Authorities ahead of Flood and Water Bill.

### Investment is required

- Key issues for local authorities that need addressing are: long term funding, technical expertise and cooperation
- Not all funding for new flooding responsibilities will come from central government

### Better planning

- Holistic and integrated planning – working with all key partners
- Need to join up with Environment Agency and Met Office to ensure well informed of weather events.
- Be aware of council owned dams and reservoirs – put in place robust plans for failure of these structures.
- Learn from others - Morpeth Borough Council is example of good practice.
- Improve planning decisions in flood risk areas.

### Working with the public

- LA have role to play in helping the public to be more prepared.
- LA need to improve how they are perceived as a source of advice on flooding – survey showed only 31% public trusted LA for advice.

**On the horizon**

- Government will publish response to Pitt Review next month (~11th December).
- Scope of draft Flood and Water Bill will be announced next year.
- Defra will be undertaking review of PPS20.
- Defra consultation on National Flood Emergency Flood Plan – this will include sandbags.

**1. Keynote address – The Pitt Review: Sir Michael Pitt**

Noted that the most important finding from the Review was the six priorities:

1. Reducing the risk of flooding and its impact
2. Knowing where and when it will flood
3. Better advice and help for people to protect their families and homes
4. Being rescued and cared for during an emergency
5. Maintaining power and water supplies and protecting essential services
6. Staying healthy and speeding up recovery

*1.1 People and flooding*

10% people live in a flood risk area but only half are aware of it or will admit it. Only 29% of people at risk take advance measures – many views of "never thought it would happen to us". Almost half of those flooded want their house repaired to how it was before – i.e. no additional measures put in as part of repair.

There are four stages of reaction to being flooded: disbelief; fear; anger; blame. The majority put blame on the local Council and look to them to put things right after the event.

It is important to take account of health and well-being effects of flooding. Those flooded display significant effects on mental and physical well-being. Plus there are increased incidence of family breakdown because of displacement and stress on the family.

National risk register puts flooding on a par with terrorism and pandemic flu – but the public are not aware of this nor do they recognise flood risk in this way.

*1.2 Flood protection measures*

Example given of house which ha previously suffered extensive damage from flooding. Installed flood skirt, drop down electrics, flood resistant plaster, boards, sump pump etc – in 2007 flood event there was no damage and no insurance claim was made.

Typical insurance payout for flood damage = £15k-45k. Those without adequate insurance struggle to return house to original condition.

Pitt does not support the use of sandbags unless it is done strategically and by professionals (i.e. knows where and how). At best, sandbags offer a 40% chance of success in keeping water out.
For the public, sandbags are essentially a placebo. Local authorities have different policies for sandbags – need consistency and more advice on their use.

*1.3 Planning and development issues*

Quarter of homes flooded in 2007 were built after 1980. 13 major developments were given planning permission against ENVIRONMENT AGENCY advice in 2006/07. Properties in flood risk areas, or restored after a flood event, use flood susceptible material. Example of Cypress Gardens in Gloucestershire cited as example.

Development in flood risk areas and/or inappropriate construction material and design are issues that need addressing by the relevant planning authorities.

*1.4 Dams and reservoirs*

Pitt referred to Ulley Reservoir (LA owned), which had a 40% chance of failure during 2007 flood event. There were no plans in place for this failure and reaction (1000 evacuated and closure of M1) was improvised.

3.5m people are living in areas at risk from dam or reservoir failure. But are they aware of risk and are sufficient plans in place? Most important issues in planning for risk of dam or reservoir failure are which way to safety and where will wall of water go? Need more openness about dam and reservoir risks.

Lake Sihl (Switzerland) inundation map, showing levels of risk and evacuation routes, cited as good example.

*1.5 Better systems for prediction and management of flood events*

On 20 July 2007 10,000 motorists were stranded overnight on M5 and surrounding roads – it was fortunate that it was summer and not cold winter night, otherwise implications of this could have been a lot worst. Better forecasting and prediction of where flooding occurs would have helped authorities to avoid this by diverting motorists in advance to appropriate routes.

Need a whole system approach – currently very fragmented. Most vital is joining up the Environment Agency and Met Office – then linking this centre up with others. This new joint centre is currently in development.

Need better use of technology for communication and visualisation of events.

*1.6 Role of local government*

Key question is who is accountable? This is difficult for public to discern because of number of bodies involved at national and local level. But inevitably it is the local authority that is held accountable.

