

**Hampshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Event: 9 December 2013
Hampshire County Council Environment & Transportation Select Committee:
Request for Written Evidence**

Deadline for receipt of responses: 10 November 2013

The following questions are being addressed to the local flood risk management authorities operating in Hampshire and the relevant regional flood and coastal committees. Your organisation's response to as many of these questions as are relevant will assist the Select Committee in its investigations.

You are welcome to use this document as a basis for your response, or submit a separate document if you prefer.

Name of Organisation Responding:

- **Southern Water**

Contact Name and Contact Details:

- **Mark Thompson, Head of Wastewater Assets - 01903 272825**

Funding

1. What is Southern Water's understanding of the key challenges in obtaining funding for flood risk management in Hampshire, and how might these be surmounted?

One of the challenges for Lead Local Authorities centres on the way in which Government funding is now allocated. Rather than meeting the full cost of a limited number of projects, as was historically the case, the Government has moved towards a funding mechanism that aims to make money available towards worthwhile projects over time. Since the change was announced in 2011, grants for surface water management and property protection are now available alongside funding for other risks and funding levels for each scheme now relate directly to the number of households protected; the damages being prevented; and wider benefits that might be realised.

Though the new funding mechanism sets out to give more local choice, it gives greater emphasis on protecting those in deprived areas. The increased payment rates for deprived areas are based on the fact that households in these areas are less likely to be insured, can need more assistance than others in terms of flood recovery and they may be less able to contribute. Due to its socio-economic profile, much of Hampshire may therefore be less inclined to attract funding.

Within any one part of the country, there are likely to be some projects that stand to be fully funded by Defra and others that could attract partial funding. Lead local flood authorities such as Hampshire County Council can, along with their local partners, choose to concentrate their efforts on supporting schemes likely to be fully funded by Defra. However, by working together in partnership and bringing wider stakeholders into the equation, they can support schemes that would otherwise be only partially funded by central Government.

The Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (SRFCC) has highlighted the need to work in partnership and this may include collaborative working between lead local flood authorities, with District and Borough councils and developers. Development of the list of proposed schemes by the Environment Agency and approval via the SRFCC, means that Hampshire County Council has the opportunity to directly influence which schemes proceed, as well as seeking to raise additional funds to support schemes (including using existing local authorities powers to raise funds).

Examples of how partnership funding has been successful are available through the Environment Agency. These include Flood Defence Grant in Aid funded schemes that have been realised by maximising Outcome Measure Scores, with top up from local contributions and flood protection measures directly funded by private developers.

One important mechanism for local authorities is the alignment of planning policy to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages of the planning process. Linking new development to funding flood protection measures is likely to be a key way of raising additional funding in the future.

2. What role, if any, can partnership working play in helping to attract funding for flood risk management in Hampshire?

Partnership working by all parties involved in local flood risk management groups is crucial and in line with the Government's aspirations following the Pitt Review. Partnership working is crucial to bridge the gap between local needs and the availability of central funding, in order to realise additional funds and to realise wider benefits that might otherwise be missed. By all parties being involved in local flood risk management contributing their knowledge, expertise and influence, the greatest gains can be achieved. This includes leveraging funding from stakeholders, realising gains from new development and maximising the combined impact of community measures that might otherwise be planned and implemented in isolation. By following the partnership approach in Hampshire, there is a greater chance of attracting central Government funding and additional funding sources outside of this.

3. What can Southern Water do to help maximise investment in Hampshire's flood risk management?

Southern Water is committed to playing an active role in local and regional flood risk management, in line with its responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. As Defra defines, "Water and Sewerage Companies are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from water and foul or combined sewer systems providing drainage from buildings and yards". In order to deliver on this, Southern Water has a vested interest in working in partnership with flood authorities to achieve the best possible outcomes for our customers.

Southern Water also has a role to play in sharing our funded plans with local authorities, in order that they are aware of infrastructure improvements that are fully funded through Ofwat and supported by the Environment Agency on behalf of Defra. Following determination of our Periodic Review 2014 (PR14) Business Plan, we will be able to discuss and share the detail surrounding planned investigations and

infrastructure improvements that are timetabled to take place from 2015-20. Such measures will help to support a greater partnership approach, and in turn may influence future development and third party funding from developers. By regular and effective communication with flood risk management authorities, we hope to maximise the impact that we have on flood related issues in Hampshire.

Overlapping Responsibilities

4. The Flood and Water Management Act has made major changes in the division of responsibilities for flood risk management. However, the duties conferred upon the various agencies by the legislation interact and overlap, as do the sources of flooding themselves. What are the key areas of overlap in the opinion of Southern Water and what challenges do these pose to flood risk management in Hampshire?

