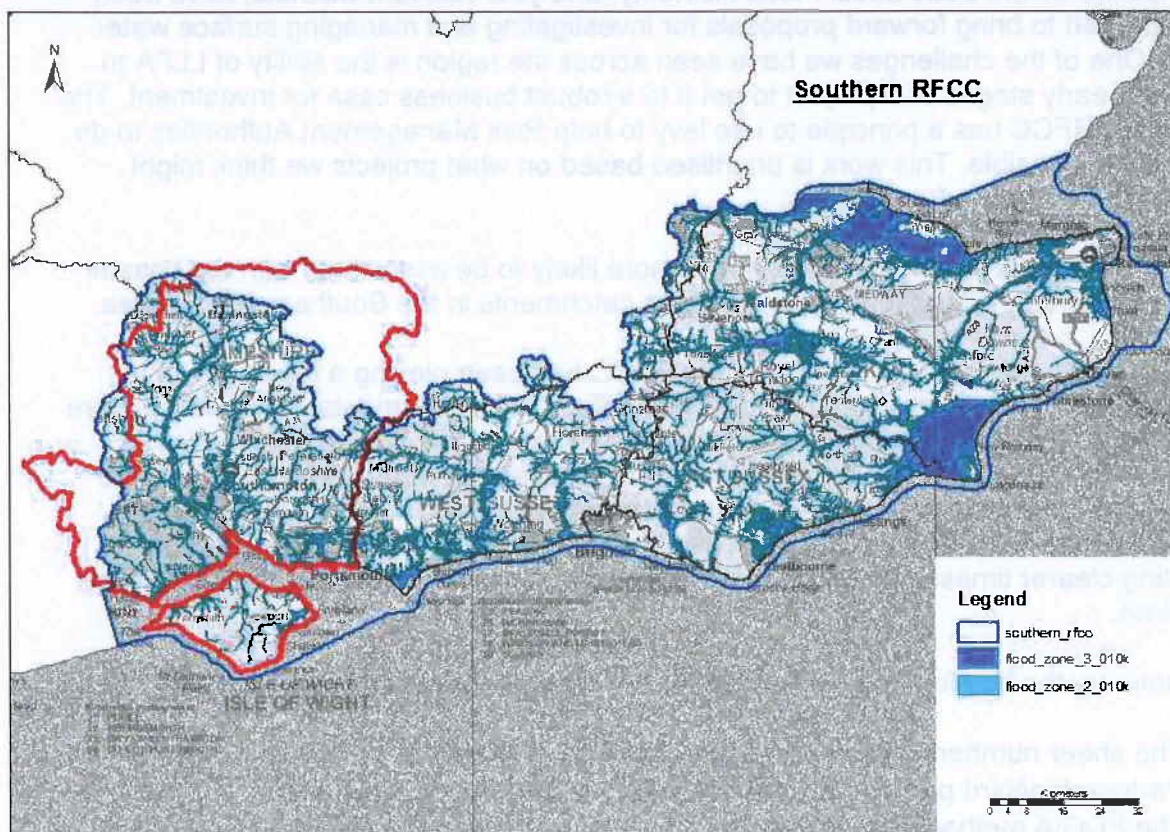


**Hampshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Event: 9 December 2013
Hampshire County Council Environment & Transportation Select Committee:
Request for Written Evidence**

Name of Organisation Responding: Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee
Lorraine Brown (Chair) – lorraine-brown@live.co.uk; 01590 673172

Supported by Emma Formoy, Environment Agency –
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The parts of Hampshire covered by the Southern RFCC are subject to flood risk from the sea, rivers, surface water and groundwater. Responsibility for managing these sources of flooding lies with the Environment Agency and Hampshire County Council in its role as a Lead Local Flood Authority and in the case of coastal erosion with the Districts.



The latest estimate is that around 26,000 properties are at risk of flooding from river and the sea in Hampshire of which just under 7000 are at significant risk, greater than 1.3% chance of flooding in any one year.

Funding

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

The Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC) approve and oversee a programme of work for all Risk Management Authorities across its region. This

programme is managed by the Environment Agency who distributes funding on behalf of Defra. Funding is allocated using the Defra Partnership Funding approach whereby projects attract FCRM GiA funding from central government based on the public benefit they provide such as reducing flood risk to homes or creating habitat for wildlife. Some schemes will be fully funded, others only partly funded by FCRM GiA. Contributions from local levy, local businesses or other parties who will benefit from the scheme make up any shortfall in the funding.

Schemes for all sources of flooding compete for the same pot of funding, and with the current pressures on the amount of FCRM GiA, only schemes that can demonstrate strong benefits and have external contributions are likely to receive funding. The challenge is to find appropriate contributions from beneficiaries to progress these schemes. Local levy can form part of this but it is also important to show contributions from other parties.

