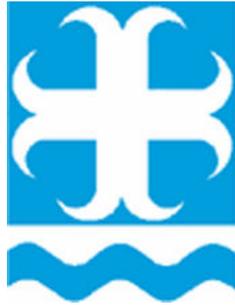


SEFTON COUNCIL

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(Regeneration & Environmental Services)**



**Watercourse Maintenance & Flooding
Working Group**

**FINAL REPORT
August 2009**

Foreword

Councillor Peter Papworth (Lead Member)

Sefton is unusual in being exposed – to some extent at least – to every possible type of flooding risk. Indeed the Borough has experienced flooding of every type (tidal, fluvial, pluvial and sewerage) during the last twenty five years. Given that the Environment Agency measures flooding risks by the number of years during which a flood might be expected (for example 1 in 200, 1 in 50) and that the lowest number, i.e. the most frequent risk, is 1 in 25 , it is clear that Sefton needs to take particular care to protect its people and its assets.

The Borough is fortunate to have the expert services of its Drainage Services Manager, Mr John Baker, who is widely respected throughout the North West of England, and his able assistant Mr Sam Dimba; both of these now work for Sefton via Capital Symonds. The Borough also has the considerable benefit of the service of Mr Graham Lymbery, who heads our Coast Protection team and also chairs the Environment Agency's Coastal Flooding Risks team covering the whole coastline from Anglesey to the Scottish border. In addition there are skilled and knowledgeable officers in the Planning Department and Emergency Planning Team. By contrast with this valuable effort and expertise, the great majority of Local Authorities employ no specialist drainage officers whatsoever.

It is therefore fair to say that in general Sefton is already doing a very reasonable job of protecting its people and its assets from flooding, and of planning to alleviate the results of flooding. But our enquiries clearly show that much more should be done – and no doubt would be done if financial resources permitted. It was ironic that during the period of our work the Council received the Government's response to the Pitt Committee's Review on flooding, commenting that 'local authorities are already funded to manage local flood and coastal erosion risk'. This Working Group has been unable to discover any evidence that Sefton receives any such funding, let alone that the Borough receives – as it clearly should – more funding than other Metropolitan Boroughs where for example neither the sea nor watercourses pose the slightest problem.

It has been brought to our attention on many occasions that one thing is sure; that some part of Sefton will inevitably be flooded before long. It is therefore important that we make best use of our scarce resources, so that the resultant damage is minimised. So far, our Council's progress has been admirable, and we hope that our recommendations will help the Council to do even better in the future.

I am grateful to my colleagues for their contribution to our Group's work. I am sure that Councillors Kevin Cluskey and Cliff and Sylvia Mainey will share my delight that Councillor Barry Griffiths will be in Cabinet to receive this report and consider it. All of us are grateful for the professional help and advice we have

received from a number of Sefton's officers, and for the time and trouble freely given by those who gave evidence to us.

1.0 WATERCOURSE MAINTENANCE & FLOODING REVIEW

Further to Minute No. 7 of 3 June 2008, the Overview & Scrutiny Review Committee (Regeneration & Environmental Services) considered the report of the Legal Director on the Work Programme to be determined by the Committee in respect of Working Groups. It was resolved that a new Working Group be appointed as follows.

1.1 Membership

Councillors Papworth (Lead Member), Cluskey, Griffiths*, Cliff Mainey & Sylvia Mainey.

**Councillor Griffiths was obliged to withdraw from the Group following his appointment to the Cabinet in early May 2009, before some important evidence had been taken, and of course before this Report was compiled*.*

1.2 Terms of Reference

1. To examine the adequacy of the maintenance of watercourses and drainage in the Borough, particularly in light of the Pitt Review; and
2. To gain a publicly accessible understanding of each Agency's / and Agencies' joint responsibilities in relation to flooding risks.

1.3 Meetings / Site Visits

- Wednesday 25th July 2008 - Working Group Meeting
- Tuesday 2nd September 2008 – Working Group Meeting
- Wednesday 22nd October – Working Group Meeting
- Wednesday 12th November 2008 – Site visit to Altmouth Pumping Station
- Friday 21st November 2008 – Working Group Meeting
- Tuesday 28th April 2009 – Working Group Meeting / Interviews & Presentations
- Monday 1st June 2009 – Working Group Meeting / Interviews & Presentations
- Friday 12th June 2009 – Working Group Meeting

In addition to the above meetings / visits individual Members of the Working Group took the opportunity to conduct their own visits to relevant sites and gather information of relevance to the review.

1.4 Evidence Collection

Information gathering for the review included meetings where presentations and reports were received, a site visit to Altmouth Pumping Station, interviewing of

witnesses of relevant organisations and Members have attended conferences and seminars. The Services Manager attended all Working Group meetings and provided support to the Working Group. Members also collected evidence from the Planning Department regarding the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Further evidence has been received from Parish Councils, Emergency Planning Team, Coast Protection Team, Environment Agency and United Utilities in order to gain more insight into the role and responsibilities of external organisations and to provide the opportunity to ask more questions about the current issues.

2.0 BACKGROUND

This report recounts the evidence received by the Working Group, the considerations which were taken into account, and the recommendations we now make to Sefton's Cabinet.

The Working Group has considered the following areas in its investigation into the issues currently facing Sefton:

- Recent history of flooding, problems associated with it
- Watercourse and drainage maintenance programmes
- Flood protection
- Good practice
- Legal and legislative position
- Overview of climate change issues and impact upon risk
- The responsibility of each organisation, and joint responsibilities (such as Environment Agency, United Utilities, Departments within the Council, individual residents)
- National policy and the impact on local policies and plans (such as the publication of the Pitt Review)
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (still awaiting final publication)
- Resource implications

Types of Flood Risks

Sefton is potentially vulnerable to flooding from several sources:

- Coastal
- Watercourse / Fluvial
- Groundwater
- Pluvial
- Sewer
- Man made structures

Coastal / tidal flooding normally caused by river or sea defences being overtopped. Usually a combination of low pressure and high tide.

Watercourse / Fluvial

As a result of freshwater flows in a watercourse that exceeds the capacities of the rivers / watercourses. This type of flooding may result from overtopping and / or breaching of flood defences by heavy rainfall and / or melting snow which causes abnormally high water levels in the rivers and their tributaries; Dam or reservoir failure. It can also be caused by debris blocking watercourses.

Groundwater flooding occurs when a rise in groundwater level is sufficient for the water table to intersect the ground surface and inundate low lying areas. This tends to occur after prolonged and heavy rainfall.