Southern Water is clear on its role under the Flood and Water Management Act, but we appreciate that there may be some perceived overlap between the various parties involved in flood risk management and also the sources of flooding themselves. We would advocate that where other parties consider there to be overlapping duties and responsibilities, that these be discussed and agreed at a local level between the various parties. In relation to the issues of overlapping sources of flooding, this is a particular issue that drives us to greater collaborative working with other parties involved in flood risk management. A key example is the collaborative work we have done with West Sussex County Council since the floods experienced in the County in 2012.

5. How can these challenges be managed, and what are the key actions that must be taken to improve flood risk management partnership working in Hampshire?

One of the greatest areas of overlap perceived by us lies between County/Unitary Councils (discharging their duties as lead local flood authorities and highways authorities) and District and Borough Councils. This is partly because of the overlap between surface water, groundwater, ordinary watercourses and minor watercourse. Where there is a lack of clarity, or issues arising between Councils, then we believe that the Environment Agency has an important role to play in its strategic level flooding and coastal erosion remit. The Environment Agency should set the direction for managing risks through strategic planning and support other organisations to play an effective part in flood risk management.

Sustainable Drainage

6. Once the Flood and Water Management Act has been fully enabled, the County Council will be responsible for approving and adopting all drainage systems on new developments. What impacts will this have upon Southern Water and its operations?

Assuming that County Councils have the necessary resources, capacity and expertise, then the adoption of drainage systems on new developments should not be problematic. It will be necessary to ensure up to date codes of practice are followed by developers, so that adopted infrastructure is developed to the required standards. Opportunities to encourage developers to devise more sustainable

solutions should be maximised, to help to reduce sources of potential flooding. Early warning of developers' intentions is crucial to Southern Water, to help us to fully review the capacity and resilience of our own infrastructure going forwards and specifically where this needs to accommodate changes to the water environment and new connections.

7. In what ways can the County Council use this new responsibility to complement the work of other flood risk management authorities – especially, but not exclusively in relation to flood risk management?

In setting the planning policy context for development, the County Council can be highly influential in terms of creating the landscape within which planning may be granted at the District and Borough level. If fully embraced, the partnership working approach advocated for flood risk management could have a significantly positive impact on first and second tier Council working relationships, which could theoretically lead to benefits beyond flood risk management. For example, the infrastructure and capacity issues relating to future development could be better resolved by cross-Council collaboration to align strategic planning policy, neighbourhood plans and planning approvals.

A demonstration of the way the County Council as lead local flood authority has facilitated multi agency co-operation in addressing groundwater infiltration into foul sewers is in St Marybourne in North Hampshire.

8. In what ways, if any, can Southern Water support the delivery of the sustainable drainage approval body function? It is anticipated the SUDS Approval Boards will consult Southern Water where a discharge to the public sewer network is proposed.

Southern Water considers that it is vital for it be consulted early on where discharges to public sewer is proposed. This will allow us to better support new development and associated plans for SUDS. Early consultation on this is crucial, bearing in mind our long term business planning cycle and funding mechanisms.

Maintenance

9. Please provide details of any relevant maintenance programme/s your organisation undertakes which is beneficial to flood risk management?

Southern Water has a significant programme of proactive sewer maintenance, including in Hampshire, to ensure that public sewers are working to their optimum capacity. There is also a program of planned maintenance on other assets such as flap valves. In addition to routine pumping station visits, five hundred stations across the company are being subject to depth condition and performance surveys.

10. What is the biggest issue in terms of effective maintenance of flood risk management infrastructure/water courses, and what would help address this?

Each organisation clearly understanding their roles and responsibilities in relation to flood risk management and then them discharging their duties in line with the Flood and Water Management Act is in our view the biggest issue. Once this is achieved

and all parties fully understand the role that they need to play, with the right will they can then work collaboratively and move to a fully functioning partnership approach.

Other

Are there any other comments with regard to flood risk management that you would like to make to the Select Committee?

Southern Water will continue to participate in multi agency discussions to try and determine if there are synergies with respect to surface water and cases of foul water flooding. Such an approach will ensure flood risk measures take place in the most efficient and effective manner.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the Committee's request, your responses will help Members identify areas for improvement in flood risk management. Please note, as evidence to a Select Committee inquiry, your responses will be published unless you specify that the content is not for publication (see guidance notes).

Please return your responses to:

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It will assist the committee's preparations for the event on 9 December if you can submit your written evidence by 10th November 2013.