

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SCRUTINY BOARD – 27TH JANUARY 2009

OVERVIEW BOARD – 3RD FEBRUARY 2009

JOINT COUNTYWIDE SCRUTINY REPORT ON FLOODING

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillors Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths and P. J. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects Head of Street Scene and Community Head of Planning and Environment Services
Task Group Chairman	Councillor M. King (Wychavon District Council)
Our Representatives	Councillors P. M. McDonald and D. L. Pardoe

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Joint Countywide Flooding Scrutiny Report was presented to Members at the joint meeting of the Overview Board and Scrutiny Board in December. Members are now requested to consider the implications to the recommendations made by the Joint Countywide Flooding Task Group, as detailed in Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Consider the financial and other implications for this Council in relation to the implementation of the recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1;
- 2.2 In the light of 2.1 above, consider whether to recommend that the Cabinet approve the Joint Countywide Flooding Scrutiny Report; and
- 2.3 Subject to the outcome of 2.2 above, recommend to the Cabinet that officers who form the current watercourses officer group be requested to revise its terms of reference and composition in order to address the implications for the District of any Cabinet approved recommendations contained within the Joint Countywide Scrutiny Flooding Report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Joint Meeting of the Overview Board and Scrutiny Board held on 2nd December 2008, Members discussed the findings and recommendations put forward by the Joint Countywide Flooding Task Group. Members will remember that several comments were made and questions raised which were answered at the meeting relating to a number of issues including: riparian ownership; enforcement and prosecution; recommendations coming out of the Pitt Review; flash flooding; drainage responsibility; flood defence measures; role of County Council, District Council and Parish Councils; responsibilities of other agencies such as Severn Trent, Environment Agency and Highways Agency; emergency planning and sustainability; clearing and maintaining ditches and culverts; role of elected Members; and Gold Command.
- 3.2 The Overview Board and Scrutiny Board agreed that, in relation to Gold Command, the Task Group (when it next meets) should be requested to investigate the possibility of elected Members being appointed as 'Gold' representatives to assist them in providing Community Leadership (and help cascade up to date information to local residents).
- 3.3 Members will also remember that the Overview Board and Scrutiny Board agreed that there is a need for effective communication between all agencies, as identified within the scrutiny investigation.
- 3.4 However, there was some concern regarding resource implications and such implications are not detailed within the joint scrutiny report. Therefore, it was agreed that the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects should be requested to investigate the financial and other implications before the report was considered by the Cabinet. It is hoped this will enable the Cabinet to make a more informed decision (due to be taken in March 2009). As requested, this information is provided within Appendix 1. Members are asked to consider this information and then decide whether or not to recommend that the Cabinet approves the Joint Countywide Flooding Scrutiny Report.
- 3.5 It is also proposed in this report that, if approved, the implications of the Joint Countywide Scrutiny Report be addressed through the watercourses officer group. This officer group has already given some consideration to flooding issues as it forms an integral aspect of the District's watercourses. However, it is proposed that the terms of reference and the composition of the watercourses officer group are revised to include flooding and the pursuit of the recommendations contained in the Joint Countywide Flooding Task Group.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The implications for this Council of the Joint Countywide Flooding Task Group Report are detailed in Appendix 1. The financial implications are referred to following each recommendation.
- 4.2 The majority of the recommendations would impact on officer time in development and implementation rather than direct costs.
- 4.3 A small number of recommendations would require further specialist research and development which would require consultancy support or the services of an additional drainage engineer for investigation. These are identified at Appendix 1.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The implications for this Council of the Joint Countywide Flooding Task Group Report are detailed in Appendix 1. The legal implications are referred to following each recommendation.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The attached report relates to Council Objectives 'Improvement' and 'Environment' and relates to the Council Priority 'Climate Change'.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The risks for the District vary according to the various implications and recommendations.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The customer implications vary according to the pursuit of each recommendation. However, there are various common themes around communication, preparation and advice directed towards customers. It is implicitly acknowledged that flooding cannot be prevented, but households and businesses can be given warning, advised on reducing the impact of flooding and informed of their responsibilities.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Vulnerable people can be more severely affected by the impact of flooding. The report contains reference to vulnerable people and the need to provide advice and support to these people in the case of flooding affecting their homes.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Implications for value for money are addressed following those recommendations where this is particularly relevant.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues – None
Personnel Implications – There are implications for training.
Governance/Performance Management – The role of the parish forum is particularly important in examining the implications for parishes of the report.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – None
Policy – None
Environmental – Flooding is a key environmental issue and links to climate change and land drainage matters in relation to care of watercourses and ditches.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holders	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Executive Director - Services	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Implications of recommendations for Bromsgrove District Council

Appendix 2 - Letter regarding Pitt Review on Flooding from Department for Communities and Local Government

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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