Pluvial or surface water flooding is usually, but not exclusively, as a result of intense rainfall that exceeds the capacity of the installed drainage system. Typically this type of flooding is very localised and has short lead-times, making it difficult to predict. It can occur where no watercourse exists. The problem and severity of 'pluvial' flooding can be exacerbated by: topography, drainage systems and surfaces with low permeability.

Sewer or Foul flooding can occur as a result of heavy rainfall overloading sewers or failure of a sewer due to collapse or debris build up.

Man-made structures flooding results from the failure of canals, reservoirs, and other man-made structures along with problems caused by the failure of pumping stations, water mains and industrial activity.

National Context

Making Space for Water (2005) sets out the cross-government, overarching strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. The Government's strategy has continued to evolve and broaden, including, for example:

The Climate Change Act (2008) which requires a UK wide climate change risk assessment every five years accompanied by a national adaptation programme that is also reviewed every five years. The Act has also given the Government new powers to require public bodies and statutory organisations such as water companies to report on how they are adapting to climate change.

Future Water (2008) is the Government's overall strategy for water looking mainly at water supply and provision. It reaffirms 'Making Space for Water' as the basis for managing river and coastal flooding. However it also sets out a vision for better management of surface water to address the dual pressures of climate change and housing development.

The Pitt Review (2008) Sir Michael Pitt published his review of the 2007 summer floods in June 2008 setting out 92 recommendations to be addressed by Government, the Environment Agency, Local Authorities, Local Resilience Forums, providers of essential services, insurers and others, including the general public.

The five themes contained in the report: -

- reducing the risk of flooding and its impact
- being rescued and cared for in an emergency
- maintaining power and water and protecting essential services
- better advice and help for people to protect their families and homes
- staying healthy and speeding recovery

The Government has accepted all 92 recommendations of the Pitt Report and stated that it 'supported changes in response to all of the recommendations in the review' and is providing extra funding of £5 Million for the establishment of a joint Met Office / Environment Agency forecasting centre, £5 Million for a resilience grant scheme and £15 Million to local authorities to include Surface Water Management Plans. In addition, £300K has been made available to produce six pilot Surface Water Management Plans (one of which is Warrington).

The £15 Million for local authorities will be subject to bids and be targeted towards the development of Surface Water Management Plans in the areas deemed to be at highest flood risk. No separate provision has been made to fund the revenue required to compile the bids.

The relationship between the new joint Met Office / Environment Agency forecasting service and Regional Flood Forecasting teams need to be clarified, although the centre is expected to provide improved rainfall forecasts and issue these to regions to translate the predictions into the likely impacts locally.

The Government also planned to introduce a draft Floods and Water Bill in order to respond to many of Sir Michael's recommendations.

This review has had far reaching conclusions and recommendations that have direct implications for the Council in the future.

Development Control Strategy

Local authorities now have to prepare Local Development Frameworks. These yield a series of documents produced at different times, some but not all of which are flood risk policies. These changes ensure that consideration of current and future flood risk happens at each stage of planning. The core documents contain policies to help make those seeking planning permission more aware of the need to steer development away from flood risk zones.

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and Flood Risk (2006) sets out the Government's approach to the use of the planning system to reduce flood risk. It now requires developers to submit a Flood Risk Assessment that assesses the flood risk affecting a proposed development. It requires local planning authorities in England to consult with the Environment Agency on planning applications where the property is at any risk from flooding. The Association of British Insurers has said that its members will not necessarily offer to insure new properties sited in areas of flood risk.

Local Flood Management Strategy

The Environment Agency will produce Catchment Flood Management Plans (CFMPs) for 68 main catchments in England during 2009. These will act as high-planning tools and set out objectives for flood risk management across each river catchment and estuary, and also identify flood risk management policies that are

economically practical and have a potential life of 50 to 100 years. The CFMPs will consider inland flood risks from rivers, surface water, groundwater and tidal flooding but will not cover sewer flooding.

Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) are mainly produced by coastal groups / local authorities and perform a similar role to CFMPs but examine coastal flooding and erosion risks. SMPs cover the entire coastline and these are under review, with second generation SMPs due for completion by 2010.

Improving Local Leadership for Flood Risk Management

The Government wrote to all Council Leaders and Chief Executives in December 2008 drawing attention to the Government response to the Pitt Review of the Summer 2007 floods. This letter particularly set out the work the Government is undertaking to support a new leadership role for local government in local flood risk management. Funding was made available to enable those local authorities considered most at risk to take action in advance of legislation (this did not include Sefton), in order to build local partnerships, recognising that in doing so there are substantial benefits to be gained from fewer flooding incidents and less severe consequences if flooding does happen.

The Government encouraged local authorities to assess local capabilities and build local partnerships, to help ensure that local authorities are fully geared up for their new roles. The current planning system provides for local planning to be underpinned by Strategic Flood Risk Assessments; ensuring that effective risk assessments of this kind are in place will provide a strong basis for assessing future priorities and shaping action.

The transfer of responsibility for private sewers which relates to recommendations in the Pitt Review was announced on Monday 15th December 2008. The intention is that from April 2011 there will be a transfer of ownership of existing private sewers and lateral drains that drain to public sewers to the nine statutory Water and Sewerage Companies (WaSCs) operating in England. The burden of these responsibilities currently fall primarily on individuals (most of whom have no idea that they might be liable) but local authorities frequently get involved (and incur expenditure) in remediation work, resolving disputes and providing advice. The Government will also take action to prevent a new stock of private sewers growing to replace the transferred stock, by requiring that in future all new sewers and laterals that connect to the public system should automatically come under the WaSCs

Draft Flood and Water Bill

Local Authority Flood and Erosion Risk Management Issues

Government policy is to manage flood and coastal erosion risks by a 'portfolio' of measures, which are in addition to the traditional approaches of defence,

drainage and protection. Such measures include risk maps, awareness campaigns, flood warnings, emergency planning and response management, community defences, resilience measures, installation of sustainable drainage systems (SUDs), changes to land management and support to individuals or communities to adapt to change. This includes help being given to individuals to make changes to their properties to help protect the fabric, fixtures and fittings from flooding, or to reduce the cost and time of recovering from fixtures.

The draft Bill does not explicitly make any provision to adapt to climate change. Instead it sets out an approach that provides scope to manage all risks, of which climate change is a key one. Adaptation as a management response includes a whole range of approaches; from building defences, providing complementary flood storage to extending the life of a scheme, to the provision of information and support to adapt to and live with risk and its potential impacts. It also covers other approaches, such as avoiding inappropriate development in areas of flood risk, making buildings resilient to flooding, or moving assets out of risk areas where this is practicable and feasible. Thus the broadened approach of flood and coastal erosion risk management is also essentially about adaptation and building adaptive capacity.

