

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	Tuesday 7 November 2017
Subject:	Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual report to Overview and Scrutiny		
Report of:	Head of Locality Services - Commissioned	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member – Locality Services		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary: The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires that arrangements be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion risk management functions. This annual report satisfies that requirement.

Recommendation(s): That Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills);

(1) Review the report

(2) That any comments from this committee be referred to the Cabinet Member (Locality Services) for consideration.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To comply with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that requires Lead Local Flood Risk Authorities to report on progress on an annual basis to their Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

The Council could choose not to undertake its duties as set out in the Flood Risk Management Act 2010. This would reduce the Council's ability to manage flood risk in the Borough and may result in sanctions from Government for failing to deliver statutory functions. It will also reduce the Council's ability to secure external funding.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) **Revenue Costs.** Costs can be contained within existing budgets

(B) Capital Costs. Existing projects are being funded from grant from the Environment Agency, the main element of which has been secured until 2021. Grant aid will be sought for additional projects and schemes as required

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): No additional resource implications to those required to deliver service.</p>
<p>Legal Implications: Sefton Council will comply with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 that requires the work of the Lead Local Flood Risk Authorities be scrutinised.</p>
<p>Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.</p>

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: not applicable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The work FCERM does is about informing and educating our communities about flood risk and ensuring they understand their role in managing flood risk.
Commission, broker and provide core services: not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: We actively work in partnership with communities and other risk management organisations and authorities to ensure we can deliver our outcomes that tie into the 2030 vision.
Drivers of change and reform: by having a FCERM strategy in place and performance management systems in place we can ensure we are doing the right thing in the right way.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Not applicable
Greater income for social investment: not applicable
Cleaner Greener: the assets we manage on the coast and inland as part of the Green Infrastructure service enable people to come and enjoy Sefton’s natural beauty. The work we do to manage risk, understand risk, avoid increasing risk, reduce risk and reduce the consequences of flood risk both coastal and inland, directly supports Sefton’s economy and people’s health and wellbeing.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD 4873/17.) and Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD.4157/17) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee / Council meeting.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Enc 1. Appendix 1 O&S detailed action plan

Background Papers:

The following background papers, which are not available elsewhere on the Internet can be accessed on the Council website:

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy, Investment Plan and Service Plan
<http://smbc-modgov-01/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Ild=41245&Opt=0>

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1** The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (subsequently referred to as the Act) has placed a number of new duties on the Council as the Lead Local Flood Risk Authority; these have been previously presented to the committee. One of these is the requirement to make arrangements for Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the Council's progress and it was agreed that this would be achieved through the provision of an annual report.
- 1.2** Since our last Update in November 2016 The Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management team is merging with Parks & Greenspaces and Coast & Countryside services through the Public Sector Reform projects to become the Green Infrastructure service. We are currently looking at ways we can better link together to deliver services in a more effective and efficient way.
- 1.3** This report sets out progress that has been made in the last year, highlights key issues and sets out priorities for the coming years. Key items of work are detailed below.

2 Progress

2.1 Sefton's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy

This Strategy is a requirement under section 9 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The Strategy was adopted by Cabinet on the 1st October 2015. This Strategy sets out how Sefton will deliver flood and coastal erosion risk management, what investment will be needed to deliver this and the manner in which this service will be delivered. It defines the outcomes, outputs and actions for this service area.

- 2.1.1** The Action Plan associated with this Strategy sets out the programme and nature of works. Progress made against the action plan is provided in appendix 1.
- 2.1.2** The Investment Plan sets out how the actions will be funded and identifies potential funding sources. The updated Investment Plan is provided in appendix 2.
- 2.1.3** The Strategy is due to be updated in 2018 and work is currently underway to review the risk, update actions and review our outcomes to see if they are still relevant for the next strategy period.

2.2 Flooding incidents

The 5th September saw a prolonged period of rainfall that led to widespread flooding across Southport through to Formby. This was mainly confined to the highway and gardens. Rain fell for three hours in the morning and by late afternoon the majority of the flood water had drained away. This would suggest that the capacity of the system was the limiting factor. Contractors were sent out to draw water away from the worse affected areas and teams from United Utilities were out cleansing areas where foul flooding was suspected. There was only one report of internal flooding to a garage attached to a property.

2.3 Resilient Communities

This area of work has been developed to help deliver Sefton Council's priorities to create Resilient Communities and Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy. These projects aim to support communities to become more resilient during flood events and to have an input in the decisions made about flood risk management. This has been extended to align with Sefton's 2030 Vision theme of Resilient People and Places.

