



**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EMERGENCY PLANNING UNIT**

Committee Report

Meeting : CIVIL CONTINGENCIES COMMITTEE : 6 JULY 2009

**Subject : NORTHUMBRIA LRF FLOOD PLAN, FLOODING DEBRIEF
REPORT AND FLOOD RELATED ISSUES**

Report of the Chief Emergency Planning Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to bring Members up to date with significant developments in relation to flooding, in particular the development of the Northumbria Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Multi-Agency Flood Emergency Response Plan, the LRF Debrief Report into the September 2008 floods which affected this area (particularly Morpeth), and Government progress on implementing some of the key recommendations arising from the Pitt Report.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Since the floods in 2007 which affected large parts of England and Wales, four detailed reports have been submitted to this Committee. These reports have covered:

i) the impacts of and the response to the 2007 floods and the mutual aid support offered by Tyne and Wear FRA and councils;

ii) the Interim Pitt report, and the subsequent LRF arrangements to address its fifteen urgent recommendations through the establishment of an LRF Flooding Task and Finish Group, and the Action Plan prepared by the EPU to support that process;

iii) the Final Pitt Report into the Floods of 2007 and LRF arrangements to address the 92 recommendations, including establishment of a further Environment Agency-led LRF Flood Plan Group to develop a multi agency LRF Flood Plan;

iv) the floods of September 2008 (which affected parts of Tyne and Wear but most significantly impacting upon Northumberland, especially Morpeth, Rothbury and Wooler); the mutual aid provided by Tyne and Wear to Northumberland councils; and the multi agency debrief scheduled to review the response to that event.

2.2 The Northumbria Community Risk Register (a specific requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004) identifies flooding as a significant risk.

3. LRF FLOOD PLAN

- 3.1 As a result of the recommendations of the Pitt Interim report into the Floods of 2007, DEFRA and the Cabinet Office wrote jointly to LRF Chairs concerning the need for Multi-Agency Flood Plans. As advised in a previous report to this committee, a Northumbria LRF Group was then established to develop a multi-agency Flood Plan. The Northumbria LRF Flood Plan Monitoring Group was established in September 2008, and chaired by a senior officer from the Environment Agency, with the Tyne & Wear Emergency Planning Unit carrying out the role of Secretariat. A range of relevant Category 1 and 2 Responders from the Local Resilience Forum are members of the group, including the 5 Tyne and Wear Councils and the Fire and Rescue Service.
- 3.2 The Group had agreed that there should be a single plan for Northumbria LRF area, with 6 Sections in part 2, based upon the six local authority areas covered by Northumbria LRF (ie Northumberland, North Tyneside, Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland). The aim of the LRF Multi-agency Flood Plan is to provide a mechanism to co-ordinate the multi-agency response to a flooding incident with severe impacts on one council area, or affecting more than one local authority area in the Northumbria LRF area.
- 3.3 In January, the draft plan was submitted as a work in progress for review to the Environment Agency. Several areas had been highlighted for further development, as was common across the country due to the developing guidance being issued by DEFRA; but the plan has been commended for its scope and approach. The plan is being further developed in accordance with the requested priority actions and guidance.
- 3.4. It should be noted that the plan will be one of three Flood Local Resilience Forum (LRF) plans prepared for the North East of England region. Should a flood emergency occur which affects more than one North East LRF area, the North East Regional Response Plan may be invoked to allow a region wide co-ordination of response.
- 3.5 As intended, the LRF Flood Plan Monitoring Group has now amalgamated with the Northumbria LRF Flood Task and Finish Group (i.e. the group tasked with addressing the Pitt Recommendations), to become the 'Northumbria LRF Flood Group'. The new group met on the 26th May 2009, and has produced a combined work programme for the coming year to finalise the LRF Multi Agency Flood Plan and to ensure that the remaining recommendations from the Pitt Report are actioned.

4. THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE FINAL PITT REPORT

- 4.1 On 25th June 2008, the Final Pitt Report entitled '*The Pitt Review: Learning Lessons from the 2007 Floods: Final Report*' which was published. Members will recall that Pitt made 92 recommendations covering:
- flood risk management (knowing when and where it may flood);
 - better planning and reducing the risk of flooding and its impact;

- emergency response;
- maintaining power and water supplies and protecting essential services;
- better advice to help people to protect their families and homes; and
- recovery.