The Government also wants to integrate management of flooding and coastal erosion to recognise the links and dependencies between different policy areas and activities such as the impact that land management has on flood risk and the effects that flood management has on the environment. Understanding and working with natural processes to manage flood and erosion risk is fundamental to this approach. The government wants to work with the natural processes of flooding and erosion at a local level. They want to enable and encourage those who manage flood risk to achieve the benefits of doing so in the light of wider policy objectives such as maintaining good soil quality, landscape and healthy resilient natural environments.

The Government considers that local authorities should also contribute towards sustainable development in carrying out their flood and coastal erosion risk management activities. This would include planning for risk in both the short and long-term and understanding the possible impacts and appropriateness of management responses in the longer term. The EA will be empowered to provide guidance to other flood and coastal erosion risk management operating authorities on how this should be achieved, This guidance relates to the application of the EA's national strategy for flood and coastal risk management and operating authorities will be required to act in a manner consistent with the guidance and the strategy.

In developing proposals for the draft Bill, the Government has had four objectives:

- to provide the greatest possible clarity and accountability about who is responsible for what, including for leadership at a national and local level;

- that the roles and responsibilities of existing delivery organisations are retained wherever possible to ensure the continued engagement of local knowledge and expertise;
- to provide flexibility for different delivery organisations to deliver flood and coastal erosion risk management on the ground; and
- to promote the growth of effective local partnerships and to provide a string duty on all bodies to co-operate and share information

Local Authorities Role

Local Leadership Role

- Setting Local Strategy for local flood risk management
- Leadership and accountability for ensuring effective management of local flood risk from ordinary watercourses, surface run-off and groundwater.
- Production of local flood risk assessments, maps and plans including an asset register.
- Improved drainage and flood risk management expertise.
- Co-ordinate Surface Water Management Plan production.
- Drainage from non-Highways Agency Roads
- Prioritising local investment.
- Consenting and enforcement powers for certain works affecting ordinary watercourses.
- Promoting partnerships with local planning authorities to produce Strategic Flood Risk Assessments.

Delivery / executive role

- Powers to do work for surface run-off and groundwater flood risk.
- Duty to undertake Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) functions in accordance with local and national strategies.
- Local Flood Risk Management (LFRM) decision-making integrated into local asset management and investment programmes.
- Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act including local delivery of flood warnings.

Local Flood Risk Management

The draft Bill contains provisions to implement recommendations from Sir Michael Pitt's Review to improve the management of local flood risk. Local authorities will have a leadership role for local flood risk management which includes ensuring that flood risk from all sources, including from surface run-off, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, is identified and managed as part of locally agreed work programmes. This enhanced role for local authorities, leading new local partnerships and responsibility for sustainable drainage systems (SUDs), will be pivotal to the success of the much stronger and more comprehensive approach to flood risk management that the government want to achieve following Sir Michael Pitt's Review. The proposed roles for local authorities are set out below:

Role of County and Unitary Local Authorities

The Government recognises that success will depend on greater co-ordination and co-operation between local partners working together closely to establish the most effective arrangements to meet local circumstances. The Government also believes that local flood risk management will be best if based on new partnership arrangements. It wishes to see county, unitary and district local authorities, the EA, water companies and sewerage undertakers and other players, working together to secure effective and consistent management of local flood risk in their areas. These organisations should work together to decide the best arrangements for delivery on an area by area basis, taking account of their current roles and capacities, underpinned by a new duty on all partners to co-operate and share information.

Sir Michael Pitt also recommended that local authorities should collect information from private landowners or individuals on the flood and drainage assets for which they are responsible. The draft Bill places the leadership role in these partnerships on county and unitary local authorities. They will need to ensure that all relevant partners are engaged in developing a strategy for local flood risk management and securing progress in its implementation. This will build on the county and unitary authority leadership role in Local Area Agreements, and will allow them to develop centres of engineering and flood risk expertise alongside their existing highways functions, providing support to other partners and promoting collaboration across the whole area.

To fulfil this role the county or unitary local authority would need to ensure they have strategy for local flood risk management. This will comprise a range of documents and working practices which, among other things, sets out how they will:

- convene and co-ordinate district local authorities, water and sewerage companies, highways bodies and any other that they consider necessary to deliver a joined up management of local flood risk in their areas;
- produce flood risk assessments and flood risk action plans (e.g. Surface Water Management Plans) for their areas. These should be consistent with the EAs FCERM strategy and any supplementary guidance and use any existing relevant work, such as Strategic Flood Risk Assessments. In part this will deliver the EU Floods Directive. However, the Government encourages county and unitary local authorities to produce assessments and plans can form part of the local authority's local flood risk management strategy;
- develop local flood risk management work programmes (including works which they themselves intend to undertake or works which they consider that other bodies should undertake or works with other bodies are responsible for including water companies and the EA for example within Surface Water Management Plans (SWMPs);
- identify other bodies whose assets may be an important part of the effective management of flood risk or which may be contributing to flood

- risk and create an asset register of information on the ownership, location and where available, the condition of those assets in the area; and
- investigate local flooding incidents with all relevant parties to identify the source of the problem and where responsibility lies for addressing it in the same way it does for the EA National Strategy, the draft Bill requires the county or unitary local authority to publish their strategy. It places a duty on the district local authority to act in a manner which is consistent with that strategy and any supplementary guidance the local authority issues. It also places a duty on other listed bodies to have regard to the strategy and guidance.

Elements of planning or subsequent work could be delegated to other authorities (using the 'arrangements' clauses in the draft Bill) but responsibility for the strategy would remain with the county or unitary local authority. As indicated, the draft Bill places the default local leadership role with county and unitary local authorities. These are defined in the draft Bill as 'lead local authorities' for these purposes. SWMPs will help local authorities and relevant delivery bodies understand and manage local flood risk as well as to influence land use planning and flood risk management investment decisions. They should deliver:

- co-ordinated and prioritised investment strategies and asset management;
- clear of roles to reduce duplicated effort across different organisations;
- support for greater use of SUDs to help avoid large investments in unsustainable hard infrastructure;
- identification of design approaches that avoid and reduce flood risk to and from new development (PPS 25); and
- information to improve emergency planning decisions for local authorities and awareness of surface water flooding when preparing for emergencies.

The Government is currently informally consulting on the draft Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) Guidance which is available on the DEFRA website. This guidance will provide the framework for local authorities to develop SWMPs. SWMPs will also fulfil requirement under the EU Floods Directive for flood risk management plans in areas of significant flood risk.