2.4 Formby Flood Group

We have worked with Formby Parish Council to establish a community flood group to try to jointly manage flood risk and improve the health and wellbeing of the community of Formby supported by grant in aid secured from the Environment Agency. A number of initial meetings with the wider community were held to share understanding of the risk in Formby and identify key priorities the community wanted pursuing. From these initial meetings the community agreed that a smaller group should be set up to represent the wider community views and take actions forward.

2.4.1 The Formby Flood Group is currently working towards establishing itself as a constituted group, which will enable it to source a wider range of funding opportunities to work towards achieving the community priorities.

2.4.2 The group's main priority is community resilience and it is looking at administering a community stock of flood sacks and a mechanism to warn residents of potential flooding from rivers or rainfall in the area, which should help reduce the impact/consequences of any flooding.

2.4.3 The group has set up a flood group website www.formbyflood.uk.

2.4.4 Working with John Moores University they have installed a number of groundwater monitoring sensors which feed live data back to a web portal to create an early warning system for groundwater flooding. The group felt that groundwater flooding is a serious problem in the area along with surface water flooding.

2.5 Maghull Flood Committee

We have worked with Maghull Town Council to establish a community flood group in the area supported by grant in aid secured from the Environment Agency. An advert was placed in the local newspaper inviting interested residents to help form a flood committee early in 2016. Since our last update in November 2016;

- The flood committee has disbanded following the setting of priorities and an attempt to establish roles within the committee. Friction began to form within the committee as members had different priorities and decided they could no longer commit their time to the group
- Two members of the community who have been flooded internally in Fouracres were still keen to set up a flood group just for Fouracres residents, but this has been slow in getting set up due to other commitments of these two members.
- The Council are still working with partner Flood Risk Management authorities in the area to look at further options and will continue to support the community.

- One option still to be considered by Fouracres residents is the purchase of a pump with an agreement by the residents to maintain and deploy when needed.
- We have been working with the Environment Agency on a scheme they are developing to reduce flood risk associated with Whinney Brook. They are currently expanding their modelling to include Melling brook and Dovers Brook.

2.6 Thornton Parish Council

The main urban area of Thornton has a piped watercourse running underneath properties, roads, schools and farmland. A number of issues related to the maintenance of the watercourse by the riparian owners have been raised, especially where it passes under individuals' property. We have been working with the Parish Council to engage with these riparian owners to work towards an effective maintenance programme. Through negotiation a riparian owner has renewed a culverted watercourse that was derelict and not functioning as it should this should address a number of issues with this watercourse.

2.7 Staffing

The FCERM team have recruited to the vacant post of Principal Officer. This post supports the team leader in the delivery of the service. They provide the key link between strategic planning and operational delivery. A key piece of work undertaken has been clearly communicating the Council's vision, corporate priorities and Sefton's 2030 Vision to the team and demonstrating how our service area supports these. This supports staff during challenging times and ensures the service is outcome focussed. This work has provided a clear line of sight and sense of purpose to tasks undertaken in the team and how everything we do ties into a much bigger picture and positive direction of travel.

- 2.7.1 This work has then led into a resource allocation, time recording and performance management system for the FCERM team. Each member of staff has been allocated a set number of hours to work within on various projects depending upon the budgets that are available. This allows us to monitor the work we are undertaking and flag if we are over or underspending and if the work we do is delivering our outcomes with the resources we have. This system has also been shared with other teams within Transport & Highways Infrastructure as a best practice way of setting a strategic direction with clear outcomes and a method for allocating resources and monitoring how the service is being delivered.
- 2.7.2 The successful candidate for the Principal Officer role was from within the team, this left a vacant post that resulted in a cascade of recruitment exercises. We have successfully filled the vacant Senior Officer role through internal promotion within the team and recruited in externally for the vacant Officer role. We now have a full complement of staff within the team and hope this will help in the delivery of our outcomes; however our budgets are very limited making very little revenue funds available to deliver anything above and beyond what we have to do legally or is our responsibility as we own an asset. We are working with our new colleagues in Green Infrastructure to seek opportunities to work deliver to deliver outcomes for our communities with limited resources.
- 2.7.3 Sefton Council has also secured funding from the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to support the delivery of the Shoreline Management Plan in the North

West in the form of a staff resource. This post will support local authorities and organisations across the North West from the Dee Estuary to Solway on the Scottish Border, to plan for the delivery of actions as set out in the Shoreline Management Plan. They will also provide a crucial link between the Shoreline Management Plan and the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. The post holder has made significant progress in setting the direction of travel and getting buy in from all Local Authorities and organisations across the North West. A forward plan is now in development and will be starting with a light touch review of SMP policies within each LA.

