

REPORT OF THE DRAFT PRELIMINARY FLOODRISK ASSESSMENT

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive.

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs Committee of findings of the Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) for Sunderland. A draft copy was submitted to the Environment Agency on 22 June 2011 to meet regulatory deadlines. The Environment Agency will be informed in due course of any changes required to the draft PFRA following its consideration by Members.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Over the last few years, many damaging floods have occurred in the United Kingdom and Europe which resulted in the EU Floods Directive (Directive 2007/60/EC).
- 2.2 In England and Wales, the Pitt Review (2007) set out a series of recommendations on how the country should respond to flooding (at a national, regional and local perspective).
- 2.3 In taking the recommendations forward from the Pitt Review, the Council established a multi-disciplined Pitt Review Working Group and continues to work on a wider regional basis with appropriate partners. Attached at Annex 1 is progress against those relevant actions.
- 2.4 In addition, new national planning policies imposed more stringent requirements on local planning authorities to take flood risk issues into account in discharging their statutory planning duties. Consequently, the City Council adopted the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) in July 2010 to inform both the emerging Local Development Framework and the determination of day to day planning applications.

3.0 THE PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT – OUTLINE

- 3.1 The Flood Risk Regulations (2009) and the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) have now come into affect thereby transposing the EU Directive into domestic law. These confer new duties and responsibilities for local authorities in planning for, and delivering local flood risk management. Unitary authorities, including Sunderland City Council, are now designated as Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and are responsible for local flood risk management. This covers flooding from surface water, groundwater, ordinary watercourses and canals. The Environment Agency retains responsibility for flooding from the sea, from main rivers and has a strategic overview of flood risk.

3.2 As LLFA, the City Council is therefore required to implement the requirements of the European Floods Directive (which seeks to provide a consistent approach to managing flood risk across Europe). The approach consists of a six year cycle of planning based on a four stage process of :

Stage 1 ~ Undertaking a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) (by 22 June 2011)

Stage 2 ~ Identifying *Flood Risk Areas* where the risk of flooding is significant (by 22 June 2011)

Stage 3 ~ Preparing flood hazard and risk maps for the *Flood Risk Areas* (by June 2013)

Stage 4 ~ Preparing flood risk management plans for the *Flood Risk Areas* (by June 2015).

3.3 Completion of the PFRA is therefore the first stage of the cycle outlined above. It provides a high level screening exercise involving the collection of information on past and future (potential) floods. The PFRA is then used to determine whether the authority contains areas of most significant flood risk classed as 'Flood Risk Areas' (stage 2).

3.4 DEFRA and the Environment Agency have defined Flood Risk Areas as containing 'clusters' of over 30,000 people predicted to be vulnerable from surface water flooding. The Environment Agency has used DEFRA and nationally available evidence to identify 10 indicative Flood Risk Areas across England (the most northerly being Hull). Completion of PFRAs is therefore a technical exercise required by the Environment Agency to test and ratify its selection of its proposed 10 Flood Risk Areas. By comparison, only three 'Flood Risk Areas' have been identified in the whole of France.

3.5 Where a Flood Risk Area is confirmed through the PFRA process, the LLFA is required to complete Stages 3 and 4 as outlined above.

3.6 LLFAs had to submit their draft PFRAs to the Environment Agency by 22 June 2011. The Environment Agency further requests that the PFRAs are considered by the relevant committee delegated to deal with flood risk issues by 19 August 2011. The Environment Agency will then review, collate and publish the required reports by December 2011, which will then be submitted to the European Commission.

3.7 The PFRA differs significantly from the SFRA in so far as :

- The PFRA is primarily limited to assessing local sources of flooding such as from surface water, groundwater, ordinary watercourses and canals. It should however consider the interaction between these local flooding sources and those of main rivers, the sea and reservoirs. The SFRA, by comparison considers all potential flooding sources and is therefore a major information source towards completing the PFRAs;

