

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF PITT REVIEW ON FLOODING TASK AND FINISH PANEL  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2009  
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING  
AT 7.30 - 8.47 PM**

**Members Present:** Mrs A Grigg (Vice Chairman of Council) (Chairman), , Mrs R Brookes and B Rolfe (Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder)

**Other members present:**

**Apologies for Absence:** K Angold-Stephens, G Pritchard and Mrs E Webster

**Officers Present** K Durrani (Assistant Director (Engineering Services)), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), S Stranders (Principal Team Leader) and P Charman (Joint Emergency Planning Officer)

**5. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

It was reported that Councillor Mrs R Brookes was substituting for Councillor K Angold-Stephens.

**6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

That the notes of the last meeting of the Panel held on 20 July 2009 be agreed.

**8. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

(1) The Panel reviewed the Terms of Reference. They noted some anomalies and made the following changes:

- That the current item 2 be deleted and replaced with: "That the Task and Finish Panel respond to the Flood and Water Management Bill consultation."
- That item 5 had the words "including flood risk assets within the District Public Infrastructure and residential properties" added to the end after "...forms of flooding..".
- That the following sentence in item 7 be deleted: "Essex County Council have not, so far, indicated the likely split of responsibilities between County and Districts but it is reasonable to assume that Districts will have a role to play in implementing the recommendations, specially a District like EFDC which takes flood risk management seriously."
- That the word 'this' be replace with 'the' in the last sentence of item 7.

- Under Aims and Objectives, the second to last paragraph should read “the Budget Process of 2010/11”.
- That officers consult with the finance section to establish if the Panel should put an interim bid in for next years budget round.

(2) On consideration, the Panel decided that they would prefer a 7.30 start time for their meetings.

## **9. PRESENTATION ON THE PITT REVIEW**

The Assistant Director Technical Services, Kim Durrani, took the Panel through the impact of the Pitt Review on the Council. He noted that the panel had jumped ahead of the process by responding to the Flood and Water Management Bill at their first meeting.

The Bill was devised to try and manage and/or control local flooding and heavy rainfall which resulted in the 2007 floodings. It was estimated that in the United Kingdom during the July 2007 flooding event, 40% of flooding was due to fluvial (fluvial covers ditches, streams and rivers) and 60% to surface water flooding. Consequently the government asked for a review from Sir Michael Pitt; some of the recommendations from which are being added to the Flood and Water Bill. The Bill seeks to address all forms of flooding as in the past efforts were focused on dealing with only fluvial and coastal flooding.

Councillor Mrs Brookes asked for clarification as to what was a ‘1:100’ risk. This is complex; an extreme flood event is often categorised as having a probability of occurrence of greater than 1 in 100 years. This is a way of expressing flooding probability and means that if there is a 1 in 100 chance of flooding in any given year, this can also be described as having a 1 per cent chance of flooding each year. However, if a flood occurs, it does not mean another flood will not occur for 99 years. A 1 in 100 year flood should more correctly be termed a flood with a 1% probability in any given year.

National Modelling indicates 1900 properties are at ‘significant risk of flooding’ in the Epping Forest District. EFDC with their local knowledge estimated that 823 properties were at risk from ordinary water courses and 1882 properties at risk from rivers and other watercourses.

The Pitt Review recommends that the Environmental Agency should have overall control over all flooding with County or Unitary Councils acting as Lead Authorities. As EFDC has gained detailed local knowledge over the years; it might not be wise to leave it all to County or Regional level.

Councillor Mrs Grigg noted that over the years, a lot of flood defences had been constructed in the district and the council had built up a lot of expertise in the field.

Implementing the current recommendations by Pitt and the Bill would also give County the responsibility for flash flooding and emergency response, officers thought that that a local response would be better and quicker to mobilise. But not every district would have this ability.

The Government had given local authorities a steer, saying that “implementing Pitt doesn’t need to wait for the Bill”.