Local Delivery – Counties and Districts

County and unitary local authorities will have powers to plan, build, maintain, alter, operate and remove works to manage flood risk from surface run-off and groundwater. These authorities would also have powers to maintain or restore natural processes and manage water levels in relation to these sources of flood risk. More generally, in relation to all forms of flood risk in their areas, these councils would have powers to:

- provide public awareness campaigns;
- provide support to individuals or communities in dealing with local flood risk management including financial support, advice or equipment;
- facilitate changes to land management;

- undertake measures to benefit the natural environment; and
- develop and share techniques and tools to understand and manage local flood risk management.

Local authorities will have an increasing role in flood risk management and ensuring that this is linked to the spatial planning process. County and unitary local authorities lead in ensuring the production of Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRAs) covering all forms of flood risk, which still:

- provide the evidence to allow local planning authorities to factor flood risk into local development plans and individual decisions on new development proposals;
- help the county and unitary local authorities to determine where they need to develop a surface water management plan for local flood risk management;
- provide the evidence to allow local planning authorities to factor flood risk into local development plans and individual decisions on new development proposals; and
- help the county and unitary local authorities to determine where they need to develop a surface water management plan for local flood risk management.

They also have responsibility for open spaces and parks and often roads, verges, housing and public buildings. They are often active in managing the local flood risk from ordinary watercourses and also in land drainage. The Government therefore propose leaving these current powers intact subject to LA's having to take account of (a) the local flood risk management strategy published by the county or unitary local authority for the area and (b) the national flood and coastal erosion risk management strategy published by the EA. The draft Bill will remove the requirement for EA consent to local authority works on ordinary watercourses under Section 17 of the Land Drainage Act on the basis that local authorities in undertaking works on the ordinary watercourse network will need to do so in a manner consistent with the EA and county and unitary local authority strategies. The Government do not currently propose giving county local authorities any additional role on the ordinary watercourse network in terms of work and maintenance, apart from a proposed consenting role. County and unitary local authorities may, while remaining accountable for the overall quality of service, also want to use the expertise and capacity that exists in district local authorities to help fulfil their new functions, including for example preparing SWMPs. To this end, the draft Bill provides powers for all relevant organisations to undertake flood and coastal erosion risk management functions at the request of another, and on terms (including payment) which may be agreed between them.

The draft Bill would enable authority A to make an arrangement with Authority B to perform a function on behalf of authority A even though authority B might not ordinarily have the powers to do so. The Government see that works powers and elements within the EA or local authority strategy e.g. producing SWMPs could

be delegated using these arrangements. However, they consider that overall accountability for the strategy should not be able to be delegated to another body.

The impact assessment for local flood risk management assumes that local authorities will develop a suite of measures for managing local flood risk, for example, surface water mapping, appropriate development planning and collating information on flood risk and drainage assets. It assumes that:

- the average cost to develop a SWMP is £100,000.
- They will invest £100,000 annually in mitigation measures for surface run-off and groundwater which will produce a real benefit for local flood risk;
- By taking all the measures proposed including co-ordinating the flood risk management activities of other bodies (e.g. EA and Water Companies) (including SUDs) it will reduce all local flood risk by 40% (over a 43 year period) based on the limited best information available at present.

Funding For The New Leadership Role

The Government considers that local authorities are already funded to manage local flood and coastal erosion risk. It is also considered that local authorities also stand to save financially from taking a proactive stance on local flood risk management.

3.0 THE LOCAL CONTEXT / SEFTON'S CURRENT POSITION

Climate Change

Recent changes in climate, particularly in the North West have included: -

- average mean temperatures rising by about 2.65°C over the last century
- the 1990s being globally the warmest decade in the last century with 1998 being the hottest year on record
- seasonal rainfall has varied by as much as 15% from the average in the last 30 years
- decreases in summer rainfall during the last century of up to 20%
- increases in high intensity winter rainfall having been experienced since the 1960s
- increases in flooding of some major rivers in the region in the last few decades
- sea levels around Liverpool having risen by about 60mm in the last 50 years and 100mm over the last 100 years.

Predicted changes which may affect the climate of the UK include:-

- Warming in the North West, which will increase mean winter temperatures between 1 and 3°C and in summer between 2.6 and 4.1°C by the 2050's.

While by the 2080's summer mean temperatures across the North West may have risen between 2 and 5.9°C.

- More warming in summer and autumn than in winter and spring.
- Winters will become wetter than at present by up to 26%, whilst summers will most likely become drier.
- This contrast between winter and summer climate will increase with time. Winters will become wetter and summers drier.
- Sea level rises of up to 26cm by the 2050's and 43cm by the 2080's

The predicted changes are based on the Governments own UK Climate Impacts and the most recent predictions from the UK Climate Projections 2009 (UKCP09), which has produced a series of potential climate change scenarios based on differing global emission rates from low to high. There are a large number of uncertainties associated with predicting the outcome of these scenarios, which create limitations on the accuracy of the predictions. However, although there are clearly a large number of potential consequences of climate change with differing degrees of likelihood associated with them, changes will occur and Sefton must be ready.

Coastal Defence and Protection

The work of the North West England and North Wales Coastal Group includes the Coastal overview map of responsibilities, the coastal erosion map, the Shoreline Management Plan second generation review groups and the co-ordination for coastal works by the various operating authorities. The Chair of the Group is Graham Lymbery, Project Leader for Coastal Defence, Sefton MBC.

Coastal Group boundaries are based on coastal cells (in which sediment movement is largely self-contained) rather than local authority boundaries. The North West and North Wales Coastal Group extends from the Scottish border to Great Orme's Head at Llandudno, North Wales. Three key elements of work as follows: -

- Shoreline Management Plans. These are non-statutory plans and are concerned with the management of risk.
- Regional coastal monitoring. The first generation of Shoreline Management Plans, produced in the late 1990s identified a need for consistent data, which is necessary to develop a risk based model. Monitoring itself is risk based with highest intensity of monitoring in areas of highest risk. It is anticipated that a consistent framework for England will be in place by 2011.
- Regional studies, e.g. Cell 11 tidal and sediment study and the Joint Probability Study, which considers the likelihood of storms coinciding with high astronomical tides.

The Coastal Group manages the risks associated with delivery of flood and coastal erosion risk management, inputs into the development and

implementation of national policy and promotes communication and co-operation at all levels and between all stakeholders.