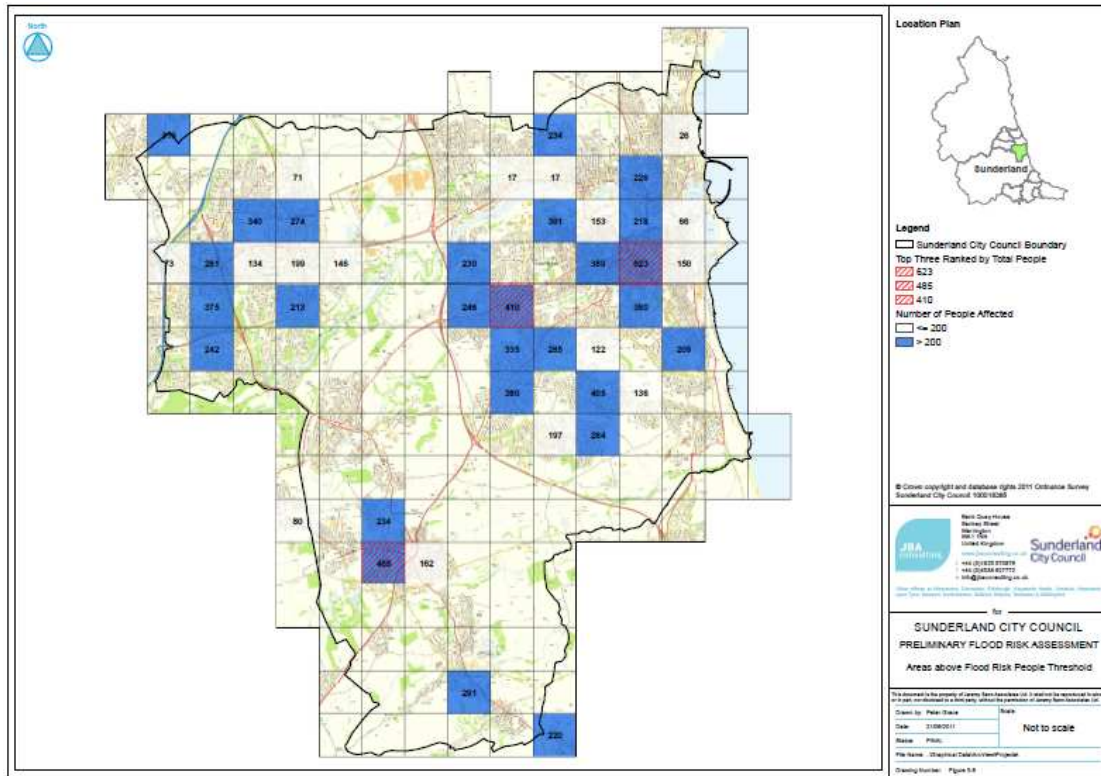
- The PFRA is required to largely consider the extent of **existing** properties that are at risk from flooding from local sources;
 - The SFRA is a largely a technical document to consider **future** development by steering it away from those areas that are at the highest risks of flooding, and ensuring that land can be developed in a safe, cost effective and sustainable manner.
- 3.7 A fundamental similarity between the SFRA and PFRA is that as part of modelling potential future flood risk, both assessments do not account for actual flood defence works or mitigation measures that are installed or operational.

4.0 THE SUNDERLAND PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 Due to limited in-house expertise in this subject area, specialist consultants, JBA Consulting, were appointed to complete the work on behalf of the City Council. JBA Consulting previously prepared the city's Strategic Flood Assessment and were therefore fully aware of the City's flood risk issues.
- 4.2 Sunderland's Draft PFRA has been undertaken in accordance with the national guidance and was submitted to the Environment Agency by 22nd June 2011 deadline. A copy of the Draft PFRA is available for inspection from Neil Cole, (Lead Policy Officer for Planning) or can be viewed on-line at <http://mor-maweb-01/cm5/Meetings/tabid/73/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/410/Meeting/7290/Committee/1479/Default.aspx>, (Entitled 07a – Sunderland Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment FINAL). The PFRA provides up to date information of areas that are potentially at risk from flooding. In accordance with the guidance, the PFRA has collated data from the Environment Agency's own flood risk mapping datasets (which are reviewed regularly) and the Council's SFRA. The PFRA therefore adds little to the information that is already known about flood risk in the city. Given that the majority of the data that informed the PFRA is already in the public domain through the internet and other sources, it can also be accessed by the city's residents, external agencies and even insurance companies.
- 4.3 The Draft PFRA confirms that there are no Flood Risk Areas within the City, although two small clusters in Washington and Sunderland are identified which could affect up to 3,400 and 8,100 people respectively from surface water and ordinary watercourse flooding (shown at Figure 1). Since neither cluster exceeds the national threshold of 30,000 people, these do not fall within the definition of Flood Risk Areas.
- 4.4 Therefore, by not having a Flood Risk Area covering Sunderland, stages 3 and 4 of the Regulations are not triggered. This means that the Council is not required to produce flood hazard maps, flood risk maps and flood risk management plans for the areas affected.
- 4.5 However, in adopting such a precautionary stance to discounting existing flood defence measures, the PFRA estimates that some

22,500 properties including the two aforementioned clusters, across the city may be at risk during a 1 in 200 year rainfall event¹. This represents an extremely low risk but one which requires a proportionate response by the Council through its responsibility to undertake a Local Flood Management Strategy as outlined in Section 5.

Figure 1 – Areas above the Flood Risk People Threshold (Source Draft Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment, June 2010).