Hampshire as the Lead Local Flood Authority, and your relevant Districts, have been encouraged to bring forward proposals for investigating and managing surface water risks. One of the challenges we have seen across the region is the ability of LLFA to fund the early stages of a project to get it to a robust business case for investment. The Southern RFCC has a principle to use levy to help Risk Management Authorities to do this where possible. This work is prioritised based on what projects we think might attract FCRM GiA in future years.

The challenge for raising contributions is more likely to be associated with the coastal areas of the county and lower down various catchments in the Southern RFCC Area.

One of the challenges in which Southern RFCC has been playing a leading role, is moving to a longer term approach to planning flood risk investments. This will be more appropriate for delivering major capital infrastructure and will help to achieve efficiencies. The Environment Agency has undertaken to prepare a ten year forward look for major schemes across the country to assist partners in identifying when a window for delivering their major schemes might arise. This should also assist by creating clearer timescales for planning when relevant beneficiary contributions will be required.

In summary the key funding challenges for the Southern region are:

- The sheer numbers of potential schemes/need in the area
- Partnership/third party funding is essential if FDGiA is to be obtained
- The FDGiA methodology is weighted towards protection of homes, less weight is given to schemes that support/protect agricultural land/coastal or the economy
- The Southern area had a healthy number of Capital projects in delivery. It now needs to build up a new pipeline of strong projects for the future
- The funds for developing projects to a point where FDGiA can be applied for, is limited
- The capacity of LLFA's and EA to deal with the challenges and delivery of schemes given, increasing resource limitations
- The low level of the Levy in the region
- The declining revenue funding within the EA for staff and maintenance of schemes.

How many these challenges be surmounted?

- Ensuring quality of information and preparation for new schemes

- Ensuring all schemes have third party contributions of some form or another
- Sharing potential schemes between risk management partners and RFCC at an early stage to find synergies, shared funding opportunities etc
- Ensuring value for money on all schemes
- Close partnership working; better use of RFCC Members
- Influencing the FDGiA methodology when possible
- Better understanding of the Levy, its uses and the benefits of raising the amount in the region
- Well informed /briefed Members attending RFCC.

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

Partnerships can play a crucial part in encouraging external contributions. Partnership working can help identify opportunities to maximise benefits and deliver cost efficient outcomes in an integrated way. Early partnership working is important in scheme development. Partnerships need to exist between Risk Management Authorities and local communities. Partnerships are also relevant when it comes to maximising options for available funding, for example where there is the opportunity to link flood risk management benefits to other local redevelopment or enhancement projects that might be planned. Also important is linking up investment with water companies.

Involvement of elected representatives is an important part of this partnership too. They will be able to bring a political aspect to the discussion and maximise the potential role of the RFCC in delivery. They will need to be knowledgeable about schemes within their patch and champion the outcomes to the rest of the RFCC for inclusion in the programme.

Partnerships can also play a significant role in areas where perhaps there is no built scheme available, resulting in investment in flood warning services and the development of community flood plans. It also has an important link to publication of updated risk information and changes to insurance provisions.

3. What can the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee do to help maximise investment in Hampshire's flood risk management?

All RFCC's have a responsibility to 'promote efficient, targeted and risk based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that optimises value for money and benefits for local communities.'

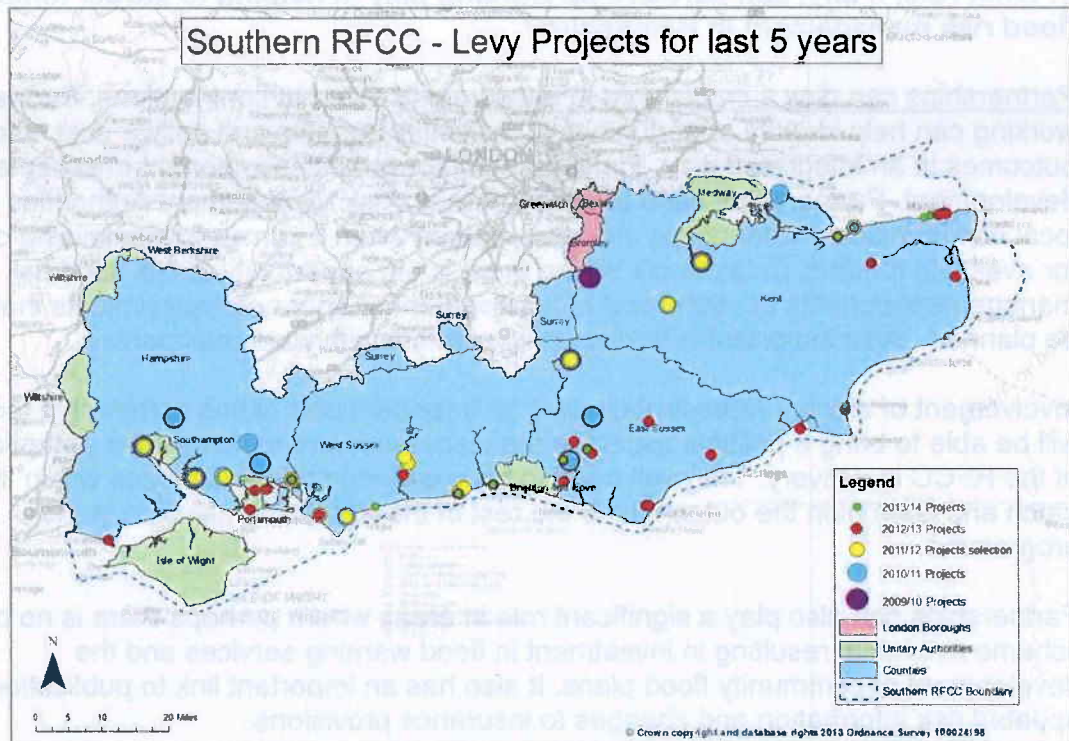
This guides the advice the Committee gives when we approve the Southern programme. It also guides our Levy Investment decisions. The Levy is funding raised by LLFA's and used to support the overall investment programme in the Southern Area.