Locally Sefton's Coastal Defence Team maintains the hard defence structures at Crosby and Southport. Sefton also works to secure grant aid for new or replacement structures when they are required. However a large proportion of work relates to understanding of the geo-morphological processes shaping our coast so that we can understand what the future might hold; through the natural change of the coast, change induced by local human actions and change as a result of the impacts of climate change. Part of this work requires the assembling and conserving historic data about the coast (this has been done within the Sefton Coast Database). Moving on from this is the need to analyse the data that it is held and trying to develop conceptual models of the coast that explain our current understanding. Then there is the need to commission or undertake more research and data collection. Without an understanding of the past evolution of the coast through to where we are today it is difficult to understand how the coast might evolve in the future under current conditions or with climate change. All of this understanding is then used to inform the decisions in relation to FCERM (Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management) and the decisions of other partners on the coast where an understanding of future coastal evolution is relevant.

Flooding Problems

Sefton has been attempting to mitigate climate change through behavioural changes or by reducing its carbon emissions thus reducing its carbon footprint, for example through initiatives such as energy use reductions, recycling and through green transport initiatives. There has also been work on adapting where possible through for example, changes in how the Planning Department deals with inappropriate developments in flood risk areas or by protecting existing assets.

At present the Council's response to flooding problems involves regular pre-emptive cleansing of gullies and associated assets. Additionally some planned maintenance of watercourses in Formby is undertaken and investigations into general flooding problems are carried out.

Although a continuing problem throughout the Borough, flooding in Sefton has to date occurred mostly on an isolated incident basis. It can result as a consequence of a lack of maintenance, capacity issues or that no drainage exists at all. Flooding from public sewers is increasingly affecting larger areas and United Utilities, although tackling the problem, prioritise the flooding such that internal flooding is given the highest priority for funding and highway and external property flooding is given a lower priority. However it is likely that when resolving property flooding by increasing the public sewer capacity, benefits to the system as a whole will accrue.

From records maintained by Sefton, listed below are some of the locations that over the last 3 years have suffered either regular flooding or where the flooding when it does occur affects a number of properties. Also identified is the likely cause or causes of the flooding where the responsibility to solve it may lie.

FLOODING LOCATIONS – Highway and Property

Area	Location	Comments	Responsibilities
Maghull	Kenyons Lane	Land drainage due to capacity/maintenance issues	Riparian
	Green Lane	Capacity issue with public sewers, leaf blockage of gullies	United Utilities (UU), Sefton
	Liverpool Rd South (various locations)	Capacity issues with both public and land drainage systems	UU, Sefton, Riparian
	Hall Lane (various locations)	Capacity issues with both public and foul systems also linked to Environment Agency (EA) main river.	UU
	Damfield Lane	Land drainage/Highway drain capacity/maintenance issues connects to EA main river	Riparian, Sefton, EA
	Northway (various locations)	Land drainage/public sewer issues.	Riparian, UU
	Sefton Lane/Sefton Drive	Public sewer/land drainage/EA main river issues	UU, Riparian, Sefton, EA
	Bridges Lane/Brickwall Lane	Highway/ land drainage issues	Sefton, riparian
	Station Road/Melling Lane	Highway and public sewer /land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, UU, riparian
	Willow Hey	Public/highway and land drainage capacity/ maintenance issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Poverty Lane	Highway drain issues	Sefton
	Deyes Lane (various locations)	Public sewer/highway/land drainage issue.	UU, Sefton, riparian

Lydiate	Southport Road (various locations)	Highway drain/land drain capacity issue	Sefton, riparian
	Pilling Lane	Highway/land drainage maintenance issue	Sefton, riparian
	Moss Lane (various locations)	Highway/land drainage maintenance issue	Sefton, riparian
	Oakhill Drive/Coppull Road	Sewer capacity issues	Private
	Lamshear Lane	Highway/land drainage capacity issue	Sefton, riparian
	Kenyons Lane	Land drainage	Riparian
Netherton	Marina Crescent	Land drainage issue	Riparian
	Heysham Road	Public sewer/land drainage capacity issues	UU, riparian
Thornton	Edge Lane	Highway/land drainage capacity/maintenance issue.	Sefton, riparian
	Brook Road	Highway/land drainage capacity/maintenance issue.	Sefton, riparian
	Green Lane	Highway/land drainage capacity/maintenance issue.	Sefton, riparian
	Ince Road	Highway/land drainage capacity/maintenance issue.	Sefton, riparian
	Lydiate Lane	Highway, land drainage issues	Sefton, riparian
	Runnels lane	Highway/land drainage issues.	Sefton, riparian
Crosby/Blundellsands	Coronation Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Manor Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Hall Road East	Public sewer/land drainage capacity issues	UU, riparian
	The Serpentine North/South	Highway drainage capacity issues	Sefton
	Rutherglen Avenue	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Seathwaite Close	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	College Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Blundellsands Road East/West	Public sewer capacity and carriageway ponding issues.	UU, Sefton
	Agnes Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU

	Victoria Road West	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	St. Andrews Road	Public sewer capacity issues or possible PS problems.	UU
	St Michaels Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Moss Lane (Little Crosby)	Highway/ land drainage capacity issues.	Sefton, riparian
Waterloo	Endsleigh Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Holden Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Warrenhouse Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Riverslea Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Westward View	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Brook Road East/West	Public sewer capacity and carriageway ponding issues.	UU, Sefton
	Brunswick Parade	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
Bootle	Hawthorne Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Sefton Road / Hawthorne Road	Highway/ public sewer capacity issues	Sefton, UU
	Bedford Road underpass	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Southport Road	Public sewer capacity and carriageway ponding issues	UU, Sefton
Aintree	Wango Lane (Hancocks Bridge)	Highway/land drainage capacity/ maintenance issues	Sefton, riparian
	Sherwoods Lane	Public sewer, highway/land drainage capacity/ maintenance issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Altway	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Aintree lane	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Ormskirk Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
Melling	Rock Lane	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Spencers Lane	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Leatherbarrow	Highway/land drainage	Sefton, riparian

	Lane	capacity issues	
Waddicar	Waddicar Lane	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Hayes Drive	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Bank Lane	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Rock View	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Rainbow Drive	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Tithebarn Drive	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Prescot Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
Formby	Harrington Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Park Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Southport Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Liverpool Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Timms Lane	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton riparian
	Park Close	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Piercefield Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Victoria Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Ravenmeols Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Cross Green	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Lenton Close	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Birkey Lane	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Chapel Lane	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Gores Lane	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Bills Lane	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Freshfield Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Lonsdale Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU Sefton, riparian
	Hogshill lane	Highway/land drainage/EA	Sefton, riparian,