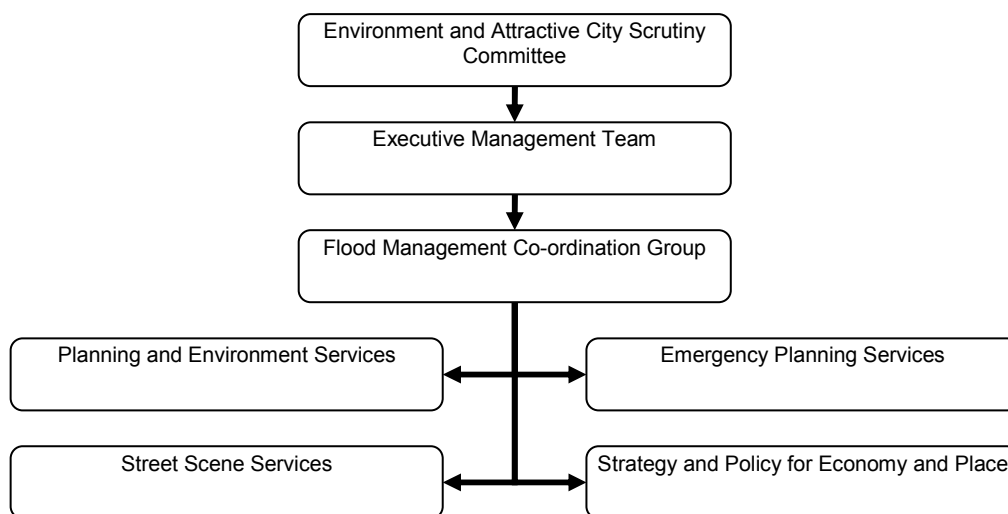
5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Given the draft PFRA concludes there are no Flood Risk Areas within Sunderland, there is no need to meet the requirements of Stages 3 and 4 of the Flood Risk Regulations.
- 5.2 Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the City Council will however be required to produce a 'Local Flood Management Strategy'. Its key objective will be set out how the City Council will manage the identified local flood risks within the city as identified within the PFRA.
- 5.3 The Act sets out the minimum that a Local Flood Management Strategy must contain, which includes : -
 - Setting out its objectives for managing flood risk
 - Setting out how measures proposed will meet the objectives
 - Identifying how and when measures are expected to be implemented

¹ In effect, 1 in 200 year rainfall event equates to there being a 0.5% chance of flooding in any one year.

- Assessing the costs and benefits and how measures will be paid for
 - Assessing local flood risk for the purpose of the strategy
 - How and when the strategy will be reviewed
 - How the strategy contributes to wider environmental objectives
- 5.4 The LLFA is required to consult on the strategy with risk management authorities and the public. Local partnerships between other risk management authorities (including Northumbrian Water, the Environment Agency and neighbouring LLFAs) will be critical to ensure it is fully integrated with flood management works planned by the Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water.
- 5.5 The City Council will need to consider the full range of measures consistent with a risk management approach in developing and implementing the Local Flood Management Strategy. For example, major capital works may not necessarily be the required solution, and where further investigation reveals that existing flood measures are adequate to minimise those flood risks, then no further action would be required.
- 5.6 The Government has made financial provision for the additional duties imposed on the LLFAs through the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, through additional Area Based Grant allocations. Sunderland has received £120,600 for 2011/12 and is due to receive £158,100 in 2012/13 and thereafter.
- 5.7 It should be noted that there are to be wider roles and responsibilities that will fall on LLFAs as a consequence of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Officers are considering how these responsibilities would be distributed across the Council and these will be presented to Members this summer outlining the responsibilities in detail, as well as proposing how this should be taken forward to ensure the appropriate level of action is taken to address those identified areas of higher risk. It should be noted that for the purposes of completing the PFRA, a draft management structure was inserted as below (albeit heavily caveated to clarify that these arrangements were still subject to fuller consideration and confirmation) :

Figure 2 ~ Draft Flood Management Group Structure



6.0 CONSULTATION

6.1 Consultation on the draft PFRA has been carried out with all relevant Council Services, including Commercial and Corporate Services, City Services (Street Scene Services), Property Services (Land and Property and Emergency Planning), Planning and Environment, and comments have been included into the report. In addition, the Environment Agency has been involved fully in preparation of the PFRA and likewise, their comments have been included.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Committee is requested to:

- i) Endorse the officer comments as detailed within this report and make any comments considered appropriate;
- ii) Authorise officers to forward a copy of this report together with any further comments to the Environment Agency.