- 4.2 The Government made an initial response to the launch, which was reported to this Committee on 8th September 2008. Since then, in December 2008, the Government has published its full formal response to the Pitt Report entitled '*The Government's Response to Sir Michael Pitt's Review of the Summer 2007 Flood*'. Annex 1 to this report contains Hilary Benn's accompanying speech.
- 4.3 As stated in 3.5 above, the Northumbria LRF Flood Group has subsumed the LRF Task and Finish Group, and will oversee the implementation of the recommendations that fall to the LRF as set out in the Pitt report.

5. NORTHUMBRIA LRF - SEPTEMBER 2008 FLOODING MULTI-AGENCY DEBRIEF REPORT

- 5.1 In September 2008, the heaviest rainfall for 50 years saw the parts of Northumbria being flooded; with Morpeth, Rothbury and Wooler being particularly badly hit. Parts of Tyne and Wear, particularly Newcastle and Gateshead, were also affected. Northumbria LRF subsequently commissioned an independent report into how the emergency response was handled, which was co-ordinated by Government Office – North East (GO-NE).
- 5.2 The report was informed by a multi agency debrief meeting held in November 2008, that used the agreed LRF Post Incident Debrief Protocol as a framework for discussions. The final report, launched at a press conference on Wednesday 22nd April 2008, contains 44 recommendations, which are listed in Annex 2 to this report.
- 5.3 The report provides a summary of the events which took place and the manner in which they were handled; examines the most and least successful aspects of the emergency response; and identifies potential areas of improvement to the response to future incidents. A full copy of the Debrief Report is publicly available on the GO-NE website.
- 5.4 The recommendations are currently being considered by the relevant organisations, including the LRF Flood Group, so that appropriate actions can be identified and undertaken.

6 RESERVOIRS

- 6.1 The Pitt Report identified Reservoir Safety as another area of concern, particularly the sparsity of information available to responders to enable them to plan for a dam breach. Sir Michael Pitt recommended that the government should provide LRF's with inundation maps to facilitate

planning for such events. In response, the government established the Reservoir Inundation Preparedness Project, that has since issued draft guidance and plan templates (both specific and generic), which includes a timetable for the review, maintenance and exercising of plans.

- 6.2 Responsibility for plan production will fall to the top tier local authority in which the dam is sited, who will be responsible for co-ordinating input from other LRF members. Delivery of the reservoir inundation maps (for all reservoirs over 25,000 cubic metres) is scheduled to take place between the July and December 2009; and this will be supported by a series of workshops for LRF's to be held over the summer. LRF's will also receive an explanation of the mapping process, further technical advice, and details as to the priority that should be given to each dam.

7. NATIONAL FLOOD EMERGENCY FRAMEWORK

- 7.1 One of the Government flood response initiatives announced by Hilary Benn is the establishment of a National Flood Emergency Framework (NFEF).
- 7.2 It will provide a frame work for emergency planning and response, and bring together information, guidance and key policies and act as a resource for all involved in flood emergency planning and response at national, regional and local levels. It will ensure that all relevant agencies deal with a serious actual or potential flooding event in a coherent way across the country.
- 7.3 The Secretary of State states that the NFEF will help ensure that all the organisations involved in responding to floods – including those responsible for national infrastructure – understand, and are fully prepared for, what they have to do.
- 7.4 An outline Framework has been published and consultation is ongoing across the country. A workshop on this issue was held in our region on the 17th March at Government Offices.
- 7.5 The 'Proposals for Consultation Document' issued in December 2008 states that research by the Government has led it to conclude that there are six work-streams that need to be developed. They are:
- The Meteorological Office and Environment Agency should develop new, formal arrangements to provide specific flood risk advice to local emergency responders and professional partners in the lead up to a potential flooding incident.
 - Flood emergency planning and response – what you can expect of the Government and its agencies in the event of a flooding emergency.
 - Health and social care in the event of a flooding emergency.
 - Developing definitive guidance on multi-agency planning for flooding of all types and at all necessary geographical levels.

- Arrangements for mutual aid in the event of predicted and/or actual flooding.
- A single gateway for, and an electronic compendium of, information, advice and guidance for flood emergency planners and responders.

7.6 The Government also states that costs of developing the NFEF which should be completed by June 2010, will be met by the Government and any net new burdens on local authorities would be funded in accordance with new burdens principles.