2.8 Local Planning Authority

As a statutory consultee for major planning applications (>10 properties or 0.5ha) we have commented on 63 major planning applications and, in addition, have commented on 424 minor applications between 1st October 2016 to end of September 2017.

2.8.1 We provided technical support and advice to the planning authority throughout the Local Plan enquiry. We attended the hearings and provided evidence to the inspector when required.

2.8.2 We are now working on major planning applications coming in as a result of the adoption of the Local Plan and release of sites.

2.9 Nile and Pool Investigations, Southport

Grant in aid has been secured from the Environment Agency to undertake investigations and studies into two watercourses that serve Southport and Birkdale. These watercourses have largely been piped/culverted over time and have had numerous connections and disconnections made to them. Initial investigation work has helped to identify where work is required to maintain the system, opportunities to restore the open watercourse and reduce flood risk. One of the options being developed is the restoration of the open watercourse through the Stray. Working with colleagues from Green Infrastructure we are looking at opportunities of in-house teams delivering and maintaining this project with volunteer or community groups.

2.10 Merseyside Natural Flood Risk Management

£30k funding has been secured from Environment Agency to undertake this project. Sefton has entered into partnership with the Healthy Rivers Trust to deliver this project. The Trust has recently carried out similar projects in Lancashire and has the computer modelling systems in place to efficiently deliver this work. Initial outputs identify areas within Merseyside to use as flood storage, to increase street or rural tree planting. For Sefton this has identified some areas where tree planting may help reduce flood risk along the River Alt, but most of the benefits to Sefton would come from undertaking work in adjacent local authorities such as Knowsley, by creating flood storage areas near to the source of the river Alt. All local authorities in Merseyside are now working together to look at opportunities and different funding sources available to take forward some of the schemes identified in the mapping. This will help deliver the Sefton Council 2030 vision for resilient people and places.

2.11 Coastal Risk Management

There have been no significant incidents of flooding or erosion along the coast. There has been the ongoing maintenance work and planning for future works as set out in section 4.

2.11.1 We have also advised Formby golf course about the risk of further erosion on their section of coastline for the next 100 years. This will allow them to make an informed decision about the relocation of certain greens which are presently at risk of being unusable due to the erosion occurring along this stretch of coast.

2.12 Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme

Sefton Council coordinate the monitoring programme on behalf of maritime authorities in the North West. The programme has secured grant funding for the continuation of the programme, from the Environment Agency, for another 5 year period from 2016 to 2021.

2.12.1 The programme employs 3 full time equivalents posts that bring additional benefits and skills into the Council. The team undertake the coastal surveys for the Sefton area and have worked with colleagues across the North West to support their survey programmes. The skills and equipment used for the monitoring programme is also available for inland survey work to the FCERM team and wider Council.

2.12.2 Contracts currently in place include Beach topographic surveys, hydrodynamic surveys, lidar, local process reporting and defence inspections and vertical aerial photography. We are currently writing a brief to tender an update our ecological mapping for the North West that assess the aerial photography and lidar.

3. Partnership Working

3.1. Merseyside Partnerships

Sefton Council continues to work closely with other partners in Merseyside through the Merseyside Tactical and Strategic Flood Risk Partnership meetings. These meetings look at improving cross boundary working and improved efficiencies through partnership working. The Merseyside Strategic group also prioritises the Grant in Aid bids through the Local Choices and administers a £50k support fund. Cllr McKinley represents Sefton at the Merseyside Strategic Partnership and represents the Merseyside Strategic Partnership at the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee as an elected member.

- 3.1.1. Sefton's Making Space for Water group brings together service areas and organisations with a role in flood and coastal erosion risk in Sefton. The group works at both strategic and operational levels facilitating closer working and improved cooperation and data sharing.

3.2. North West and North Wales Coastal Groups

Sefton Council sit on the North West and North Wales Coastal Group to report progress on the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme and the Shoreline Management Plan. This group reports on the progress of the actions of the Shoreline Management Plan to DEFRA. It is also represented on the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. The group oversees two sub groups both of which Sefton Council are represented at.

- 3.2.1. Liverpool Bay Coastal Sub Group is now chaired by Denbighshire Council as Sefton Council stepped down due to other work priorities. The group supports the exchange of best practice and partnership working.
- 3.2.2. Northern Coastal Sub Group is attended to enable Sefton Council to report on progress of the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. It also enables the wider understanding of coastal issues and exchange of best practice.

3.3. Key actions by other Flood Risk Management Agencies

3.3.1. The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency hasn't taken any significant actions in Sefton over the last year and has continued with their annual maintenance programmes and has provided support when requested to the Maghull Flood Committee.