Local Government have a big role to play in flood risk management. Morpeth Borough Council cited as good example in terms of improvements made since 2007 floods. Better organisation led to better response to events in September 2008.

*1.7 Key areas for change*

1. National and local leadership
2. A 'whole system' approach
3. Engaging with the public
4. Improved flood prediction, warnings and advice
5. PPS25 and Building Regulations
6. Investing in engineers
7. Properly protecting infrastructure and essential services
8. Mobilise the private and voluntary sectors
9. Use new technology and visualisation
10. Get people back into their homes

*1.8 Implementation*

Flood and Water Bill next year will bring in changes but steps can be taken now. Funding will be a future issue.

Three key considerations for local authorities:

1. How do we ensure <u>all</u> local authorities step up to responsibility of flood risk management? How do we hold local government to account? Is flooding high enough priority for local authorities?

2. What approach should be taken in two tier areas? County Council should take the lead but collaboration is needed with districts.

3. Resources – engineers and technical staff. How do we address the resource issue to ensure they can cope?

*1.9 Points raised in response to presentation*

Insurance industry view refurbishment of flooded home with flood resilient materials etc as betterment and will not pay – how can this be addressed? *Pitt: "Review recommends change to building regulations so flood resilience measures have to be installed".*

Qualities of leadership of army in 2007 flood events were exemplary.

10L per day is standard requirement for water. This is unsatisfactory, particularly when going over 2-3 days.

Difficult to dry out homes that have been constructed with inappropriate material – there are some victims of the 2007 floods facing their second Christmas in temporary accommodation.

**2. Reflections on the Pitt Review – LGA**

LGA welcomes stronger role for local government, as recommended by Pitt Review but Government needs to address lack of clarity on roles for flood risk management with a suitable strategy – powers need to be clearer. The LGA are working closely with the Environment Agency and Government to determine how local authority role sits within Environment Agency Strategic Overview and are developing models for strategic working.

Key issues for local authorities that need addressing are: long term funding; technical expertise and cooperation. An LGA and Defra capability study is looking into these issues. Initial findings are:

- 70% Local Authorities welcome lead role in local flood risk management.
- 60% Local Authorities feel existing funding is insufficient for current responsibilities.
- Local Authorities have difficulty recruiting suitable staff for flood risk management.
- 80% Local Authorities need more engineers; 40% more planners; 60% more staff training.
- Only 50% Local Authorities have partnerships with water companies and the majority of these are not very effective.

Noted that Local Authorities need to consider a range of funding options – it is unrealistic to expect all funding from central government. York City Council increased their budget to £1.1 million p/a – LGA believe all Local Authorities will need similar budget. Need investment now to improve flood risk management and emergency planning. Also need better knowledge base and understanding of risk; and improved skills base, through training.

Local Authorities may have difficulty in prioritising work relating to flood risk management, particularly if they have not experienced major flood events in recent years. There is the need to raise the priority of flooding and any work should be viewed in the context of climate change.

Local Authorities need to look at planning controls – e.g. low carbon development and adaptation of design to extreme weather. LA also have a role to play in helping the public to be more prepared.

More strategic planning and action at both national and local level is required and Local Authorities should be fully engaged in this work. Ahead of Flood and Water Bill, what should Local Authorities and others be doing now - LGA have been reviewing this and will be publishing a list of actions in the next month.

**3. Reflections on the Pitt Review – Defra**

Partnership is the only solution – “we don’t have powers/responsibility” is not the answer and does not help the public. People expect leadership from their local authority.

60% chance of another Morpeth (1 in 50 yr event) happening somewhere else in England. Climate change will only make things worst, especially in relation to the coast, estuaries and surface water. Coastal surges are predicted to become 1 in 5 yr event because of climate change – that’s a 1953 event every 5 years!

Flood events have a dislocation effect on an area, with people and businesses leaving.

Noted that we can't wait for the Flood and Water Bill to act and improve flood risk management (draft Bill in 2009, with Royal Ascent not expected till 2010 at earliest). Local Authorities have to act now – Leeds and Gloucester are leading the way. Questioned if Local Authorities are fully aware of their responsibilities?

It is not clear who is responsible for surface water and groundwater flooding – this needs to be determined. Better information transfer from the Environment Agency to Local Authorities is required.

Local Authorities need to ensure engagement with Government, Community and delivery partners.