8. DRAFT FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT BILL

8.1 On 21 April 2009 the Government published the draft Flood and Water Management Bill for consultation. The Bill is, in part, a response to Sir Michael Pitt's report that had identified gaps in the way that flood risk was managed, particularly in relation to surface water flooding and on the need for a more risk based approach to reservoir safety.

8.2 The Bill addresses a range of flooding issues; measures in relation to surface water management, transposition of the Floods Directive requirements, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) adoption and maintenance measures, sewer micro-connections, critical infrastructure, information sharing, disaster recovery, flood event management. Its main benefits are intended to:

- deliver improved security, service and sustainability for people and their communities;
- make clear who is responsible for managing all sources of flood risk;
- protect essential water supplies by enabling water companies to control more non-essential uses of water during droughts;
- modernise the law for managing the safety of reservoirs;
- encourage more sustainable forms of drainage in new developments; and
- make it easier to resolve misconnections to sewers.

8.3 The Bill also addresses 'Future Water' which was announced by the Government In February 2008 as its water strategy for England including an integrated view of the importance water plays in society and the way Government will manage this.

8.4 The deadline for responses on the draft Bill is 24th July 2009. At its recent meeting in June 2009, the LRF agreed that local authorities should respond separately to this consultation. Following formal consultation and pre-legislative scrutiny in the summer, the Bill is likely to be introduced to Parliament in the 2009 – 2010 session.

8.5 The draft Bill and associated papers can be found on the Defra web-site.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 There continues to be significant progress and developments in relation to flooding, both locally and nationally.
- 9.2 The multi agency LRF Flood Plan Group has delivered a great deal of work in a short time scale to accommodate the Government imposed deadlines, and to develop arrangements should more flooding occur.
- 9.3 The independent multi agency Debrief Report into the September 2008 floods provides an excellent summary of events, examines the most and least successful aspects of the emergency response and identifies, through a series of recommendations, potential areas of improvement that should improve the response to future incidents.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Members are asked to:
 - endorse the Recommendations contained in Annex 2 to this report;
 - note the work of the Local Resilience Forum Flood Working Groups to further develop local arrangements to mitigate the effects of any future flood emergencies; and
 - continue to receive further reports on important national developments in relation to flooding and related issues.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Tyne and Wear Civil Contingencies Committee Report – ‘Morpeth Floods: Provision of Mutual Aid Support’ - 1 December 2008.
- Tyne and Wear Civil Contingencies Committee Report – ‘The Pitt Review: Learning Lessons from the 2007 Floods: Final Report’ - 8 September 2008
- Tyne and Wear Civil Contingencies Committee Report – ‘Flooding’ - 10 March 2008.
- Tyne and Wear Civil Contingencies Committee Report – ‘Flooding Incidents June/July 2007’ - 10 September 2007.
- The Government’s Response to Sir Michael Pitt’s ‘Review of the Summer 2007 Flood’
- A National Flood Emergency Framework – Proposals for Consultation December 2008

- Draft Flood and Water Management Bill – available from the Defra website <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/floodsandwaterbill.htm>
- Northumbria Local Resilience Forum Multi Agency Debrief Report 2008 – Severe Weather and Associated Flooding available on GONE website: http://www.go-ne.gov.uk/nestore/docs/prepforemer/090416_final_debrief.pdf

Copies of these documents are available in the Emergency Planning Unit.

Oral Ministerial Statement by Hilary Benn: Government's response to Sir Michael Pitt's Final report on the floods of summer 2007, 17 December 2008

With permission Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the Government's response to Sir Michael Pitt's final report on the floods of summer 2007.

Last weekend's flooding in the South West, in which two people sadly died, reminds us of the ever present risk we face, and of the importance of Sir Michael's comprehensive and impressive report.

In his 92 recommendations, published in June, Sir Michael identified a need:

- to clarify who is responsible for what;
- to ensure that the public have all the information and guidance they need;
- to work with essential services to assess risk and protect critical infrastructure;
- to have a clear recovery plan right from the start of any major emergency; and
- to establish the right legislative framework to tackle flooding.

I can tell the House that the Government's action plan being published today supports changes in response to all of his recommendations, but before setting out these changes I want to acknowledge the continuing effects of the flooding as a second Christmas approaches.

