

Joint County and District Councils Scrutiny Task Group

A Joint County and District Councils Scrutiny Task Group, of the all the District Councils and led by Worcestershire County Council, met in 2007. In 2010 a review of the implementation of the agreed recommendations was carried out.

The local authorities, central government (Defra and OFWAT), insurance industry, Severn Trent Water, the Highways Agency, and the Local Resilience Forum have each provided an update on progress made on the agreed recommendations.

The Land Drainage Partnership has been set up. Over 380 projects have been completed to date to solve flooding problems. Severn Trent are now involved and three Districts have produced Multi Agency Flood Plans. There is a focus on helping the 20 - 30 parishes most affected by flooding. Communication is improving with 3 officers acting as points of contact on drainage issues, in conjunction with the Hub.

Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Authority have established 3 specialist water rescue units in Evesham, Hereford and Worcester and approved 6 additional first responder units to be strategically placed throughout the service area. The Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) has agreed to write to Government supporting the need for a statutory duty for Fire and Rescue Services to provide flood rescue.

Diversions routes are now in place on public roads and highways. Evacuation of the motorway is a last resort and the preference is that people remain in their cars. It is understood that the Highways Agency is exploring with voluntary sector organisations such as the Red Cross and Women's Volunteer Centre, possible ways of helping stranded motorists.

An enforcement protocol has been created so that each district should follow the same process in relation to ditch clearance. Some parishes were unaware that Districts could help with such work and it was acknowledged that the responsibilities for drainage between parishes and districts needs to be quantified in some areas.

The Task Group had supported the Pitt Review's recommendation 91 which required upper tier local authorities' scrutiny committees to have an annual summary of actions taken locally to manage flood risk. In future years it was suggested that a summary of actions taken locally to manage flood risk would be prepared by relevant officers working in that field and produced with input from partners. The summary could then be submitted to each authority's relevant scrutiny committee. Any operational or new issues could be fed in as they arose to individual officers in the county or district as appropriate.