Defra recognise that there is only so much Local Authorities can do – Defra are currently:

- Looking at the right balance between enabling powers and duties.
- Clarifying roles – this needs to be decided at local level but should identify where "buck stops". Defra suggest the default scenario (based on Pitt Review Recommendation) is final responsibility should lie with County Council. Upper tier authorities should take the local coordination role but local expertise from districts must be retained.
- £34.5m allocated to fund work connected with Pitt Review recommendations (to "tide us over till 2010"). Have made a commitment to fund net new burdens and are negotiating with CLG to determine how . Many new burdens won't come into place until after 2010 (planned Flood and Water Bill).
- Have already banned use of impermeable paved front gardens; are looking at automatic right to connect to mains sewer and grants for homeowners to improve flood resilience of property.
- Government will publish response to Pitt Review next month (~11th December).
- Scope of draft Flood and Water Bill will be announced next year.
- Will be undertaking review of PPS20.
- Consulting on National Flood Emergency Flood Plan – this will include sandbags.
- Defra's ultimate role here is to ensure future framework is the right one.

**4. Reflections on the Pitt Review – Environment Agency**

From June 2008 the Environment Agency's strategic overview role includes inland flooding. It has a coordinating role in flood risk planning. Water and the environment must be managed in an integrated way – strategic overview to take this approach. The strategic overview includes a bigger responsibility for local authorities, taking the lead role for local flood risk and retain coastal responsibility where they have the technical capability.

Environment Agency see they have three key roles:

1. Advisor

- To provide national, consistent guidance.
- Working in partnership to improve datasets on surface and ground water. (N.B. Defra will shortly be publishing guidance on surface water management)
- Currently working with Surrey County Council to identify vulnerability of key routes.
- Water UK – developed protocol for sharing of information, extend to Local Authorities.

2. Regulator
    - Guidance, advice and quality assurance.
    - Oversee national investment and prioritisation for flood and coastal erosion risk.
    - Working with Local Authorities to reduce number of inappropriate developments – 96% planning decisions were in line with Environment Agency advice in 2006/07.

3. Provider
    - Information.
    - Warning services.
    - Surface water maps (susceptibility of systems) – provision of information to Local Resilience Forums.
    - Piloting new service with Met Office to provide better weather warnings. Also looking at pluvial warning systems.
    - Have assessed infrastructure within floodplain at national level.

**5. Impact of climate change**

By 2080 (Foresight, 2004):

- 40% more rain
- 40% more flow
- 100% more flood volume
- 130% more properties affected
- 200% more flood damage

Conventional solutions to flood risk will become four to eight times more expensive – therefore we have to shift from defence to resilience and adaptation. Flooding has to be at heart of urban design and should be genuine, not just included to get planning permission.

**6. Morpeth Borough Council experience – Multi-agency planning** (see presentation for detailed information)

Local Authorities should learn from each other – learn from those that have already experienced severe flooding and have now developed emergency response plans with lessons learnt from 2007. Morpeth BC is a good example.

Multi-agency flood plan involved the Borough Council, County Council, Environment Agency and Fire & Rescue.

When planning how to deal with flood event consider every eventuality – not everyone will be getting out....some people travelled into Morpeth to see the flooding and some amateur film crews blocked emergency routes.

Any recovery structure should involve the local community to get their view on pace etc of recovery. The aim of the response plan is to reduce the time and depth of disillusionment by those affected.

The Plan should have name individuals to lead elements of work – and they must know what they are doing.

**7. Insurance – ABI**

The total cost of the summer 2007 floods was £3bn. The average claim was £40k (average premium £400).

ABI are calling on Government to develop a 25 year strategy to manage Britain's growing flood risk.

In the meantime, ABI and Government have agreed a statement of principles which secures industry's commitment to insure against flood risk and Government's commitment o ensure enough is being done to manage the risk. This agreement was informed by the Pitt Review findings. The aim is to get to the point where risk is managed adequately and therefore a formal agreement, such as this, is not required. The statement of principle does not apply to new developments started in 2009, therefore new build should not come outside of 1 in 75 year risk.

ABI have developed guidance, which includes what builders/developers should do and ties in with PPS25.

There is the need to improve public awareness. The general public think in the here and now; 85% of small businesses are aware of climate change but only quarter of them think it will affect their business. But how do we communicate risk without scare mongering and who should lead? A recent You Gov poll asked "who would you trust for advice"; the response showed 61% Environment Agency and 39% local authority – these figures need improving, especially is Local Authorities are to be leading on managing local flood risk.