The fact that most people are now back home – thanks to a great deal of hard work – will be of little comfort to those families who are still out of their homes, or are living upstairs in them. Our thoughts are with them and their plight reminds us all just what a toll flooding takes on people's lives and emotions, and just how difficult it can be to get things going again. That's why - working with local authorities and the insurance industry - we will continue to do all we can to help. My Rt Hon Friend the Minister for Local Government announced last month further help for these families.

Mr Speaker, we have taken action in the 18 months since the 2007 floods.

The Environment Agency has spent £5 million on repairing defences that were damaged.

49 flood defence schemes have been completed, protecting 37,000 homes from Selby in Yorkshire to St Ives in Cornwall, and from West Bridgford in Nottingham to Worcester and Hexham, where newly built defences successfully protected the town from significant flooding in September this year.

Over 78,000 more people have now registered with the Environment Agency's telephone flood warning system. The total is now 280,000.

All local resilience forums have been briefed on critical national infrastructure in their areas.

And we have brought forward £20 million of flood defence spending to 2009/10. This will mean an earlier start on these schemes which, when completed, will protect over 27,000 homes from flooding and coastal erosion. In total, our £2.15 billion investment in flood defence over the three years to 2010-11 will protect an additional 145,000 homes across England.

The further steps I am announcing today draw both on the £34.5 million I set aside to implement Sir Michael's report, and on funding from other existing budgets.

We are creating a new National Flood Forecasting Centre, bringing together staff from the Environment Agency and the Met Office. This will start operating in April and will improve our ability to respond quickly by providing better information and more detailed warnings directly to emergency responders.

Having previously decided that the Environment Agency will take on a strategic overview for all forms of flooding, I am today announcing that local authorities will be responsible for ensuring that arrangements are in place to assess and manage local flood risk, from all sources, including surface water. In two-tier council areas this responsibility will rest with county councils, but we will encourage them to work closely with districts, Internal Drainage Boards and others. I am increasing funding to local authorities by £15 million to allow authorities where the risk is greatest to take on this new role straight away.

Part of this will be for the development of Surface Water Management Plans. I can announce that the first six local areas which have successfully bid for these funds are:

- Hull
- Gloucestershire
- Leeds
- Warrington
- Richmond upon Thames
- West Berkshire

I am establishing, in addition, a £5 million grant scheme, which local authorities can bid for, to help people to better protect their homes from the risk of flooding, for example through fitting flood boards and airbrick covers. This help will be available where it is not possible to provide protection through community level defences.

I am also providing funding to help the Environment Agency improve flood warnings, including moving to an opt-out system for ex-directory numbers. I am also putting money into improving our flood rescue capability, so we can make the best use of the skilled personnel and boats available.

The National Flood Framework will help ensure that all the organisations involved in responding to floods – including those responsible for critical national infrastructure – understand, and are fully prepared for, what they have to do.

An outline Framework has already been published and the consultation we are launching will enable us to complete the job. Meanwhile, organisations are already taking action to identify and protect infrastructure.

On reservoir safety, we are doubling funding for inundation maps for all the country's larger reservoirs, and we are providing support for Local Resilience Forums to prepare reservoir emergency plans.

We will be publishing a draft Floods and Water Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny in Spring next year to deal with those of Sir Michael's recommendations, including clearer roles and responsibilities and strengthening reservoir safety, which require primary legislation.

On Monday, I announced that we intend to transfer to water and sewerage companies, private sewers and lateral drains that connect to the public system.

This was welcomed by Sir Michael, and it will release many householders from a liability they often don't know they have until something goes wrong and they face a hefty bill to sort it out. The transfer will take place from April 2011.

Finally, we are establishing a Cabinet Committee to oversee work on flooding and Sir Michael will continue to be involved in reviewing progress.

Mr Speaker, the House knows that we can never eliminate the risk of flooding, particularly as climate change takes hold, but we are all determined to learn the lessons from what has happened and to be better prepared in future.

All of us – Government, local authorities, emergency and other services, local communities and individuals – must take flood risk seriously.

This report and the steps we are taking will help us to do so, and I commend them to the House.

Published: 17 December 2008

NORTHUMBRIA LRF - SEPTEMBER 2008 MULTI-AGENCY DEBRIEF REPORT 'SEVERE WEATHER AND ASSOCIATED FLOODING'.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Rec 1 The Meteorological Office and Environment Agency to review their joint arrangements for information gathering and message dissemination, with a view to achieving a more co-ordinated and joined up approach to the provision of timely and accurate advisory/warning messages to emergency responders.