		Main River capacity issues	EA
Ince Blundell/Lunt	Moor lane	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Lady Green Lane	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Victoria Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Lunt Road	Highway/land drainage capacity/maintenance issues	Sefton, riparian
Ainsdale	Station Road	Public sewer/highway drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton
	Liverpool Road	Public sewer/highway drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton
	Shore Road	Public sewer/highway drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton
	Sandringham Road	Public sewer/highway capacity issues	UU, Sefton
	Cornwall way	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
Birkdale	Guildford Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Dunbar Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Liverpool Road	Public sewer/highway drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton
	Essex Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
Southport	Scarisbrick New Road	Highway/land drainage capacity issues	Sefton, riparian
	Cemetery Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Houghton Street	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Rufford Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Radnor Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Mallee Crescent	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Balmoral Drive	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Pool street	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Preston New Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Butts lane	Public sewer capacity issues	UU

	Botanic Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Glamis Drive	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Verulam Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Merelwood Avenue	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Bankfield Lane	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Marshside Road	Public sewer/highway/land drainage capacity issues	UU, Sefton, riparian
	Holmdale Avenue	Land drainage	Riparian
	Fylde Road	Public sewer capacity issues	UU
	Rotten Row	Highway drain capacity issue	Sefton

For Sefton, a man-power and budget-resourcing problem is one of the main issues preventing progress on many of these locations. This is further compounded by the complexity of the relationship between the different drainage elements and the differing opinions as to who is responsible. It is often Sefton who are required to try and resolve these issues. Additionally the budget allocation for both the highway and land drainage functions have been cut as part of the requested savings.

It should be noted that, in a few locations where flooding has continued to occur over a number of years without being resolved, it is likely that a satisfactory or cost-effective solution does not exist and that planning for, minimising the effects of, or simply reducing the number of flooding incidents is the only reasonable course of action.

Watercourse Maintenance Programmes

As recommended by the Pitt review, Sefton may need to undertake a more pre-emptive view of the maintenance of surface water such as strategic critical watercourses. Strategic watercourses exist within the Thornton / Lunt area, Aintree, Melling, Maghull / Lydiate and parts of Southport. The exact locations and conditions of which are largely unknown.

Sefton funds the planned maintenance of strategic watercourses in Formby – however the regular maintenance of strategic watercourses in other parts of the Borough has never been undertaken even where Sefton has responsibilities to do so such as the pool watercourse in Southport.

The Environment Agency has funded an investigation into the surface water system in Formby to enable it to be accurately mapped and the opportunity to

apply for similar funding for investigations in the Thornton / Lunt area has been taken. Additionally, an application for funding to undertake further improvements to the land drainage pumping station at Lunt was approved by the Environment Agency and the work undertaken.

Dobbs Gutter in Formby is a strategic watercourse receiving a third of the surface water discharge from the surrounding built up area. The Authority is responsible, under an agreement, to maintain a length of it from Church Road to Freshfield Road. The remaining sections of Dobbs Gutter are riparian owned, but Formby RDC previously maintained these as part of a rolling ditch maintenance programme. The Council reinstated this ditch maintenance programme some time ago when an additional annual budget provision of 25k was made available. Dobbs Gutter is cleaned annually while the other watercourses are cleared on a four yearly cycle. However a number of residents feel that more should be done and on a more regular basis but it should be noted that without work being carried out on the (riparian owned) downstream lengths, the only gain following the work is the provision of some additional storage capacity in these cleared lengths.

In addition to this watercourse / ditch clearing the twice-weekly clearing off watercourse debris screens in Formby is also carried out. Although no other planned maintenance of watercourses / ditches in the Borough is undertaken, reactive works are occasionally carried out to resolve problems resulting in flooding of the highway.

The Environment Agency has a programme of regular maintenance on all its main rivers which includes inspections, litter and debris removal, desilting, strimming, flailing and weed treatment. There is informal and formal contact between Sefton staff and the Environment Agency in connection with watercourse maintenance and flood protection.

Sefton has permissive powers but not a duty to carry out works on ordinary watercourses. This can include improvements, general maintenance and cleaning work, in addition the permissive powers enable the Council to take action against those who are legally responsible to carry out such work but do not do so. These are known as the riparian owners.

The term 'Riparian Owner' describes anyone who owns a property where a watercourse bounds or crosses it. Under common law they possess rights and responsibilities appertaining to that stretch of watercourse, which may be an open watercourse, a culvert or pipe. Often property owners are unaware of this responsibility particularly where the watercourse is underground. In addition, where a watercourse is situated on a boundary between properties, it is normally presumed that a riparian owner owns the land up to the centre-line of the watercourse, unless records exist to prove otherwise, so both property owners have riparian responsibilities.

A riparian owner is responsible for: -

- accepting water from the section of watercourse owned by their upstream neighbour and transferring this, together with drainage from their own property, to their neighbour downstream,
- carrying out, at his or her own expense, any necessary maintenance of the watercourse to the satisfaction of the relevant Land Drainage Authority, which in the case of the non-main rivers within the Sefton area is the Council.

The Council itself has riparian responsibilities to maintain watercourses where it is the land owner. This occurs at schools, playing fields and allotments these are the responsibility of the Department that has ownership.

As previously identified the Council has no direct responsibility to solve land drainage flooding, but using the powers within the Land Drainage Act 1991, it can enforce maintenance responsibilities and in default carry out that work and recharge the offender. Unfortunately this can be very expensive and may involve a great deal of investigation. The budget for such work is small and therefore the problems are prioritised in accordance with the listing shown below and some may not be of a high enough priority to be investigated for some time, if at all. Although it should be noted that in the majority of cases persuasion has been more successful when combined with the threat of enforcement.

LAND DRAINAGE – PRIORITY LISTING

No.	Definition
1.	Internal property flooding (habitable)
2.	Imminent threat of internal flooding
3.	Nuisance to highway network / environment
4.	Other property internal flooding (non habitable i.e. garage, outbuildings but not garden sheds)
5.	Flooding to amenity areas in proximity to property
6.	Flooding to amenity areas remote from property
7.	Fields / farmland
8.	Footpaths / rights of way

Sefton's Drainage Unit

The Drainage function has existed within Sefton since its inception in 1974 following local government reorganisation. Its main role at that time was its responsibility for the sewerage agency function on behalf of the newly formed Water Authority, North West Water. This included both the maintenance of and capital improvements to the public sewerage network in Sefton. At the same time a small team was set up to deal with highway and land drainage issues. This arrangement, although subject to some major changes including the privatisation of the Water Authorities to become the Water Companies, continued until 2003 when the water company for this area, United Utilities, took the sewerage function in-house.

