

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy & Resources
Date:	11 March 2010
Title:	Flooding Light Touch Scrutiny Recommendation
Reference:	1330
Report From:	Environment & Transportation Select Committee

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to present the conclusions and recommendation of the Environment & Transportation Select Committee review of Flooding.

1.2. This paper seeks to

- Provide background to the Flooding review;
- Highlight evidence and conclusions that led the Committee to its recommendation;
- Detail the next steps of the review.

2. Contextual information

2.1. At the March 2009 meeting of the Environment and Transportation Select Committee, 'Flooding' was adopted as a subject for a light-touch scrutiny review.

2.2. The choice of the review topic was influenced by 'The Pitt Review: Lessons learned from the 2007 floods', which suggested that Overview & Scrutiny Committees should 'review work by public sector bodies and essential service providers in order to manage flood risk'.

2.3. The purpose of the review was to assess the partnership working underpinning current flood risk management and flood prevention arrangements in Hampshire, together with performance since the 2007 floods.

2.4. The review group held its light touch review meeting on 2 November 2009, where it received evidence from key flooding partners, which included the Hampshire County Council Emergency Planning Unit, Hampshire County Council Highways Department, the Environment Agency and Southern Water.

2.5. The Committee made one urgent recommendation. This was:

‘That Hampshire County Council Emergency Planning Unit, (in conjunction with its Hampshire Flood Response Group partners), subject to funding being identified, explores options for producing for all County, District and Borough Councillors a current handbook which contains information for use in a flooding emergency, including key agencies, roles and responsibilities of such agencies and useful contact numbers / websites.’

2.6. Pursuant to Part 3 of the County Council's constitution, once a Select Committee has formed recommendations on a particular matter, it will arrange a report to the Executive Member for consideration.

3. Performance

3.1. During the course of a review evidence giving session, the Committee heard that a booklet was distributed by flooding partners in 2000 to Parish Councillors in Hampshire, which aimed to inform them of what steps to take in a flooding emergency.

3.2. The Committee subsequently heard that this booklet has not been updated since publication ten years ago.

3.3. It was agreed that local Councillors are often the first line of communication for residents experiencing a flooding emergency. Therefore the Committee believed it of acute importance to be in possession of a handbook containing current flooding emergency information, which can be disseminated by local Councillors to residents in such a situation.

4. Finance

4.1. There is likely to be a financial implication in the cost of printing and distributing a flooding booklet to Councillors within all levels of Local Government in Hampshire. It is proposed that a business case outlines a detailed proposal of the likely cost.

5. Future direction

5.1. The Review Group is aware that this ‘light touch’ overview & scrutiny review has been limited in its evidence gathering, due to the wish that the topic be explored from a strategic level. The Review Group is pleased that the Policy & Resources Select Committee will be following on from this ‘light touch’ review, and will be scoping an in-depth review in 2010.

5.2. The Policy & Resources Select Committee is currently embarking on a ‘review of the Severe Winter Weather experienced in Hampshire in 2009/10’. This review will report back to Cabinet in September 2010. The ‘in-depth’ Flooding review is proposed to take place after this time.

6. Recommendation(s)

- 6.1. That the recommendation of the Environment & Transportation Select Committee is endorsed.
- 6.2. That the Chief Executive (County Emergency Planning Officer) prepares a business case for producing a current flooding handbook for all County, District and Parish Councillors, which contains information for use in an emergency.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	No
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Flooding Light Touch Scrutiny Review Report	http://www.hants.gov.uk/decisions/decisions-docs/100112-entrpr-R0105142415.html

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. N/A

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. N/A

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

There may be a small carbon cost in printing and distributing a flooding booklet to all local Councillors in Hampshire.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

This review has engaged in Hampshire County Council's overall approach to Climate Change by scrutinising its approach to Flooding.