Rec 2 Local Authorities in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear to review their internal procedures for occasions when Flood Watches are received from the Environment Agency in order to identify options for maximising the benefits of such early "heads up" messages; and to consider engaging with Environment Agency Duty Officers when such messages are received.

Rec 3 Local Authorities in Northumberland to review their internal and joint arrangements with their emergency planning unit, for the receipt and onward transmission of Environment Agency Flood Watches and Flood Warnings, particularly during out-of-office hours.

Rec 4 Emergency Services and all other Category 1 responders to review their emergency plans in order to: a) ensure that they incorporate arrangements for early multi agency dynamic risk assessments (including liaison with appropriate Category 2 responders and Voluntary Organisations), on receipt of Severe Weather Warnings and Flood Warnings b) ensure early multi agency evaluation of potential consequences and potential impact assessments.

Rec 5 Emergency Services and all other Category 1 responders to include the use of the Meteorological Office 'Emergency Support Website' in their emergency plans.

Rec 6 Emergency Services and all other Category 1 responders to incorporate, in their emergency plans, arrangements for achieving direct contact with the Meteorological Office PWS Advisor and/or Environment Monitoring and Response Centre (EMARC), in order to ensure provision of the best available advice on current and forecast weather.

Rec 7 Environment Agency to review the flood warning options for the reduction of flood risk to Rothbury

Rec 8 All organisations to work together to produce an agreed protocol for the declaration of a Major Incident

Rec 9 All Category 1 responders to support Northumbria Police in the development of guidance on 'Flooding and Severe Weather Gold Room Trigger Points,' with a view to common adoption of the agreed principles by all LRF partners.

Rec 10 All organisations to review their alerting and call-out procedures, at the earliest opportunity, in order to ensure that they have effective, robust and simple systems.

Rec 11 All organisations to formally adopt the principle that, upon the Declaration of a Major Incident, all LRF partners will be alerted as soon as possible, so that they can activate their plans (or as a minimum, go on standby).

Rec 12 All organisations to disseminate their alerting and call-out systems to the other LRF partners, and to ensure that they are regularly reviewed and updated.

Rec 13 All organisations to be pro-active in terms of offering assistance in the event of their not being alerted or called out for any reason; and to generally promote and encourage a spirit of "willingness to help."

Rec 14 Northumbria LRF partners to jointly plan and organise a public awareness campaign, capable for adaptation for each key location, incorporating: raising awareness of the Flood Warning system, promoting the use of the Environment Agency 'Floodline Direct' public warning system, promoting the Agency's advisory material for householders and businesses.

Rec 15 Northumbria LRF to maintain close working relationships with the media to ensure that the plans of all partner organisations contain clear protocols for the dissemination of timely and co-ordinated incident information and advice.

Rec 16 All organisations to ensure that, so far as possible, their emergency plans- particularly for Warning and Informing the public, contain operational procedures and systems which identify, recognise and allow for vulnerable members of the community, particularly the old, young and disabled; and that those emergency plans take account of properties identified to be at risk

Rec 17 Northumbria Police to lead on the development and dissemination of LRF Guidance, to be agreed in consultation with LRF partners, for the establishment, structure, style and membership of Gold level/Strategic Co-ordinating meetings.

Rec 18 All organisations to encourage, promote and maintain effective working relationships within the LRF and its associated sub-groups, particularly at senior management levels.

Rec 19 All organisations to review their internal systems, operational response plans and business continuity arrangements to ensure that provision is made for 24/7 cover at appropriate levels of seniority if/when required (particularly for events of a protracted period).

Rec 20 Northumbria Police to raise awareness of the most likely locations to be used for Gold and Silver commands (recognising the role of dynamic risk assessment in the selection process).

Rec 21 All organisations to review and test IT and communications functions at locations which could conceivably be used for Gold and Silver commands.

Rec 22 Northumbria LRF to undertake a structured programme of work designed to raise the awareness and understanding of all partners, particularly the newly created bodies following local government reorganisation in 2009, in relation to the roles, capabilities and capacity of other responder agencies.

