

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

6<sup>th</sup> November 2008

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## **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 6<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.