The ABI supports the idea of changing the building regulations for inclusion of flood resilient fixtures and fittings but the effectiveness of such measures is unknown. Incentives, such as a discount on insurance for houses with such measures, is unproven for uptake.

The insurance industry is trying to develop a system whereby the premium is linked to the actual individual flood risk but more detailed information is required for this.

**8. Lessons from the Netherlands**

A large proportion of the country is below sea level – loss of land would be vast if beach/dune frontages were lost. The main issues for the Netherlands are sea level rise; higher river discharge (from $12m^3$ to $18m^3$ over next 20 years); and drought.

Water policy includes a hierarchy of retain, store, discharge. Water management is led by providing more space for water and multiple land use (with nature conservation and recreation benefits).

€2.2 million was spent developing strategy “Space for the River” for the whole of the Netherlands. Then each municipality develops a plan in line with this, which is approved centrally. Space for water has led to rivers being diverted to allow more room for increasing flow.

Success factors include cooperation between all government levels, integral spatial planning, making space for water and multiple land use. There is a consistent level of protection across country – 1 in 10,000 year event.

Appendix 2

**Report to Kent County Council Flood Risk Select Committee**

**13 November 2008**

Author: Elizabeth Holliday, Team Leader Natural Environment & Coast, E&W, E&R (elizabeth.holliday@kent.gov.uk / 01622 221487)

## 1. Update on KCC Flood Risk Select Committee Recommendations

### 1.1 Background

In September 2007 the KCC Flood Risk Select Committee published its findings, including 30 recommendations. In March 2008 an extraordinary meeting of the County Council was called to discuss Flood Risk Management in Kent where it was resolved that:

a) In order to improve the protection and preparedness of Kent and its property from flooding, a Task Force be set up of relevant agencies and utilities to draw together and implement an Action Plan for Kent based on the findings of the Select Committee Report, the Pitt Review and the Environment Agency Report of 2007 Floods;

b) Members be invited to regular seminars with the relevant agencies and utilities to be informed of the progress of the Action Plan;

c) existing KCC protocols be used to monitor the flood risk situation in Kent;

d) KCC welcomes the additional funding which will be available in the future from Government for flood defence work but, given Kent's high vulnerability to flooding, efforts be made to secure extra funding to support improved flood risk management; and

e) KCC formally request the Kent and Medway Fire & Rescue Authority to pursue recommendations 14 and 25 in consultation with Kent Police and other relevant agencies and departments at local and national government as a matter of urgency.

### 1.2 Action to date in Kent

In June 2008 an action plan was drawn up in response to the Select Committee Recommendations, in order to track and report on progress. This action plan, with updates as of 6th November 2008, is appended to this report.

The Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) established a multi-agency Pitt Review Task and Finish Group to respond to the 15 urgent recommendations identified by the Pitt Review Interim Report (December 2007). This group has also considered the KCC Select Committee Report and the Environment Agency Report and effectively has formed the Task Group requested by the March 2008 KCC Extraordinary Meeting. The KRF Severe Weather Group is also responding to a number of the Select

Committee's recommendations. Work is ongoing and progress is reported on in the appended action plan.

In response to the formal request by KCC at the March 2008 extraordinary meeting, that Kent and Medway Fire & Rescue Authority to pursue recommendation 14 (*That the Fire & Rescue Service is included as an active partner in the planning process for new developments*), it is noted that district development control currently liaise with Kent Fire & Rescue Service.

At the same meeting, KCC also made a formal request that Kent and Medway Fire & Rescue Authority pursue recommendation 25 (*That the government consider placing a duty on the FRS to respond to a flood emergency and further considers designating FRS as the lead body in charge of a flood incident*). The Pitt Review Final Report (June 2008) made a similar recommendation: (Recommendation 39) *The Government should urgently put in place a fully funded national capability for flood rescue with Fire and Rescue Authorities playing a leading role, underpinned as necessary by a statutory duty*. A formal response from Government to the report, and therefore this recommendation, is awaited.

## 2. Update on the Pitt Review

In December 2007 Sir Michael Pitt published an interim report on his review of the flooding emergency that took place in June and July 2007. This identified issues that required urgent action and further interim conclusions to be consulted on. Following an extensive three month consultation, Sir Pitt published his final report in June 2008. The executive summary is appended to this report.

