

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

Name of Organisation Responding: Winchester City Council

Contact Name and Contact Details: Simon Finch Assistant Director Built Environment sfinch@winchester.gov.uk

Funding

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

1A – Under the Flood and Water Management Act there are likely to be issues for HCC relating to the costs associated with the adoption and maintenance of SuDS under the new regime. Clear guidance and mechanisms need to be provided by Government to ensure that appropriate arrangements can be put in place to enable HCC to carryout its responsibilities and that its duties are appropriately funded.

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

2A – Sharing knowledge and information about flooding and pooling expertise will assist bids for funding for flood risk management.

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

3A – Please see 2 above. However, Winchester City Council has limited staff resources in this area.

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 Winchester City Council and what challenges do these pose to flood risk management in Hampshire?

4A (i) – The key area of overlap relates to SuDS and, in particular, the links between the development management function of district councils (planning decisions) and the new requirement for developers to obtain separate approval from HCC for these systems under the Act. It is therefore important for the local planning and SAB authorities to work together.

4A (ii) - WCC and HCC are both Land Drainage Authorities and have permissive powers under Land Drainage Act 1991 to encourage riparian owners to keep Ordinary Watercourses clear and free flowing. An understanding exists between Authorities that if an obstructed watercourse is causing problems to the public highway then HCC would intervene with WCC dealing with all other non highway related items. This understanding has worked well in the past and continuation into the future is advised.

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?

5A – Establishing clear lines of communications between the City Council and HCC officers.

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 Winchester City Council and its operations?

6A: HCC will be responsible for adopting SuDS where they serve two or more dwellings. A SuDS serving a single dwelling would still remain the responsibility of the land owner for maintenance and WCC Development Management Officers would still have to approve these systems as appropriate. If a major development was proposed where storm water for all dwellings drained to individual soakaways within the curtilage of each dwelling then WCC would still be the “approving body” through the planning process. WCC still require a Drainage DC Engineer either to approve storm water drainage or to pass to HCC for approval if considered a multiple dwelling SuDS. It may also mean that WCC itself will be less likely in future to adopt SuDS which have been incorporated into open space areas of developments.

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?

7A – HCC can use this new responsibility to help manage flood risk and to improve water quality and biodiversity by working in conjunction with other bodies, such as the Environment Agency and Natural England, as well as with voluntary and charitable organisations.

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

8A: Ensure that HCC SAB Officers and planning officers communicate effectively as early as possible in the development process and encourage developers to plan for SuDS from the outset of the process.

Maintenance

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

9A: WCC have maintenance programmes for properties and land that it owns but on non WCC owned property we react to flooding problems as they occur.

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

10A: Lack of maintenance of watercourses by riparian owners' leads to many flooding problems especially to the public highway. Many highway verges have been eroded by traffic and the ditches can now be adjacent to the carriageway instead of being several feet away and ready to be filled in by the next passing heavy vehicle. It may be necessary to transfer responsibility for watercourses next to the public highway to the Highway Authority to ensure that they are properly maintained.

Other

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

Surface water is a significant issue particularly in relation to blocked drains and ditches. In rural areas land and road ditches have been filled in causing drainage issues. In areas where there is no mains drainage, sewage treatment works are sometimes being feed into road ditches which eventually find their way to a water course but these discharges can add to the flooding issues when high volumes of water are present during, or after, heavy periods of rainfall.

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.