

**Report To:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** 29<sup>th</sup> July 2014

**Lead Member/Officer:** Lead Member for Public Realm/  
Corporate Director: Economic and Community  
Ambition

**Report Author:** Senior Engineer, Flood Risk Management

**Title:** Denbighshire's Local Flood Risk Management  
Strategy & Flood Risk Management Update

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### **1. What is the report about?**

It is a requirement of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that the Council must develop, maintain, apply and monitor a strategy for local flood risk management (a "Local Flood Risk Management Strategy"). Following a period of public consultation, the Strategy (contained in Appendix 1) has now been finalised in preparation for submission to the Welsh Government for Ministerial review.

In addition, this report provides an update on the recommendations of the investigation reports into the November 2012 floods and summarises the response to the December 2013 coastal flood event. The report also provides details of locations where schemes are required to reduce flood risk to an acceptable level.

### **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To seek Cabinet approval for the submission of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to the Welsh Government for Ministerial review.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

That Cabinet:

- Approves the submission of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to the Welsh Government for Ministerial review.
- Notes the additional information provided in the report.

### **4. Report details.**

#### **4.1 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy**

In November 2011, the Welsh Government issued guidance to Welsh authorities which suggested that Local Flood Risk Management Strategies should be in place by 31st March 2013. The Council was on course to meet this target until the widespread flooding that affected the county in November 2012. The Council proposed to defer the finalisation of the Strategy until the flood investigation had reached its conclusion

and this decision was supported by the Welsh Government, which is supportive of the Council's approach. The draft Strategy was taken to Communities Scrutiny Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and Members were invited to submit their comments prior to the formal consultation. The severe coastal flooding event on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013 led to the start of the consultation period being further deferred until 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

The broad purpose of the Strategy is to increase the safety of people across the County by reducing the number of people at risk of flooding, increasing the resilience of local communities and reducing the impact of flooding. In order to achieve this, the Strategy sets out four clear objectives for managing local flood risk:

- **Reducing the consequences for individuals, communities, businesses and the environment from flooding and coastal erosion;**
- **Raising awareness of and engaging people in the response to flood and coastal erosion risk;**
- **Providing an effective and sustained response to flood and coastal erosion events; and**
- **Prioritising investment in the most at risk communities.**

The Strategy identifies eight outcomes that will enable the Council to deliver the above objectives.

1. **To improve the understanding of local flood risk;**
2. **Ensure that local communities understand their responsibilities in relation to local flood risk management;**
3. **Work in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities and stakeholders;**
4. **Actively manage flood risk associated with new development proposals;**
5. **Encourage proactive, responsible maintenance of privately-owned flood defence and drainage assets;**
6. **Investigate opportunities to reduce surface water run-off from the upper catchments and for flood storage in flood plain areas;**
7. **Identify affordable, sustainable flood risk management projects, and**
8. **Ensure local FRM knowledge is aligned with the Councils emergency planning procedures.**

The Strategy does not include specific action plans to reduce flooding. However, the Council will be working with Natural Resources Wales to produce site specific Flood Risk Management Plans for the whole County by December 2015. These plans will consider flood risk from all sources.

#### **4.2 Update on the Recommendations of the Investigation Reports into the November 2012 Floods**

Significant progress has been made in response to the recommendations set out in the reports taken to Full Council on 9th July 2013 and 10<sup>th</sup> September 2013. In

particular, work by the Council to improve the existing flood defences at Glasdir, Ruthin is expected to be completed by the end of July 2014. Natural Resources Wales has carried out interim measures to provide an improved standard of protection at St Asaph and is developing plans to reduce the flood risk further. Additional details are contained in Appendix 3.

#### **4.3 December 2013 Coastal Flood Event.**

The 5<sup>th</sup> December 2013 storm resulted in the most serious coastal flooding to affect Wales since the 1990 Towyn floods. 140 properties were flooded in East Rhyl as a consequence of the overtopping of the sea wall and the County's coastal defences suffered significant damage. A review of the event has been carried out, in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales, which examines the cause of the flood, the likelihood of recurrence and what measures are required to reduce the risk in future. One of the key findings of the review, which looked at the whole of Wales, is that events of this nature and severity are likely to occur with increasing frequency. The review makes specific recommendations with respect to East Rhyl, which the Council is currently in the process of carrying out. Further details are contained in Appendix 3.

#### **4.4 Future Flood Risk Management & Coastal Defence Schemes**

The schemes referred to in Appendix 4 have been identified on the basis of previous flooding history or, in the case of Barkby Beach, the significant risk of flooding of large numbers of properties. It is likely that, in the development of Flood Risk Management Plans, the Council will identify additional communities at risk of flooding where serious flooding has yet to occur.

The overall estimated cost of carrying out the schemes, which would provide improved flood protection to almost 6,000 properties, is around £11.5 million. The scale of the work puts it beyond the ability of the Council to fully fund. There will, therefore, need to be a continued reliance on Flood and Coastal Risk Management Grant Aid from the Welsh Government.

#### **4.5 Flood Risk Management Definitions**

Please refer to Appendix 5.

### **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

Flooding has the potential to cause severe and prolonged disruption to the communities it affects. Understanding and managing local flood risk supports the Council's priority to develop the local economy.

### **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The cost of implementing the outcomes and measures identified in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is difficult to determine. There will be a requirement to invest in human resources to ensure that the Strategy is properly implemented.

However, the Council is likely to see savings as a consequence of the reduced impact of flooding through more effective flood risk management.

The overall cost of carrying out the works described in Appendix 4 is likely to be in excess of £11 million. However, the majority of this work is eligible for government funding at grant intervention rate of either 75% (coastal) or 85% (fluvial).

**7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?**

By improving its understanding of local flood risk, the Council will be better prepared to manage the risk of flooding and reduce the impact on vulnerable groups.

**8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

The Council has carried out an eight week formal public consultation and has also consulted with other flood risk management authorities (Natural Resources Wales, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water), neighbouring Lead local Flood Authorities. The draft Strategy was taken to Communities Scrutiny Committee on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and Members were invited to submit their comments prior to the formal consultation.

**9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

The detailed cost and funding proposals for each scheme will have to be considered as the strategy develops.

**10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

As a Lead Local Flood Authority, the Council has statutory duties and responsibilities under the Flood Risk Regulations and Flood and Water Management Act. Failure to carry these out will damage the Council's reputation and could result in the withdrawal of future Welsh Government grant funding for flood and coastal defence schemes.

**11. Power to make the Decision**

Flood Risk Regulations (1999), Flood and Water Management Act (2010).

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