Government said they would be providing a detailed response, with prioritised action plan, this autumn. Nothing has been published to date but it is expected shortly.

The Natural Environment and Coast Team Leader at KCC will be attending a conference on the Pitt Review on 18th November. Central Government are due to provide a response at this conference. A report on this conference can be provided if required.

Further details on the Pitt Review and the full report can be found at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview.aspx

## 3. Other issues for consideration by Kent County Council

In reviewing the Flood Risk Select Committee Recommendations the following issues have been identified and require further consideration by KCC:

- The recommendations made in the June 2008 Pitt Review and how these are taken forward in Kent. The Kent Resilience Forum is overseeing this work and has offered to provide members with an update. It is suggested that, if required, this is requested once Government has published its response.

- The need to review and update the Select Committee Recommendations in light of the June 2008 Pitt Review final report and response from Government.

- The need to consider the actions contained within Shoreline Management Plans and Catchment Flood Management Plans alongside those of the Select Committee Recommendations.

- The need to clarify KCC's community leadership role in this agenda, given the emerging roles of other agencies.

- The need for a dedicated flood risk post within KCC to ensure relevant functions within KCC are well coordinated and to provide a key link to all the external agencies involved. Currently this role is shared across several service functions currently Environment and Waste Division, Kent Highways Services, Strategic Planning and Emergency Planning.

- Confirm arrangements for future regular reporting on action to deliver the Select Committee and other recommendations, such as the Pitt Review, to members.

**Action plan for KCC Flood Risk Select Committee Recommendations**
**Drafted June 2008**
**Reviewed November 2008**

| | Recommendation | Action(s) | Responsibility | Notes | Review Nov 2008 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| R1 | That KCC look into setting up and resourcing a permanent Flood Risk Committee, in partnership with District Councils. | Flood risk standing committee to be established.<br><br>Existing groups relating to flood risk to be identified and communication between existing groups to be improved. | KCC (Members)<br><br>KCC – which dpt? | It is suggested that a new forum is not required as many of the listed actions for such are group are already covered by established groups. Instead communication between these groups should be improved. | There is the need for one point of contact for flood risk within KCC. Currently responsibility lies with Natural Environment & Coast Team, KHS, Strategic Planning and Emergency Planning. To enable a more coordinated and cohesive approach it is suggested that dedicated Flood Risk Officer post be created. |
| R2 | That there should be adequate, ring-fenced, direct government funding for flood risk management. | Lobby central government for additional funding for flood risk management. | KCC (Members)<br>EA | Consider using the LGA coastal issues special interest group as lobbying mechanism. | LGA coastal issues SIG continues to lobby on flood risk management. Select Committee to advise on any issues they would like taken to this group. |
| R3 | That KCC should lobby the government to consider re-designating the flood | No action. | | Recommendation objected to by EA. Suggest no further | No further action required. |

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| | management arm of the Environment Agency as a dedicated flood risk agency. | | | action. | |
| R4 | That KCC promotes the further development of an Engineering Consultancy led by Canterbury City Council Engineers. | To offer support/ promotion where required. | KCC – NEC | | A county-wide drainage team has been established within KHS. |
| R5 | That KCC supports development in brownfield and other areas subject to the rigorous application of site specific sequential and exception tests of Planning Policy Statement 25 (PS25). | For KCC planners to note. | KCC – Planning | Already observed. | No further action required. |
| R6 | That KCC oversee the development of further sub-regional flood risk assessments, based on river catchments, and undertakes to monitor this development. | Identify gaps in assessments and work with EA and districts to complete assessments for the county. | EA<br>District authorities<br>KCC – Planning | | EA are leading on this work, with input from the district authorities. |
| R7 | That KCC ensures that its E&W Team are sufficiently resourced to enable them to contribute to coastal flood risk management. | | KCC – NEC | Coastal Officer post has already been secured. | Select Committee to consider the need for a dedicated post for flood risk. See comments under R1. |
| R8 | That KCC should lead on the co-ordination of work with landowners and other | KCC to convene meeting with EA and NE and other stakeholders to discuss | KCC – Planning & NEC | Work is already underway nationally to look at issues of blight | No action taken to date. Awaiting outcomes of Defra |

