

Report to: Communities Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 4th December 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 and Flood Related Matters

1. What is the report about?

Denbighshire's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy received Welsh Government Ministerial approval on 5th November 2014. The Strategy will be used to inform the Council's approach to managing local flood risk.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To provide the Committee with an update on the progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and to provide information regarding other developments on flood related matters.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee:

- Considers whether the Council is meeting its statutory and discretionary obligations with respect to flood risk management and protection.
- Comments on the flood risk management actions undertaken by the Council, particularly in response to the December 2013 coastal flood event.

4. Report details.

4.1 Local Flood Risk Management Strategy

On 29th July 2014, Cabinet approved the submission of the draft Local Flood Risk Management Strategy to the Welsh Government for Ministerial review. The Strategy was submitted on 1st August 2014 and has received favourable feedback, albeit that some minor amendments were requested to reflect the Welsh Government's intentions to make changes to the Reservoirs Act. The requested amendments have been carried out and the document re-submitted. The Strategy received formal approval by the Minister for Natural Resources on 5th November 2014.

The Strategy sets out four primary objectives and eight outcomes from these objectives that will enable the Council to effectively manage flood and coastal erosion

risk throughout Denbighshire. A range of measures have been identified which will be put into place to support the objectives and measures. Work to deliver the measures has already commenced and is summarised in Appendix 1.

4.2 Update of Flood Related Matters

4.2.1 5th December 2013 Coastal Flooding Event

Last winter's coastal flooding has been described as the worst in living memory. In response, the Welsh Government instructed Natural Resources Wales to carry out a national review of the event. The review, which was completed in April 2014, made 47 recommendations. The review documents can be viewed using the following links:

<http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/flooding-and-water/flood-alerts-and-warnings/flood-reports/wales-coastal-flooding-report/?lang=en>

<http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/flooding-and-water/flood-alerts-and-warnings/flood-reports/wales-coastal-flooding-review-phase-2-report/?lang=en>

4.2.2 Coastal Defence Repair Works

An initial assessment indicated that the cost of repairs would be in the order of £1million. The Council was successful in securing £256k of Tourism Infrastructure Funding and £701k of coastal defence grant. The final cost is expected to be around £1.28million and the Council is in discussion with the Welsh Government regarding additional grant aid.

4.2.3 Short, Medium and Long Term Proposals to Reduce Coastal Flood Risk

In investigating a flood event, the Council has three objectives: to examine the cause of the flood, to calculate the likelihood of recurrence and to understand what measures are required to reduce the risk in future. The NRW Coastal Flooding Review was inconclusive regarding the severity of the event, in part due to the short deadline imposed by the Welsh Government. Consequently, the Council has appointed consultants to complete the wave modelling work started by NRW, focusing on the area between Splash Point and Rhyl Golf Course. Possible options to reduce flood risk will be to improve the conveyance of flood water from Garford Road car park to the golf course (medium term) and to improve the primary defences at Splash Point (long term). In the short term, the timber flood boards at the existing beach access points between Splash point and the eastern end of the golf course will be replaced by steel flood gates. Additional steel flood gates will be installed across the promenade at Splash point and the eastern end of the golf course.

The December 2013 storm caused significant damage to the dune system between Barkby Beach and the county boundary. There is evidence that the dunes have begun to re-establish through natural processes. However, the narrowness of the dunes at Barkby Beach is a cause for serious concern. In recognition of this, discussions have taken place with Natural Resources Wales regarding possible options to reduce the risk of a breach at this location, such as creating a secondary dune system on the landward side of the existing dunes.

4.2.4 Denbighshire Coastal Strategy

Work to produce the draft Coastal Strategy concluded in June 2013. The main outcome of the draft report highlights two weak points in the defences, at Splash Point and Barkby Beach. In order to finalise the strategy, there is a requirement for public consultation and a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The draft strategy will also be reviewed in light of the December 2013 storm. An application for grant aid to complete the strategy will be submitted to the Welsh Government.

4.2.5 West Rhyl Coastal Defence Scheme Phase 3

All the necessary permissions and consents are in place and tenders for the works have been returned and assessed. Subject to Welsh Government funding approval, work will commence on site in January 2015.

4.2.6 Corwen Flood Risk Management Scheme and Glasdir Bund

Corwen Flood Risk Management Scheme was completed in June 2014, reducing the risk of flooding to over 100 properties. Glasdir Bund improvement works were completed in July 2014.

4.2.7 Clwyd and Elwy Natural Flood Risk Management Projects

Natural Resources Wales has, in partnership with Cadwyn Clwyd, launched two projects to investigate how changes to land use could reduce flood risk. The main catchments have been modelled to show how different interventions such as tree planting, grip blocking and soil de-compaction would impact on run-off rates. In July 2014 the project held a drop-in session for local landowners and farmers to discuss the current land use practices in the catchment. This exercise helped verify existing land-use maps and raise awareness of the project. The final Clwyd project report is due in December 2014. The next phase of the project will be to seek stakeholder engagement, including the Council, and source funding for implementation of interventions. The Elwy project was launched in September 2014 to model the impacts of changes of land-use in the Elwy catchment and the consequent impacts on downstream conurbations, particularly St. Asaph. The final report for this project is due in Jan 2015.

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 carrying out the objectives and measures identified in the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is difficult to determine. There will inevitably 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.

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?

Consultation on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy took place with the Committee on 25th November 2013. A full public consultation on the draft Strategy was subsequently carried out. Cabinet was consulted prior to the submission of the Strategy for Ministerial approval.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

The financial implications of the report can be accommodated within the Council's existing budget.

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). Articles 6.3.2(c) and (f), and 6.3.4(b) and (c) of the Council's Constitution outline scrutiny's powers with respect to this matter.

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