

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	4th May 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Barry Mellor, Lead Member for Highways & Environment) / Andy Clark, Interim Head of Highways & Environmental Services.
Report author	Tim Towers, Risk and Asset Manager / Andy Clark
Title	Flood Risk Working Group / Flood Risk Management Strategy

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The report is about the requirement for the Denbighshire Council to produce a new Flood Risk Management (FRM) Strategy by 2024.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To update the Committee on work that has taken place since the previous report from the multi-agency and riparian landowners information sharing working group was presented to the Committee on 10th March 2022.
- 2.2. To request that the Committee support a proposal to re-establish a DCC Working Group to oversee the development of a new FRM Strategy.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee support the proposal to re-establish a DCC Working Group to oversee the development of a new FRM Strategy.

4. Report details

Update since previous report to the Committee

4.1. A report was presented to the Committee on 10th March 2022 to highlight the findings of the multi-agency Flood Risk Management and Riparian Land Ownership Working Group. That report explored potential methods for strengthening communication channels and building effective working relationships between all parties and organisations that have responsibilities for managing flood risk from rivers and watercourses across Denbighshire. The committee resolved to endorse the contents of the report, including the following recommendations:

4.1.1. that a Flood Risk Working Group comprising of the flood risk management authorities and landowner representatives continue to meet on an annual basis for an updated position on issues and expectations, and report on its discussions to Communities Scrutiny Committee.

4.1.2. that the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy page on the Council's website be re-launched including:

a) links to related Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water web pages; and

b) an explanation of the responsibilities of Flood Risk Management Authorities and riparian landowners,

4.1.3. that working in partnership with Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water a generic information leaflet/letter be created on the responsibilities of riparian landowners and distributed to properties adjacent to the Rhyl Cut and Prestatyn Gutter; and

4.1.4. that the report presented to the Committee be translated and circulated to City, Town and Community Councils for inclusion on their websites.

4.2. With respect to these actions the update is as follows:

4.2.1 The Flood Risk Working Group hasn't met recently but this current paper is designed to give it new impetus and focus.

4.2.2 Due to the loss of a member of staff it hasn't been possible to improve communication relating to the web page or with Town and Community Councils but this will remain as an action that we will work to achieve in the next few months.

4.2.3 Meetings and discussions with Officers from DCC and those from NRW are taking place and progress is being made. Both organisations have commission work to look at the issue and it is anticipated that a draft document will be available to share shortly.

Proposal to re-establish a FRM Working Group

4.3. DCC currently has a local Flood Risk Management Strategy, but all local authorities are required to produce and publish a revised Flood Risk Management Strategy during 2024. Officers are proposing to establish a member-led Working Group to oversee the development of our new FRM Strategy. A draft Terms of Reference is attached at Appendix A.

4.4. There is an existing Flood Risk Management Strategy which has been in place since 2014 but there is a requirement now to revisit, revise and adapt it to create a new one. At the beginning of that document the Executive Summary included the following:

The Local Strategy will complement and support the National Strategy published by Welsh Government, which outlines a national framework for flood and coastal risk management that aims to balance the needs of communities, the economy and the environment. The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (Wales) sets the following objectives:

1.Reducing the impacts on individuals, communities, businesses and the environment from flooding and coastal erosion;

2.Raising awareness of and engaging people in the response to flood and coastal erosion risk;

3.Providing an effective and sustained response to flood and coastal erosion events; and

4.Prioritising investment in communities most at risk.

Although the parameters now might have altered, the desired outcomes for Denbighshire will be fundamentally the same.

4.5. An important part of the document is ensuring it links with other Strategic documents, amongst which will be the Flood Strategies for Natural Resources

Wales so this will be a development of the work done by the previous Task and Finish Group.

- 4.6. Communication of the new Strategy is a key element of it but it is likely to be a sizeable document so the intention will be to work with Members to create a smaller, more approachable summary so that communication of the principles can be understood more readily.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Themes?

- 5.1. This proposal supports the theme called “A Greener Denbighshire” in the 2022-27 Corporate Plan. This specifically highlights the need to “mitigate and work with communities to cope with the impacts of climate change”. It also states that we aim to “support communities to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change by...delivering schemes to reduce coastal and in-land flood risk. This includes support for the management of land adjacent to waterways”. Our new FRM Strategy will clarify how we will go about working to achieve these objectives.

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

- 6.1. The cost of developing the new FRM Strategy will be covered from existing service revenue budgets.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment (WBIA) is not required for this report, but one will be required to support the development of the new FRM Strategy. The proposed Working Group would be involved in the development of the WBIA.

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

- 8.1. The Lead Member has been consulted on, and supports, the proposal to establish a Working Group for the purposes of developing a new FRM Strategy.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. It is important that services keep within their budget during this period of financial constraint. Future years allocations for all expenditure are currently under review for 24/25 and beyond.

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

- 10.1. There are some minor risks around this proposal related to the need for wide consultation within a short space of time but these can be mitigated by good project management and diarised meetings.

11. Power to make the decision

- 11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

- 11.2. Section 7.4.1 (d) and (e) of the Council's Constitution