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| | agencies to identify options for the funding of changed land-use or buy-out to ensure that plans to achieve more naturally functioning flood plains and coastline in Kent are arrived at equitably. | current initiatives and identify way forward. | | associated with coastal policy (Defra). | work. |
| R9 | That KCC works in partnership with the EA to ensure that RBMPs are fully integrated with existing CFMPs and SMPs. | Officers leading on management plans to ensure work is joined up. | KCC – Planning & NEC<br>EA | KCC and EA are already working to ensure integration. | No further action required. |
| R10 | That KHS and the EA seek to reconstitute Flood Liaison Advice Groups (FLAGS) in Kent. | KHS to convene initial meeting. | KCC - KHS<br>EA | | KHS are now working with KRF, with input from Emergency Planning. |
| R11 | That KCC instigates discussions between local planning authorities, Southern Water and others on the feasibility, benefit and cost implications of using non-return valves/sealed sewage. | KCC to table suggestion for new developments at KPOG meeting.<br><br>KFRR to assess surface water and groundwater risk, identify at risk areas and provide recommendations.<br><br>KCC to discuss with Southern Water installation of valves at existing developments at risk. | KCC – Planning<br><br>KCC - KHS<br><br>KCC – Planning | | Not yet tabled at KPOG.<br><br>KFRR study underway to assess flooding risk in Kent.<br><br>Discussions to be held on Minerals and Waste Development Framework (incl. waste water) with Southern and Thames Water early 2009. |

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| R12 | That KCC promotes the use of SUDS throughout Kent. | KPOG to discuss development of model policy on SUDS for LDF. | KCC – Planning | Kent Design Guide already promotes SUDS and includes a technical appendix. | No further action required. |
| R13 | That Kent planning authorities adopt the requirement for Drainage Impact Assessments for all new developments, following the Canterbury model. | Review the requirement of drainage impact assessment and feasibility for its inclusion. | KCC – Planning | | Discussion needs to be held on this at the district level. |
| R14 | That the Fire & Rescue Service is included as an active partner in the planning process for new developments. | KFRS to discuss with Kent planning authorities. | KFRS<br>KCC – Planning | Noted that district development control already liaise with KFRS. | No further action required. |
| R15 | That the Kent Design guide is revised to include information on mitigating flood damage and makes reference to innovative designs for the future. | KCC to consider flood mitigation designs etc during next review of Kent Design Guide. | KCC – Planning | Next review will take place in 2010. | No action required in this period. |
| R16 | That KCC lobbies government to produce a set of Building Regulations for use in flood risk areas so that planners are supported by increased but nationally consistent obligations to assist developers with a high level | Lobby government for building regulations for flood risk areas. | KCC – Planning | Pitt Review also identified need for such building regulations – await outcomes of review before actioning recommendation. | Further assessment of Pitt Review required. Officer attending seminar on Pitt Review recommendations for Local Authorities 18th November 08. |

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| | of flood proofing/ mitigation. | | | | |
| R17 | For KCC to work in partnership with the EA to publicise actions householders can take to increase the flood resilience of their homes. | Convene a meeting with EA to discuss coordination of information provision to householders in at risk areas (link with R30).<br><br>KFRR to provide recommendations on promoting community awareness. | KCC<br>EA<br><br>KCC - KHS | KRF PRTFG looking at how to improve public readiness. KFRR to consult with this group. | The KRF Public Warning and Informing Group are currently producing a document on public readiness - appended to this is an annexe on measures to make homes more flood resilient.<br><br>Recommendations from the KFRR will be included in the report due in Dec 08. |
| R18 | That KCC specifically allocate funding to enable the proposed road gully cleansing work. | KFRR to review and identify maintenance priorities. | KCC – KHS | | Budget for gully cleansing increased from £1.8 to £2.8 million. |
| R19 | That KCC works in partnership to inform the public about road drainage cleansing activities. | KFRR to identify maintenance priorities and produce programme of work. | KCC – KHS | | KHS will be developing website over next two years that will list programme of works. |
| R20 | That the government should urgently consider the EA's request for funding to enable vital works to proceed at Jury's Gap, Camber. | EA to keep KCC, and other relevant parties, informed of developments relating to these works and others. | EA | | This refers to the Broomhill area, between Jury's Gap and Camber. The EA have brought the works forward and are in the pre-planning design stage. This |