Up until 2003 Sefton's Direct Labour Organisation was responsible for the gully cleansing operations. However, by now the operation was constantly being stripped of resources to supplement the refuse collection operations and this led to widespread flooding problems due to blockages in the highway drainage system and a decision to subject it to external competition was made.

The decision by United Utilities to take the sewerage function in-house led to Sefton re-creating a small highway and land drainage team that ensured that it did not lose all the drainage expertise that it had built up since 1974. In addition, this team would tackle what was an increasing number of flooding problems together with the management of the new gully and highway drainage cleansing contract, which was externally as Sefton's Direct Labour Organisation declined the offer to tender.

Existing budgets were split in order to fund the new team and works budgets were also transferred or created to fund its operations. In 2001 the budget for highway drainage works was 180k and had increased to 275k by 2003, to enable the resolution of highway flooding to be pro-actively managed but was reduced in 2005 to 250k. However during the same period the gully-cleansing budget was reduced from 308k down to 272k in 2005. This was further reduced in 2007/08 to 222k The comparison between 2003 and now are shown below:-

Drainage Function	2003/04 Budget £k	2008/09 Budget £k
Highway Drainage	275	250
Land Drainage	45	43
Gully Cleansing	308	222
Total	628	515

The actual cost of gully cleansing operations was in excess of 300k and was supplemented by the already reduced highways drainage budget. This burden is being reduced by the operational changes to the new contract detailed below under 'Drainage Works Issues'.

The land drainage works budget has generally remained constant at around 45k with only small budget cuts being offered up as savings, Although 23k of this budget is specifically allocated for the cleaning of ditches and watercourses in Formby.

An additional 100k of funding to undertake new highway drainage installations or major improvements was created from within the LTP budget but this has since been cut to 50k further reducing the ability of the drainage team to tackle the larger scale flooding issues. For example flooding to properties from the highway in Bullbridge Lane in Aintree was prevented by the installation of a new highway drainage system, as was the flooding of the main shopping area (Chapel Lane) in Formby and the regular closure of Southport Road in Lydiate, the main route between this area and Formby / Southport by new or improved highway drainage systems.

Opportunities to increase existing LTP expenditure or consideration of new funding streams are being investigated.

Drainage Work Issues

During the operation of the gully cleansing contract the data concerning the number and location of both highway, footway and back entry gullies has multiplied as has the location and meterage of channels or kerb drainage systems which had not been cleansed for a number of years. Although restrictions on the frequency of cleansing of these and the numerous catchpits serving the highway drainage system was introduced, the budget is not sufficient to continue with a pro-active or even a regular cleansing regime.

The existing gully and highway drainage contract was re-tendered for a commencement in April 2009. This contract now includes for one annual cleanse of all gullies and highway drainage assets together with additional targeted cleansing at known gully problem locations. The regular cleansing of all gullies has generally prevented flooding remaining on the highway following heavy rain and where flooding does remain for some time it is usually resulting from deficiencies in the highway drainage, land drainage or public sewer systems rather than with the gullies that are connected to them.

The flooding hotspot locations rather than needing additional gully cleansing visits, require the systems that they are connected to, to be either regular maintained themselves or the improvements which have been identified but are un-funded by both Sefton and United Utilities.

Watercourse maintenance, although not specifically the Councils responsibility, can dramatically improve the drainage systems ability to deal with the intense and prolonged rainfall events that climate change appears to be resulting in. As identified earlier the ditches in Formby are regularly cleaned for the benefits of the residents.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

The preparation of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has now been completed by the Planning Department to comply with Government advice and guidance as set out in Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS 25), supported by the Drainage Services Unit. The objectives of this SSFRA is that it be used as a tool to allow planning authorities to take a more proactive approach to future development by identifying those areas at risk from sources of flooding.

The principle behind SFRA is that future development should be steered away from areas at most risk of flooding, to areas at lowest risk.

The most important information in looking at flood risk is the EA flood zones (FZ 1,2 and 3) for river and tidal flooding (Flood Zone 1 – low probability of flooding from fluvial sources; Flood Zone 2 – medium probability of flooding from fluvial sources; Flood Zone 3 – high probability of flooding from fluvial sources), but information about other sources of flooding is also important and the SFRA also looks at the impact of climate change of these flood zones. It is especially important given climate change / rising sea levels but also more storms and more intense rainfall events.

So the main uses of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment are:

- as a reference and policy document which is part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy and subsequent Local Development Documents (to allow Sefton to allocate development sites from areas at highest risk or at least to make informed decisions if there has to be location in areas at some risk) and to provide appropriate policies for the management of flood risk and inform the sustainability appraisal process;
- to fulfil the Council's obligation under PPS25;
- To inform the development control process about the potential flood risk issues relating to future planning applications and to provide a framework for requesting site-specific flood risk assessments;
- To provide a reference and policy document for the general public and developers to advise and provide information on their obligations under PPS25; and
- To guide the Council's asset management and investment decisions, emergency planning, flood resilience and flood warning requirements, and to inform bids for regeneration funding.

Emergency Planning

The definition of emergency in relation to Emergency Planning is provided by the 2004 Civil Contingencies Act:

- serious damage to human health
- serious damage to the environment

- serious damage to the security of the UK

Obviously extensive flooding would fall within either or both of the first two of these.

In Sefton we are unique among Merseyside Authorities in our system of managing our Emergency Planning preparation, The Emergency Planning Team meeting, on a bi-monthly basis with the EP LOG. This group of senior officers represents each of the directorates and the meetings provide the opportunity for discussion to take place on both departmental and corporate responses to a wide range of potential emergencies of which flooding is obviously one. It was decided by the group in November 2008 that the corporate lead for flooding should rest with Regeneration and Environmental Services.

The Emergency Planning Team has also had a long standing relationship with the Drainage team and although they have now moved to Capita Symonds the relationship continues, as evidenced by joint submissions on the impact of the Pitt Report to the Cabinet Member Communities.

Externally the Emergency Planning Team has good contacts with the EA, and via the drainage team, with United Utilities. They work closely with the other Merseyside authorities on the MLACPG and with other local Category 1 and 2 responders on the LRF. The team are represented on a number of sub groups and working parties including the Community Risk Management and Severe Weather and Flooding Sub Groups. The Severe Weather and Flooding sub group have been working for some time to develop a Merseyside Emergency Flood Strategy, the intention of which is to provide a framework which will underpin the operational plans that each LA is required to develop. This document though still in draft format is to be presented to the LRF for ratification in September and will be tested during a regional exercise in December.

