

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Policy & Resources
Date:	9 June 2011
Title:	Flooding Light Touch Scrutiny Recommendation
Reference:	2830
Report From:	Emergency Planning Unit Environment & Transportation Select Committee

Contact name: Katie Benton, Scrutiny Officer
Julie James, Senior Emergency Planning Officer

Tel: 01962 847336 **Email:** katie.benton@hants.gov.uk
01962 846844 julie.james@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to present the business case that supports the recommendation made by the Environment & Transportation Select Committee following their light-touch scrutiny review of Flooding.

1.2. This paper seeks to

- Provide background to this paper;
- Detail the business case for the Flooding Guide;
- Present costs associated with the printing of the above document.

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. The Committee conducted the review in November 2009, in a half-day oral evidence gathering session.

2.2. Following this evidence session, the Committee made one urgent recommendation within the final report. 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.’

- 2.3. 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. This occurred in March 2010, where the Executive Member agreed the recommendation set out in paragraph 2.2.
- 2.4. This papers aims to inform the Executive Member for Policy and Resources of activities that have taken place since March 2010, and to present the business case, finance and next steps for the 'Councillor's Guide to Flooding'.

3. Business Case

- 3.1. It is important that Councillors are regularly updated as to how they can assist and inform residents where necessary when Hampshire County Council is coordinating a response to flooding. Flooding incidents have, in the past, highlighted gaps in information provided to Councillors which enables them to support their local communities.
- 3.2. The 'Councillor's Guide to Flooding' document aims to set out how Hampshire County Council will coordinate any response to such an event: what information will be available, how to access it and how Councillors can assist before, during and after flooding has occurred.
- 3.3. The 'Councillor's Guide to Flooding' has been compiled with input from key partner agencies (Environment Agency, district and borough councils) to ensure consistency. A pilot document was discussed by the Hart District Council 'Flood Scrutiny Group', and feedback received has resulted in making the document 'specific' to each local authority area, including details such as:
 - specific information on Flood Warning Areas;
 - broadcast information local to that local area, and;
 - individual sandbag policies for each council.
- 3.4. Those district and borough councils responding to the pilot Guide are aware of Hampshire County Council's role as the Lead Local Flood Authority, but have expressed interest in accepting some level of local responsibility for planning and responding to incidences of flooding within their areas. The area-specific Guide assists councillors to take a lead in this.

Legislation

- 3.5. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 identified Hampshire County Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority, so it is important that the council drives this project. The introduction of the Localism Bill, which, if passed, will see power shifting from central government to councils and local communities, is an important element in this project. The Guide produced will be distributed to county, district, borough and parish Councillors, all of whom have demonstrated pro-activeness in flood planning and response in the past.

3.6 The distribution of the Flood Guide document throughout Hampshire will also enable councillors to take forward the ideas contained within the Community Resilience Programme, effectively helping communities to 'help themselves'. The introduction of this document also coincides with the publication of county wide Multi Agency Flood Plans (as directed by the Department for Energy, Farming and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)).

4. Finance

4.1. The total cost of Hampshire Printing Services producing 11 district and borough specific documents, for all county, district, borough and parish Councillors (of which there are approximately 1,770), is £3,375. This will be funded be coming from the Culture, Communities and Business Services budget.

4.2. The distribution of these documents will be carried out by the Hampshire County Council Emergency Planning Team as part of their liaison with district and borough councils. There will not therefore be associated postage and distribution costs.

5. Current Position and Next Steps

5.1. The Chairman of the Environment and Transportation Select Committee, in conjunction with the County Emergency Planning Officer, has previously presented the Executive Member for Policy and Resources with a draft copy of the 'Councillor's Guide to Flooding' document for discussion.

5.2. The next step, following agreement of the 'Councillor's Guide to Flooding' document and identification of funding, is to proceed to print and distribute the Guide.

6. Recommendation(s)

6.1. That a sum of £3,375 be approved from the Culture, Communities and Business Services budget to produce the Flooding Guide booklet.

6.2. To agree the template 'Councillor's Guide to Flooding' document, and to proceed with publication for distribution to all county, district, borough and parish Councillors in Hampshire.

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):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Flooding Light Touch Scrutiny Review Recommendation	1330	11.03.2010

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.