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| | | | | | work is moving on in advance of the strategy approval because of immediate need. |
| R21 | That the EA should encourage the input of local authority and IDB experts on local strategies and schemes; IDB represented on SE RFDC. | EA to consult relevant authorities and IDBs on local strategies and schemes.<br><br>EA to invite representative of IDB to SE RFDC. | EA | Consultation with relevant LAs already takes place. | In relation to the SE RFDC, IDBs are represented through the local authority representative, which has been agreed by the RFDC as the correct approach. |
| R22 | That the EA develop and implement a phased rolling programme of maintenance to include 'low risk' areas. | | EA | Need to discuss with EA. | The year of the Select Committee, cuts were made to the rolling programme. These cuts are not reflected in this year's work and the maintenance programme is in place and includes areas classed as 'low risk'. |
| R23 | That the EA prioritise clearance of waterways in the Romney Marsh Area. | | EA | Need to discuss with EA. | Clearance work is carried out on a priority basis – most of Romney Marsh is classed as medium or high risk. Work is underway. |
| R24 | That KRF SWG audit and | Develop emergency flood | KRF SWG | | Emergency flood plans |

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| | promote the development of emergency flood plans for at risk areas and develop and generic flood plan for Kent. | plans and generic flood plan. | EA<br>KCC – Emergency Planning | | in development, with a multi-agency approach as recommended by Pitt Review. A draft plan was put out to consultation late summer/early autumn (08). EA are now working on incorporating comments received – final plan will be presented to KRF Executive Board at December 08 or February 09 meeting. |
| R25 | That the government consider placing a duty on the FRS to respond to a flood emergency and further considers designating FRS as the lead body in charge of a flood incident. | KRF to discuss and agree action. | KRF<br>KCC – Emergency Planning | | KRF established Pitt Review Task and Finish Group to look at recommendations. This was one of them. Currently awaiting government response to Pitt Review, due shortly. |
| R26 | That the KRF SWG formulate and publicise an action plan to raise public confidence in Kent's preparedness for flood events. Consideration to | KRF to develop and publicise flood action plan.<br><br>KRF and Flood Warning Planning Liaison Group to discuss merging. | KRF SWG<br><br>Flood Warning Planning Liaison Group | | Flood plan in development (see R24). How plan will be publicised will be determined once it is completed. |

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| | be given to merging the SWG with the Flood Warning Planning Liaison Group. | | | | |
| R27 | That KHS should send officers to work alongside local district colleagues in an emergency situation. | No action required. | KCC – KHS | Arrangements already exist for this. | No further action required. |
| R28 | That the EA should ensure there is a systematic survey of critical infrastructure (location and flood defences) and through the SWG promote work with utility companies to ensure supplies can be protected and maintained during flood emergency situations. | KRF PRTFG to undertake survey of critical infrastructure and review, with utility companies, protection and maintenance of supplies.<br><br>KRF PRTFG to share results of review with KFRR.<br><br>KFRR to review vulnerability of critical infrastructure and wider community. | KRF PRTFG<br><br>KRF PRTFG<br><br>KCC – KHS | | KRF are having ongoing discussions with the utilities to identify issues and necessary action.<br><br>KFRR undertaking review in relation to highways – due for completion Dec'08. |
| R29 | That the KRF SWG liaise with partners in the KRF and east coast authorities to formulate an emergency response plan for an extreme coastal event; assess whether the current warning | As per recommendation.<br><br>KFRR to provide recommendations on flooding emergency response procedures for highways. | KRF | | KRF PRTFG looking at how to improve public readiness. KFRR to consult with this group. This is part of the ongoing multi-agency flood plan work and action for high risk |

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| | system/communication processes are adequate; and ensure that people are educated about what to do when they receive a flood warning. | | | | areas (see R24).<br><br>KFRR due for completion Dec 08. |
| R30 | That KCC support the EA in raising flood risk awareness via town and parish councils and similar community groups. | KCC to meet with EA to discuss how they may assist with awareness raising (link with R17).<br><br>KFRR to provide recommendations on promoting community awareness. | KCC – Emergency Planning<br><br>KCC – KHS | KRF PRTFG developing plan for application of 'door knocking' flood warnings. | KRF are identifying communities at risk to develop awareness raising plan. EA made a presentation to the Local Authority Group on awareness raising work underway.<br><br>KHS liaison officers have been attending parish seminars. Suggested that a short note for circulation could be prepared by KHS – would need consultation with EA and KRF. |