Parish Councils

A number of Parish Councils made representation to the Working Group:

Maghull Town Council – representation made about concern of residents regarding rising groundwater levels in the area.

Melling Parish Council – representation made about concerns of residents relating to flooding and drainage in the area.

Sefton Parish Council – representation made about the condition of ditches.

Thornton Parish Council – representation made about urban and rural areas that have been affected by flooding for a number of years.

Several other Parish Councils asked to be kept informed of this review as they have had issues regarding flooding in the area.

The Working Group concluded that there is general disappointment from Parish Councils about the lack of funding available for dealing with flooding risks, and obvious confusion about lines of responsibility for matters across the public organisations, and with individuals (particularly about the enforcement of riparian responsibilities).

Environment Agency

The Working Group invited representation from the Environment Agency to discuss the current role, and proposed role for the Environment Agency, and to ask questions regarding budgetary decisions within Sefton and adequate facilities in place. The Members of the Working Group also visited the Altmouth Pumping Station in order to speak with the EA representatives about the condition of the pumping station and the planned refurbishment works and its impact upon the local area.

The general consensus from the Working Group was that the strategic role of the Environment Agency is supported in the Borough by close working with the Council, and the strategies and plans for the EA were clearly directed by national policy which ultimately resulted in difficulties for local resolution to certain problems. Members highlighted specific problems in local areas to the representatives of the EA, including the absence of remote monitoring in the Maghull / Lunt area which has had a specific impact on flood warning and were reassured that these concerns would be taken on board, whilst appreciating that budgetary decisions were often made on a long term strategic basis.

Members were generally reassured that the refurbishment works to the Altmouth Pumping Station would have a beneficial impact for residents of the area, and that there would be widespread communication with the local communities that are affected.

United Utilities

The Working Group invited representation from United Utilities to discuss their role and responsibilities regarding flood risk and responses to flooding in the Borough. There had been previous suggestions that United Utilities were less inclined to participate in local partnership arrangements than other organisations, but the Working Group felt that the organisation were clearly demonstrating a willingness to participate and involve themselves in local arrangements.

4.0 FINDINGS

- The Council's staff perform extremely well with extremely limited resources
- The Council's lack of investment in the drainage systems, brought about by budget constraints and savings, will need to be reversed to enable the drainage systems to be better able to deal with the effects of the changing weather patterns already being experienced as a result of climate change.
- Praise for existing good programmes and joint working across departments and organisations but more close working is needed
- Parish Councils provide a good source of local information which needs to be utilised by the Council and partner agencies
- Responding to climate change and changing weather patterns needs to be considered when developing policies around watercourse maintenance and flooding risks
- The public needs to be aware of the role and responsibilities of each relevant organisation (including joint responsibilities) – particularly in light of recent legislation
- Gully emptying and drain cleaning is subject to very limited resources
- The regular maintenance of watercourses in Formby has proved very beneficial to the residents
- Riparian responsibilities are not fully enforced due to the cost
- The Council does not fulfil its own riparian responsibilities
- Individuals also have an important role to play in preventing flood risks
- An ongoing role for Overview & Scrutiny around flooding issues would be valuable and is likely to be a future government requirement.
- The publication of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and close working with the Planning Department is essential for prevention

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. General

- 1.1 Cabinet and Chief Officers should note that since December 2008 the local authority has become the lead authority for flood risk management and all aspects and should make the appropriate arrangements in response to this new role.
- 1.2 Sefton should immediately establish a 'Sefton Flooding Group', along the lines of the successful Group now operating in Wirral. This Working Group should take forward the recommendations set out in this report.
- 1.3 Information should be made available to all residents and local businesses that sets out the contact details and areas of responsibility relating to flooding and what support flooded homeowners can expect.
- 1.4 The Council needs to ensure that their riparian ownership responsibilities are fulfilled, and seek to find ways to enforce individuals' responsibilities.
- 1.5 the Council should take on board the recommendations of the Pitt review, the Government's forthcoming flooding Bill and the actions proposed therein and take note of the comments on the Bill made by the Drainage Services Manager as part of the consultation process.
- 1.6 Cabinet be recommended to take note of the recently prepared Flood Risk Assessment.
- 1.7 the Council should take account of the financial and other implications of the forthcoming report on climate change to be submitted by the Drainage Services Manager.

2. Coastal / Tidal Flood Risks

- 2.1 Plans should be implemented to protect the area between the Coastguard Station & Hightown
- 2.2 The Council needs to discuss the repair of the "Training Bank" with interested parties

3. Watercourse / Fluvial Flood Risks

- 3.1 Within the authority's budgetary constraints the funding and development of a regular maintenance programme of the strategic watercourses across the Borough should be considered and the acceleration of the production of a definitive map of all watercourses should be investigated.
- 3.2 The Council should request the Environment Agency to install remote monitoring of water levels in the Lunt/Maghull area must be as a matter of urgency.
- 3.3 the Council should make efforts to provide assistance to residents whose properties have been subject to flooding as a result of the

- flooding of watercourses outside of the cartilage of their premises (for example from a neighbouring property).
- 3.4 the Council should consider introducing a policy prohibiting any further culverting of open watercourses and encouraging existing culverts to be re-opened wherever possible.
 - 3.5 the Council should instigate a programme to comply with its duty to inspect and maintain watercourses where culverted under the highway, firstly by compiling a comprehensive record of all such watercourses and then implementing a regular inspection and maintenance programme thereof.

4. Land and Highway Flood Risks

- 4.1 Residents should be notified in good time when gully cleansing is due to take place so that they can avoid parking over gully drainage grates.
- 4.2 Within the authority's budgetary constraints the funding and development of a more proactive response to flooding and maintenance across the Borough should be considered.
- 4.3 there is a need to ensure the proper screening of gully drainage grates etc. when highway surfacing works are carried out.

5. Pluvial or Surface Water Flood Risks

- 5.1 The Planning Department should look at means of enforcing planning permission for hard landscaping across the Borough (for example flagging front and rear gardens).
- 5.2 The Planning Department should endeavour to ensure that a flood risk assessment is included as part of the planning application process
- 5.3 The Planning Department should consider methods of ensuring that building does not take place above existing watercourses

6. Sewer or Foul Flood Risks

- 6.1 Sefton should publicise the responsibility of individuals, and private contractors, to not to dispose of certain materials down our domestic drains
- 6.2 The council should consult with United Utilities with a view to agreeing a practical schedule of sewer replacements within the borough.
- 6.3 The working group is concerned that the budget for the maintenance of gullies has been significantly reduced to the extent that gullies are now only able to be cleaned once per year and feels that the decision in respect of this budget should be revisited.