Rec 23 All organisations to consider, with due care and flexibility, ways in which they can maximise their potential for providing support in the event of an emergency

Rec 24 All organisations to review their internal response arrangements for weekends and out-of-office hours, in terms of staffing/communications/IT provision, with a view to identifying improvements for the receipt and sharing of emergency messages and information.

Rec 25 The Police to work closely with the other emergency services, the local authority(s), and the Environment Agency to review procedures for the establishment of multi agency Forward Control Points, and to consider jointly the identification of pre-determined FCPs at vulnerable locations such as Morpeth and Ponteland. These features to be included in future plans.

Rec 26 The Local Authority(s) and Police to work closely together, and consult other partners, on the production of an LRF Traffic Management Emergency Response Plan which will identify options for the movement of traffic on passable

routes, provision of traffic signage etc in order to improve multi agency response movement in and around vulnerable areas of Northumbria.

Rec 27 The Local Authority(s), Police and other partners to fully commit to the agreed LRF Traffic Management Emergency Response Plan and to ensure that their own plans include suitably robust arrangements for the early, efficient deployment of vehicles and drivers.

Rec 28 All Cat 1 and 2 responders to consider ways in which the attention of the public can be drawn to the potential dangers of “sightseeing” at or near to the scene of emergency operations – in order to reduce

- a) the threat to public safety
- b) the requirement for crowd control measures and
- c) potential for interference with the effectiveness of the emergency response.

Rec 29 The Local Authority(s) to review their policy and operational arrangements for the co-ordinated provision of sandbags.

Rec 30 Local Authority(s) to review the Rest Centre Plan database of key holders, caretakers, centre managers etc to ensure that systems for the rapid opening of premises during weekends and out – of office/school hours are robust and up to date.

Rec 31 Local Authority(s) to review the Service Level Agreement and/or contractual agreements with suppliers and potential suppliers (supermarkets and other retail outlets) of bedding, clothing, groceries, sanitary products etc..

Rec 32 All Local Authority(s) to review, and consider the further development of, mutual aid protocols and agreements to ensure that all available Council resources in the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear areas are always maximised to their full potential in the event of an emergency in Northumbria.

Rec 33 All Cat 1 and 2 responders to consider the inclusion, within their emergency plans, of appropriately skilled staff who could be called upon to undertake the following roles on an emergency “call out” basis:

- a) media liaison, and
- b) creation of emergency micro web sites

Rec 34 All Cat 1 and 2 responders to consider the creation of a reference library or “bank” of pre-determined and agreed (at LRF) generic media statements which could be adapted and subsequently issued for early release to the media

and other outlets such as the North East Information Line (NEIL) – for a range of emergency scenarios.

Rec 35 LRF to identify and consider methods of supplementing the NEIL system in order to improve public access to information and advice – for example through the publication of new emergency contact numbers capable of being speedily set up during a crisis.

Rec 36 LRF to conduct a review of processes for media monitoring during crises – to include the provision of radios and television sets at key locations such as Rest Centres.

Rec 37 LRF to continue to work closely with representatives of the media, through the Regional Media Emergency Forum (RMEF), in order to progress the development of effective plans, protocols and best practice.

Rec 38 All Cat 1 and 2 responders to continue to review their critical business Infrastructure.

Rec 39 All Cat 1 and 2 responders to continue to review their business continuity plans in order to ensure that key services to the public can be maintained and critical emergency response functions can be delivered, during crises.

Rec 40 The Local Authority(s) to work closely with business forums to review their current arrangements for the promotion of business continuity within the private/commercial sector, in order to identify areas where the experience of the September Floods may present new opportunities for engaging businesses in this topic.

Rec 41 The LRF to review its annual training and exercising programme in order to ensure that it includes provision for a multi agency Flood Exercise at the earliest opportunity

Rec 42 The LRF to ensure that such an exercise incorporates the lessons learned from the September 2008 floods and includes all aspects of response from transmission and receipt of Severe Weather/Flood messages to the 'handover' to recovery activities.

Rec 43 The LRF to ensure that such an exercise takes place as soon as possible following the re-organisation of local government and the creation of the new Northumberland County Council, in order to encourage public confidence, and to

reflect the significance of Flooding as a High Risk in the Community Risk Register.

Rec 44 The LRF to ensure that such an exercise includes within its scenario, not only the most vulnerable locations such as Morpeth, Rothbury and Ponteland, but also the outlying areas and the urban areas of Tyne and Wear.