The Southern RFCC levy investment is based on the principles listed below:

- To maximise external contributions;
- To enable both steady investment in small and medium projects and progress on larger schemes,
- To influence the phasing of investment by allowing projects to be kick started or sustained in years when partners are less able to invest
- To establish a portfolio of "spade ready" investments for potential growth funding opportunities;

- To be used on a good spread of projects over a diverse geographical area over a five year programme
- To be used where appropriate as “seed funding” for new projects in order to attract FCRM GiA in future years
- To fund projects with strong potential outcomes and partnership funding scores for GiA.

The map below shows examples of projects supported by the Southern RFCC Levy over the last five years.



Schemes delivered within Hampshire include;

- Keyhaven Sea Wall refurbishment
- Itchen Navigation Scheme
- Hambleden Flood Alleviation Scheme

The Southern RFCC can help maximise investment in Hampshire flood risk programme by:

- Understanding HCC’s Flood Strategy and its priorities for investment
- Targeting Local Levy on local Hampshire schemes where possible
- Being aware of the schemes Hampshire wishes to put forward and help identify ways it may be funded/progress
- Persuading HCC members of the need, given the level of flood risk, for more local funding to be found
- Identify opportunities with other areas/projects where joint working could provide better value for money.

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 the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and what challenges do these pose to flood risk management in Hampshire?

Flooding sources are not always disparate and for this reason it is even more important that all risk management authorities work together in partnership to tackle risk. This can pose a potential challenge in terms of identifying the lead risk management authority and the public understanding of responsibilities.

The lead authority for a flood risk can be difficult to understand. Clarity on roles and responsibilities and all proposed projects at an early stage is critical.

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?

All RMAS (including the politicians responsible for Flood Risk Management) need to work together to appreciate each other's roles and responsibilities, understand risk and develop solutions to manage it. Flood Partnerships play a crucial role in achieving this and must be supported.

There are a number of different workstreams driven by the FWMA and the EU Floods Directive that place responsibilities on Risk Management Authorities to deliver updated flood mapping and action plans to tackle all sources of flooding. It is important that all organisations can work together to develop these plans and move towards more integrated solutions to manage flooding. Strong partnerships at all levels, officer and senior managers, are critical to embedding this way of working.

The role of the elected members as part of the Flood Partnerships, and as members of the RFCC is also critical in ensuring that the joint/collaborative working, so necessary for achieving effective outcomes, is effective.

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 the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee and its operations?

It is not anticipated that this will have an impact on the Southern RFCC and its operation. The RFCC involvement would be on an advisory basis.

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?

Sustainable drainage is an important tool in the flood risk management toolbox, helping to manage flood risk at source in a holistic way. This duty will ensure a wider take up of sustainable drainage techniques and therefore reducing risk to communities.

8. In what ways, if any, can the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee support the delivery of the sustainable drainage approval body function?

Southern RFCC will have no formal role in SABs but will provide a forum for discussion around how this duty progresses following enactment, as the committee does with other duties under the Flood & Water Management Act.

The Southern RFCC will retain an overview of progress with this requirement through feedback from LLFA officers at the meetings.

Maintenance

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

The Southern RFCC does not itself undertake any work but maintains an overview of the revenue programme.

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

Revenue streams for maintenance are being reduced by central government meaning that maintenance on lower risk watercourses will be reduced. Aside from increased maintenance funding empowering landowners and communities to undertake their own maintenance could be a way to overcome this.

Other

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

None

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.