Officers highlighted some of the pertinent recommendations made by the Pitt Review:

- Officers accepted recommendation 14 that local authorities should lead on the management of local flood risk.
- Recommendation 15 entailed a lot of work especially in establishing ownership and legal responsibility.
- Recommendation 16 required maps and a flood risk register which was a massive logistical task. The district had two major river systems and over a thousand miles of culverts, ditches etc. Officers are looking to County to lead on this; they would help with local knowledge.
- Recommendation 17 – noted that the utility companies will be required to share information local authorities and other bodies but it is currently considered that this may prove difficult to obtain.
- Recommendation 18 – Local Surface Water Management Plan – the principle behind and the introduction of the plan was welcomed, but how would it be funded, who would look after it once completed, and who would update it? The starting point would be EFDCs local knowledge. There was a need for a standardised county wide system that could be contributed to and used when needed. Resources from the government would be needed.
- Recommendation 19 – for local authorities to assess and enhance technical capabilities – this would need clarifying and further resources.
- Recommendation 20 - which organisations should be responsible for ownership and maintenance of drainage systems? Officers would like to see more firm local agreements in place.

The government was asking for a very complex system for the surface water management plan (SWMP) as there needed to be an ability to share information across various organisations. Was the Council a tier 1 or a tier 2 authority in this? EFDC could work with County or the County could pass resources on to the district so that it could manage it. Also, how far is the modelling work to be taken; in theory millions could be spent on it.

The SWMP allied with a sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) was very ambitious. Conditions could be added to new building developments so they could add systems to collect and hold back rainwater, so that it would not cause flooding. Nationally this is not happening at present. The Pitt Review recommended that local authorities adopt these systems. EFDC would like to do it locally as we have the planning authority, although we would need finance for this; such as section 106 agreements. It would depend on the outcome of the consultation and what the County's view was on this.

The government was asking for substantive data collection to be carried out which officers agreed with. It needed to be collected and shared with County.

Councillor Mrs Brookes asked what was 'Gold Command', as it was referred to in the recommendations. Mr Charman, the Joint Emergency Planning Officer, said it was the national system for responders to be headed up by the Police that would be set up at County Hall to handle emergency situations. There was also Silver and Bronze for lower levels of emergency. However it was thought that establishing an HQ at Chelmsford was impractical for local level responses.

In summary the Panel noted that flooding was an issue for EFDC; that officers were in broad support of the Pitt Recommendations; EFDC currently offers an out of hours emergency response to flooding and needed to be continued; some limited

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) data and systems are already in place; to proactively implement PPS 25 (Planning Policy Statement 25 – development and flood risk); and develop relationships with the EA and other professional partners.

Councillor Mrs Grigg commented that as there were planning applications going through at present when could the council start asking for planning obligations or was new legislation needed? Mr Durrani replied that currently there is an officer looking at applications and if needed would ask for a planning condition to be added. Once the application had been built then the condition would be deemed to have been discharged. It would then be up to the management to look after these structures. Officers would like to see an enforcement power to make people look after the structures once built. The Pitt Review said local authorities should adopt and maintain these structures. It said the adopting body should be at County level, but potentially it may be better if it was done at district level.

The next moves for the council was to engage with County and the Environment Agency; establish what responsibility would rest with EFDC; consider the extension of out of hours emergency responses; establish the amount of work required for a GIS database; and to enter into joined up working agreements with outside organisations.

Councillor Rolf commented that no one seemed to be addressing the fact that we are increasingly building on flood plains. Mr Durrani agreed, saying that 10% of properties in England are built on flood plains and 11% of new homes since October 2000 were built on flood plains. All of Rochford District was built on a flood plain so it would be difficult to prevent anyone from building there. Councils could ask that if some of the flood plain is built on, they could ask that an equal amount of land be restored as flood plain elsewhere.

Councillor Mrs Grigg asked if officers knew of any other district councils with the comparable level of expertise as we have. Mr Durrani said that a number of district councils have some expertise in this area. Officers needed to know if County are in a position to work with district and how they are to handle the financial resources.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That EFDC continue to engage with Essex County Council and the Environmental Agency;
- (2) That Officers establish with Essex County Council the potential of responsibility that could/would rest with EFDC;
- (3) That officers continue the extension of the out of hours emergency response to flooding by seeking appropriate funding;
- (4) That the scale of work be established for an extended Geographical Information System (GIS); and
- (5) That joined up working procedures continue to be explored with North East Thames Surface Water Alliance and the Essex Land Drainage Working Partnership.

**10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was raised.

**11. FUTURE MEETING**

The Panel decided to arrange another meeting either on 10<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at 7.30pm. The Democratic Services Officer to liaise with members to establish a viable date.

