

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

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 (please contact the scrutiny officer, see below, for an electronic copy), or submit a separate document if you prefer.

**Name of Organisation Responding: Hart District Council Technical Services and Environmental Maintenance.**

**Contact Name and Contact Details: Ian Plummer, [ian.plummer@hart.gov.uk](mailto:ian.plummer@hart.gov.uk), 01252 774210**

**Funding**

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

By far the most challenging aspect of securing funding for flood alleviation projects under the current regime is the seeking and obtaining of external financial contributions from relevant stakeholders. Flood mitigation measures often require spending considerable sums to ensure a sizable reduction in flood risk is achieved.

In order for stakeholders to fully understand all the benefits and risks involved, there is often a large degree of "selling" the proposed flood alleviation scheme to those affected (inc private individuals) and also the relevant Risk Management Authorities, depending on the sources of flood water. Parish Councils have represented resident's interests in this situation and should be regarded as a major stakeholder. As the EA have an overall strategic overview role under the Act they may be better placed to engage the community to "sell" flood risk management strategy and proposals to the public.

In addition, As the LLFA County would be ideally placed to coordinate funding streams and possibly seek contributions from the relevant RMA's involved.

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

The current funding process ideally requires stakeholder contributions. Additional weight can be added to applications and ultimately influence its benefit /cost ratio score, by obtaining financial contributions from ALL the RMA's involved. This scenario would also provide real evidence of partnership engagement and a coordinated flood risk response.

3. What can Hart District Council do to help maximise investment in Hampshire's flood risk management?

Hart DC have promoted and undertaken a coordinated response in the past and achieved significant reductions in flood risk. Hart has also built a strong working relationship with colleagues within the EA's West Thames Region.

### **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 Hart District Council and what challenges do these pose to flood risk management in Hampshire?

Ordinary watercourse management will require close liaison between County and Districts regarding Consenting for structures that may alter flows within these watercourses. This also applies to structures (that influence flood risk) that are to be put forward for inclusion on the Flood Risk Asset Register, enabled by the FWM Act.

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?

These can be managed by clear and consistent goal and process targets being agreed between those parties involved. As the issues highlighted in question 4's response are to be driven by the LLFA, formal guidance is required to move these responsibilities forward.

### **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 Hart District Council and its operations?

The implementation of SUDs in new developments does require a degree of local knowledge in terms of the receiving watercourse status or condition and any previous flood history of surrounding land, if applicable.

Hart DC has considerable FRM experience, which extends to detailed knowledge of areas susceptible to flooding and the mechanisms behind previous events. This knowledge base is available to County officers. .

There will need to be significant co-ordination between those undertaking the SAB approval process and those dealing with planning applications, both officers and Planning Committees, to ensure that schemes granted planning permission are implementable. SuDs schemes will need to be deliverable within the planning permission granted and planning permissions will need to be able to accommodate adoptable SuDs schemes.

On the working assumption that there this will apply to all major applications (ie 10+ dwellings or 1,000m<sup>2</sup> of commercial floorspace or sites greater than 1.0ha) this will mean around 30 planning applications a year where a new consultation exercise will

need to be undertaken. This is likely to result in a significant resource issue for Hart and for those undertaking the SAB approval process.

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?

Provision of Suds features (dependant on design characteristics) can also provide excellent bio-diversity, water quality and quality public amenity improvements. All of these issues fall within the Environment Agencies overall remit.

8. In what ways, if any, can Hart District Council support the delivery of the sustainable drainage approval body function?

Resources within Hart are fully extended dealing with District issues at present. However, the provision of pre application SAB advice is offered. Hart would consider approaches from County regarding formal support to the HCC SAB function.

## **Maintenance**

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

Hart DC check and clear 25 debris grilles placed at strategic “hot spots” within watercourses known to have flow issues due to the accumulation of detritus within them. These grilles are also revisited after intense or prolonged rainfall to actively manage possible flood risk at these locations.

Hart also manage information from the Flood Forecasting Service and disseminate weather warning to our Grounds Maintenance team (and others) as appropriate. This ensures the District’s abilities to respond to adverse weather and residents sandbag requests are maximised.

Flood risk in Hart has been significantly reduced by the active coordination of the various Authorities involved to ensure water assets causing concern are maintained to a good standard where possible and agree capacity increases if required. These responses have been reported to Hart DC’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee over many years.

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

The overall issue of watercourse maintenance appears to remain a very low priority for the majority of landowners. Many are unaware of this responsibility, to maintain adequate flow and ensure bank side vegetation is managed. A coordinated awareness campaign would help address this oversight. From experience, many Parish Councils are in contact with local landowners and it is suggested they would be in a more favourable position to promote awareness, with guidance from Districts, County and the EA, as appropriate.

**Other**

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

Hart DC is increasingly aware of perceived property blight becoming a major concern for homeowners facing flood risk. This can directly influence the insurance premiums for residents who have not claimed or actually dealt with their property flooding in the past, let alone those who have flooded previously. Any release of this information into the public domain needs to be carefully considered.

The EA have very recently launched their “Flood Identity” awareness campaign under the following remit,

“The flood identity will be used to increase the reach and consistency of information about flood risk and the actions that people can take to protect themselves from flooding. It follows the example of other successful multi-organisation campaigns such as 'Fire Kills', 'Think!' and 'Change4Life'.

The flood identity will be used by the Environment Agency and others to create a consistent look and feel to flood information regardless of which organisation or group it comes from.”

This initiative would be a good opportunity to launch a consistent message from the EA ,LLFA and all RMA’s within Hampshire, to Parish Councils and members of the public to highlight the various issues faced at present.

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.