

From: David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
To: Flood Risk Management Committee
Subject: Local Flood Risk Management and the Local Strategy
Classification: **Unrestricted**

Background

Kent County Council adopted the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (Local Strategy) in June 2013. The Local Strategy sets out objectives for the management of local flood risk (these are risks that arise from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses). As part of the Local Strategy there is a 2013-14 action plan to be delivered; a review and update of that plan was scheduled for year-end.

Now that we are approaching the end of the first action plan it is appropriate to review it and to draft the action plan for 2014-15.

The report included in the appendix provides a summary of progress in 2013-14, a review of the action plan for that year and a draft action plan for, 2014-15.

The report shows that we have made good progress to deliver the 2013-14 action plan. The flood risk management team within Planning and Environment has grown and the team now has more resources and is able to deliver a broad flood risk management service to the county. We have undertaken further surface water management plans across the county and continued to develop good working relationship with our partners to deliver these plans. The report also shows that the recent flooding has raised the profile of flood risk management in the county and raised a number of issues that we will need to address in the next action plan period.

The progress report will be published online.

Delivering the 2014-15 action plan

KCC receives £750k for its flood risk management work under the flood and water management. This is comprised of £490k from revenue support grant from the government and £260k that is included in our local business rate retention settlement. Defra have also told us that we will receive funds to help deliver our new SuDS role that will commence in the next financial year. We are still waiting for Defra to confirm how much this will be and when it will be provided.

This funding is not ring-fenced for flood risk management work. The action plan for 2014-15 has been developed according to the flood risk management funding we receive, as in previous years. If this funding was not allocated for flood risk management KCC would be limited in its ability to deliver its flood risk management role and the proposed action plan for 2014-15.

The delivery of the action plan will also require the continued support of our risk management partners in the county. Many of the actions proposed in the plans we prepare rely on our partners to deliver them and make the plan effective.

The delivery of our proposed new role for SuDS will require Defra to commence the necessary provisions on the Flood and Water Management Act along with the necessary supporting documents. The success of this will depend on the specific provisions in the supporting documents and how Defra proposes to fund the long-term maintenance burden we will be obliged to accept.

Delivering flood defences

The proposed action plan for 2014-15 focusses on developing our understanding of local flood risk, developing options to mitigate these and improving the understanding of the local flood risks. This is funded from our revenue budget, as outlined above.

The recent floods have shown that further investment is required in the county's flood defence infrastructure. Further capital funding for flood defences is required to deliver this, including options identified by KCC for local flooding mitigation. This capital investment will require local funding in order to draw on the Flood Defence Grant in Aid scheme. The proposed action plan for 2014-15 does not include provision for local funding of flood defences; the flood risk management team is currently reviewing the scale of the local funding required and investigating options for local sources of investment.

Recommendation

The committee are asked to note the implications and risks associated with delivering the 2014-15 action plan and provide comments on the report.

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