

By: Mr Keith Ferrin, Cabinet Member, Environment, Highways & Waste

To: Environment and Regeneration Policy Overview Committee – 31 March 2009

Subject: **ESTABLISHMENT OF KCC FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP**

Classification: Unrestricted

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## Introduction

1. (1) Members will recall that this Committee sponsored a Select Committee looking at the Flood Risk for Kent which was established just before the significant flooding events in 2007.

(2) Members will recall that the Select Committee report was debated at the County Council on the annual review of the progress being made against the Select Committee's recommendations took place in November 2008.

(3) Members will recall that the report of the Select Committee co-incided with the Pitt Review which was established by the Government following the floods in the Summer of 2007.

## Pitt Review

2. (1) The Pitt Review recommended that local authorities should play more of a lead role in managing flood risk, and in particular,

- *Upper tier local authorities should be the lead responders in relation to multi-agency planning for severe weather emergencies at the local level and for triggering multi-agency arrangements in response to severe weather warnings and local impact assessments.*
- *Local authorities should lead on the management of local flood risk, with the support of the relevant organisations.*
- *Local authorities should assess and, if appropriate, enhance their technical capabilities to deliver a wide range of responsibilities in relation to local flood risk management.*
- *A number of activities relating to raising community awareness of, and preparedness for, flood risk.*
- *All upper tier local authorities should establish Oversight and Scrutiny Committees to review work by public sector bodies and essential service providers in order to manage flood risk, underpinned by a legal requirement to cooperate and share information. Each Oversight and Scrutiny Committee should prepare an annual summary of actions taken locally to manage flood risk and implement the Pitt Review recommendations, and these reports should be public and reviewed by Government Offices and the Environment Agency.*

(2) I will therefore be recommending to the County Council following the elections in June, that a Flood Risk Management Group of Members is established which will report to the portfolio holder who has responsibility for this area or to the Cabinet direct., supported by a new Flood Risk Management Officer who will act as a coordinator across the relevant functions within KCC and as a single point of external contact and expertise in this area. It will be the responsibility of the Environment and Regeneration Policy Overview Committee or its successor body to periodically hold to account the portfolio holder and partners to ensure that the flood risk for Kent residents is being addressed.

(3) In the interim, I propose to arrange a meeting of the Chairman and Spokesman of the County Council's Flood Risk Select Committee to establish what the proposed Terms of Reference and remit of this Flood Risk Management Member Group should be.

**Recommendations:**

3. The Environment and Regeneration Policy Overview Committee is asked to note that:-

- (a) the proposal to establish a Flood Risk Management Member Group following the County Council elections in June be noted and also note
- (b) a meeting of the Chairman and Spokesman of the County Council Flood Risk Select Committee will be convened to develop some proposed Terms of Reference for this Flood Risk Management Member Group;
- (c) Officers will take necessary steps to appoint a dedicated officer.

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Background Information: *Nil*