

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET

GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE PITT REVIEW INTO FLOODING

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To outline implications for the council from the Government's response to the Review into the summer 2007 flooding.
- 1.2 To agree a way forward to meet the new responsibilities placed on the council

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 More than 700 properties in North Lincolnshire were affected by flooding in June 2007 and January 2008. The council responded to support communities and spent around £4m on helping to protect properties, repairing damage and reducing future flooding risks.
- 2.2 During June 2007 flooding hit many parts of the country. The Government commissioned an independent review into these floods. Sir Michael Pitt led this. Sir Michael published his findings into the causes and responses to the floods in June 2008.
- 2.3 The Government responded to the Pitt report on 17 December 2008. This has a number of implications for North Lincolnshire Council.
- 2.4 Sir Michael Pitt recommended that local authorities should have a local leadership role for flood risk management. The Government has agreed with this. Legislation to underpin this new role is planned. The Government intends to consult on a draft bill in the Spring.
- 2.5 This role is likely to involve ensuring that flood risk from all sources, including surface run-off, ground water and ordinary watercourses, is identified and managed as part of locally agreed partnerships. The Environment Agency will retain its national strategic role and will continue to take the lead in managing risk from coastal erosion and flooding from main rivers.
- 2.6 Local authorities will lead these new partnerships. The Government intends to introduce a new duty on all partners to co-operate. Councils will also be required to work with all parties to establish ownership of drainage and watercourses.
- 2.7 A review by North Lincolnshire Council into the lessons learned from the flooding and responses had already identified the need for a more

co-ordinated approach from a number of agencies if flood risk was to be minimised and communities supported during and after flooding.

2.8 The council has already carried out a number of actions that are in line with the Government's response to the Pitt Review. These include setting up a Flood Forum that brings together the key agencies involved in preventing and responding to flooding, mapping ownership of waterways and producing a flood risk map. These actions will need to be reviewed and formalised in light of any new legislation and the new duty for partners to co-operate.

2.9 The council has invested resources in the above work in this financial year. It is also developing a comprehensive flood plan to cover both the initial response and subsequent recovery phases. The community recovery part of the plan is based on work carried out by the Humber Local Resilience Forum.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 The Government intends to legislate to bring in the new roles for local authorities. The council will however have options on how these are undertaken.

3.2 The council could continue to work with the already established Flood Forum and build on its work mapping flood risk and watercourse ownership.

3.3 Alternatively the council could set up a new partnership structure to provide a local leadership role for flood risk management with partners.

4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

4.1 The Flood Forum is already well established and has partners from all the relevant agencies working together. This is in line with the Government's plans for managing flood risk. Membership and responsibilities will have to be reviewed to ensure they meet any new Government legislation. Much work mapping flood risk, watercourse and drainage ownership has already been carried out.

4.2 Introducing another partnership structure, when the Flood Forum is already in place and working well, would lead to extra work and could potentially damage the current good working relationships.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial.

5.1.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However funding for flood prevention work, and the council's local leadership role, will have to be considered as part of the council's budget for 2009/10.

5.2 Staffing.

5.2.1 The council will need to assess its technical capabilities to deliver a wide range of responsibilities in relation to flood risk management. This could have staffing implications.

6. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)**

6.1 Statutory

6.1.1 There are no statutory implications arising from this report.

6.2 Environmental and Other

6.2.1 None

7. **OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION.**

7.1 Local authorities, including North Lincolnshire Council, were consulted as part of the Pitt Review.

8. **RECOMMENDATIONS.**

8.1 That cabinet welcomes the new local leadership role for flood risk management for councils.

8.2 That the current Flood Forum is used as the partnership mechanism to enable the council to fulfil this role.

8.3 That the membership and terms of reference of the Flood Forum is reviewed to ensure it meets any new legislation.

8.4 That funding for flood management work is considered at the council's budget meeting in February 2009.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Pittwood House
Ashby Road
SCUNTHORPE
North Lincolnshire
DN16 1AB
Author: Simon Driver
Date: 23 December 2008

Background Papers used in the preparation of this report

The Pitt Review: Lessons learned from the 2007 floods
Government response to the Pitt Review