3.3.2. United Utilities

They have undertaken a review of coastal erosion risk to their assets between Hightown and Hall Road, Crosby, following the erosion events in winter 2013/2014. They are working with us to identify a way forward for this area and have agreed to partly fund a scheme from Hall Road West to the Alt training bank to protect their asset.

- 3.3.3. We are currently in discussion with UU about working in partnership on the promotion of water saving measures and sustainable drainage at a property level. This would also compliment work they are doing with the Eco centre to create a

SUDS garden and design an education programme to be delivered in high risk surface water flooding areas.

3.4. Performance Management

We have made progress with a plan to monitor our performance going forward which involves monitoring our time and resources more closely. We have been struggling to document performance measures over the past 12 months that are useful and meaningful. We have made progress monitoring time and expenses and are currently developing more descriptive measures. This is a key priority area going forward to ensure we are measuring the right things to inform service delivery.

4. Priorities for 2018

4.1. Supporting the Local Planning Authority

With the adoption of the Local Plan the number of major applications is increasing. There are flood risk issues with the majority of the allocated sites; it is critical that we resource this area appropriately to ensure future flood risk is managed sustainably within the site and no negative effects are felt by surrounding areas.

4.2. Community Engagement/SUDS Hubs

Working with the communities should support longer term sustainable solutions and lead to more resilient communities and improved environments. However, there is a significant resource required to engage with and support these groups. The level of engagement has to be carefully managed to be effective and efficient and ensure our resources are being targeted to the area with the highest flood risk. We are also trying to embed sustainable water storage and use at a property level within areas at highest risk of surface water flooding as a priority but the across the whole of the borough. It is our aspiration for Sefton to become a SUDS Hub and a best practice example of sustainable water management. By reducing the amount of water each property inputs into the system or increasing the amount they can store on their property during wet weather events will reduce the amount of water going into already at or over capacity systems. If communities did this, the cumulative benefit of doing so would reduce flood risk without the need to resource a major drainage scheme.

4.3. Crosby Coastal Schemes

The Crosby Coastal Scheme is now a package of schemes pulled together for efficiency. Discussions have taken place with the Environment Agency, United Utilities, Natural England and Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service to scope out various options, environmental considerations and potential funding sources to bid for money to undertake the scheme.

4.3.1. The Alt training bank at the northern end of Crosby beach diverts the River Alt out into the Mersey shipping channel. The training bank has degraded over time and there is a breach developing. Should the breach enlarge the River Alt could take a more southerly course across Crosby beach and increase the risk of erosion to the existing defences.

4.3.2. The MEPAS rising main sewer that runs behind the coastline serves a large portion of northern Crosby. We are in discussion with United Utilities with regards to contributions to protect their sewer asset. The section between the Alt training

bank and coastguard station sits in made ground which is contaminated with asbestos. As the coast erodes it puts the sewer asset under increasing risk and can release asbestos. Currently work to secure this frontage is being programmed for 2019/2020.

4.3.3. The Crosby coastal defences that run from Hall Road, car park south to Seaforth docks are nearing the end of their life. Analysis of options is being undertaken to identify future solutions for this stretch of coastline. These need to be taken in a timely fashion as the lead in time for securing funding can be around 10 years. Due to the nature of the area it is likely that we will be unable to secure a significant contribution under flood and coastal erosion grant in aid and consequentially we will need to identify alternative funding sources.

4.4. **Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy Review**

Our strategy runs for three years 2015-2018, as such the process of reviewing the strategy has begun. The review will include a consultation/engagement exercise and subsequent reports to this committee.

4.5. **Securing Capital Funding**

It is critical that a forward programme of capital investment is planned and bids for grant are made at the appropriate time. Sefton regularly bid into the Environment Agency 6 year programme for flood and coastal erosion risk management, but it is becoming increasingly hard to justify schemes. Other capital funding sources and partnership funding opportunities need to be explored and built into the forward programme. New schemes in development include;

- Ainsdale to Birkdale coastal drainage scheme – improved drainage for the Nile and Coastal Road drainage systems c£50k
- SuDS hubs – examples of SuDS schemes in the community and property level water management (see 4.2) c.£290k

4.6. **Natural Flood Risk Management**

We plan to work with partners to implement some natural flood risk management schemes following the mapping exercises that were done with the Healthy Rivers Trust to slow the flow of water in Sefton or store the water to reduce flood risk. We also plan to implement the promotion of SUDS across Sefton with NFRM being an element of this.

4.7. **Performance management**

We plan on having the correct systems in place and linked directly to our outcomes and time/money spent in all our areas of work, to clearly document both qualitative and quantitative information, that can give us a meaningful overview of our success in achieving our outcomes.

4.8. **Green Infrastructure Service**

Continue to develop opportunities and synergies in the new Green Infrastructure service.