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# Pitt Review Task & Finish Panel

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009

Kim Durrani and Susan Stranders  
(Number of slides 12, approx 15 minutes)

This is what it is all about





## Flood Risk Management - Overview



- Focus on fluvial & coastal
  - EA website shows 1 in 100 & 1000 risk
  - July 2007: 40% fluvial & 60% Surface Water
  - Pitt Review
  - Holistic approach to flood risk management
  - Data: availability, gathering, transfer & modelling
  - Floods & Water Bill Consultation
- National modelling indicates within Epping Forest District there are **1900** properties at 'significant' risk of flooding.
- EFDC's own assessment from GIS mapping of historical flooding events estimate: **823** properties at risk from Ordinary Water courses (fluvial) and **1882** properties at risk from rivers and other watercourses (fluvial).

# Future Roles and Responsibilities



- **EA - overview of all flooding**
- **County/Unitary/(Districts etc ?) – local lead for surface water flooding**
  
- **EA – main river, sea and coastal**
- **County/Unitary Authorities – surface water and ground water**
- **District/Unitary Authorities/Internal Drainage Boards – ordinary water courses**

## Pitt Recommendations – Local Government

**Gov steer = ‘implementing Pitt doesn’t need to wait for the Bill’**



- RECOMMENDATION 14: Local authorities should **lead** on the management of **local flood risk**
- RECOMMENDATION 15: Local authorities should **positively tackle local problems** of flooding by working with all **relevant parties**, establishing ownership and legal responsibility.
- RECOMMENDATION 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.
- RECOMMENDATION 17: All relevant organisations (Utilities) should have a duty to **share information** and cooperate with **local authorities** and the Environment Agency to facilitate the management of flood risk.

## Pitt Recommendations – Local Government Gov steer = ‘implementing Pitt doesn’t need wait for the Bill’



- RECOMMENDATION 18: Local **Surface Water Management Plans** to be **coordinated** by **local authorities**, should provide the basis for managing all local flood risk (Funding?).
- RECOMMENDATION 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 (Resources?).
- RECOMMENDATION 20: The Government should resolve the issue of which organisations should be responsible for the ownership and maintenance of sustainable drainage systems (Local Agreements?).

## Delivery of Recommendations

- **Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP)**

*'is a framework through which key local partners with responsibility for surface water and drainage in their area work together to understand the causes of surface water flooding and agree the most cost effective way of managing surface water flood risk'.*

- **Ability to share information across organisations.**
- **Council to lead – Tier 1 or Tier 2.**
- **Modelling – extent of?**



## Delivery of Recommendations

- **Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP)**  
**Holistic view on flooding (fluvial, pluvial, sewerage, highway drainage & ground water).**
- **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)**
  - *Right to connect to sewers will be conditional*
  - *LAs to adopt and maintain SUDS*
  - *SUDS national standards*
  - *National sewer standards*



## Data collection

- Surveys/Asset Register/Geographical Information System (GIS) based.
- Obtain data from multiple organisations securely.
- Promote & stimulate discussion with all stakeholders.



## Pitt Recommendations - Emergency planning



- RECOMMENDATION 36: **The Environment Agency** should make relevant flood visualisation **data**, available **online** to Gold and Silver Commands.
- RECOMMENDATION 41: **Upper tier local authorities** should be the **lead responders** in relation to **multi agency planning** for severe weather emergencies
- RECOMMENDATION 42: Where a **Gold Command** is established for **severe weather events**, the **police**, unless agreed otherwise locally, should convene and lead the **multi-agency response**.
- RECOMMENDATION 68: **Council leaders** and **chief executives** should play a prominent role in **public reassurance** through the **local media** during a flooding emergency, as part of a coordinated effort overseen by Gold Commanders.



## Summary – where we are

- **Flooding is an issue for EFDC.**
- **We support the Pitt Recommendations.**
- **EFDC currently offers an Out of Hours emergency response to flooding**
- **Some limited Geographical Information System (GIS) data and systems already in place.**
- **Proactively implements PPS 25 (Planning Policy Statement 25 – Development and Flood Risk).**
- **Developing relationships with EA and other professional partners.**



## What next?

- Engage with ECC & EA
- Establish with ECC the potential of responsibility that could/would rest with EFDC
- Consider extension of Out of Hours emergency response for flooding.
- Geographical Information System (GIS) – establish scale of work required.
- Joint up working
  - North East Thames Surface Water Alliance (NETSWA)
  - Essex Land Drainage Working Partnership