8.0 RELEVANT CONSULTATIONS/ CONSIDERATIONS

- a) **Financial Implications** – External funding from DEFRA has covered the cost of the preparation of the PFRA. There are no direct financial implications arising from the PFRA itself. There will be future costs associated with the implementation of the new duties arising from the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. This will be considered by a future report that will be presented to this Committee.
- b) **Legal Implications** – Completion of the PFRA is a statutory requirement as set by the Flood Risk Regulations (2009) and Sunderland's Draft PFRA has been prepared in accordance with the appropriate national guidance.
- c) **Policy Implications** - The Draft PFRA will be used to inform the development of Sunderland's Local Flood Management Strategy as outlined in Section 5 of this Report.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS : Sunderland City Council Draft Preliminary Flood
Risk Assessment**

Contact Officer: Neil Cole (0191) 561 1574

neil.cole@sunderland.gov.uk

Annex 1 ~ Update on Local Authority Pitt Recommendations

Rec	Description	Update	Status
13	Local Authorities, in discharging their responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to promote business continuity, should encourage the take-up of property flood resistance and resilience by businesses.	<p>Flood resistance and resilience has been added to the strategy of the Council's Business Continuity Promotion Duty.</p> <p>Work is also underway through the LRF to further enhance the response to this recommendation.</p> <p>Local Authorities will be working with the EA to raise awareness of flooding to communities and those defined as at risk. The EA is also expanding its Floodwarnings Direct.</p>	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
14	Local authorities should lead on the management of local flood risk, with the support of the relevant organisations.	<p>The review of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been supported by organisations including the EA, Northumbrian Water and Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.</p> <p>The Council currently has a Flood Plan in and sits alongside the Northumbria LRF Flood Plan.</p>	Ongoing
15	Local authorities should positively tackle local problems of flooding by working with all relevant parties, establishing ownership and legal responsibility.	Work is ongoing to address flash flooding/highways drainage across the City.	Ongoing
16	Local authorities should collate and map the main flood risk management and drainage assets (over and underground), including a record of their ownership and condition.	Work is ongoing and will be completed to meet the standards set through the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.	Ongoing
17	All relevant organisations should have a duty	Relevant organisations have been and continue to be	Ongoing

Rec	Description	Update	Status
	to share information and cooperate with local authorities and the Environment Agency to facilitate the management of flood risk.	identified through the review of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the Environment Theme Group of the LRF.	
18	Local Surface Water Management Plans, as set out under PPS25 and coordinated by local authorities, should provide the basis for managing all local flood risk.	Work ongoing	Ongoing
19	Local authorities should assess and, if appropriate, enhance their technical capabilities to deliver a wide range of responsibilities in relation to local flood risk management.	Continuous assessment to ensure that the most appropriate capabilities are available.	Ongoing
38	Local authorities should establish mutual aid agreements in accordance with the guidance currently being prepared by the Local Government Association and the Cabinet Office.	The Council is part of the mutual aid agreement for Northumbria LRF, which is included as an example of good practice in the LGA/Cabinet Office guidance.	Completed
41	Upper tier local authorities should be the lead responders in relation to multi-agency planning for severe weather emergencies at the local level and for triggering multi-agency arrangements in response to severe weather warnings and local impact assessments.	Severe weather warnings are monitored and circulated through the Council's 24/7 City Alarm and Emergency Centre. Agreement has been made for Local Authorities to trigger Major Incidents and activate Gold arrangements in Northumbria LRF for the response to flooding.	Completed
66	Local authority contact centres should take the lead in dealing with general enquiries from the public during and after major flooding, redirecting calls to other organisations when appropriate.	An incident information line has been established for staff and a notification service for the public is in place through the communications team and customer contact centre.	Ongoing

Rec	Description	Update	Status
68	Council leaders and chief executives should play a prominent role in public reassurance and advice through the local media during a flooding emergency, as part of a coordinated effort overseen by Gold Commanders	The Council's Emergency Response Plan and Emergency Media Plan identify the Leader and Chief Executive as being the leads to liaise with the public through the media in all major emergencies.	Completed
81	There should be an agreed framework, including definitions and timescales, for local central recovery reporting.	The Council's Recovery Plan in place and is agreed local and regional partner agencies. Agreements and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis.	Ongoing
82	Following major flooding events, the Government should publish monthly summaries of the progress of the recovery phase, including the numbers of households still displaced from all or part of their homes.	Arrangements are already in place for reporting to Central Government through the Local Resilience Forum.	Completed
90	All upper tier local authorities should establish Oversight and Scrutiny Committees to review work by public sector bodies and essential service providers in order to manage flood risk, underpinned by a legal requirement to cooperate.	A report to Scrutiny to establish this recommendation is underway. Once agreed, a timetable for future reporting will be developed.	Completed
91	Each Oversight and Scrutiny Committee should prepare an annual summary of actions taken locally to manage flood risk and implement this Review, and these reports should be public and reviewed by Government Offices and the Environment Agency.	As '90' above	Completed