

 Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 3 February 2009		Agenda Item No.
Title	Scrutiny of Flooding – Update on Outcomes	
For further information about this report please contact	Alan Boad, Chair of the Scrutiny of Flooding Task & Finish Group,	
Service Area	Councillor	
Wards of the District directly affected	None	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	WDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee July 2008 WDC Executive September 2009.	
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	Yes
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	Yes
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <i>must</i> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Relevant Director	16/1/09	Chris Elliott & Bill Hunt
Chief Executive		
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		
Legal	13/1/09	Peter Oliver
Finance	13/1/09	Marcus Miskinis
Portfolio Holder(s)	16/1/09	John Hammon
Consultation Undertaken		
Councillor Alan Boad as Chair of the Task & Finish Group, Alwin McGibbon as WCC Scrutiny Officer who supported the review, WDC Head of Engineering, WDC Head of Planning and WCC EPU Team.		
Final Decision?	No	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		
A further report be submitted in six months time to this Committee updating them on the outcomes of this scrutiny.		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on the progress made with implementing the recommendations agreed by the Executive in September 2008 following the conclusion of the Scrutiny of Flooding undertaken by this authority jointly with WCC.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Committee notes the progress made to date and further report be submitted to the Committee in six months detailing the progress made with regard to implementing the actions and what impact their implementation has had.
- 2.2 The Committee notes the learning points from this joint scrutiny and the suggested practices (as outlined in paragraphs 7.7) and these be incorporated, where appropriate, in to the Council's Scrutiny working practices.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 When the Committee received the flooding report in July 2008, they asked for a progress report in 6 months. However the actions have not yet been implemented therefore the Committee need another report in six months to ensure that the outcomes have been achieved.

4. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The Committee could consider not having another report back but because of the sensitivity of this subject area, it is imperative that the Committee are satisfied their work has made a difference.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 There are no significant budgetary impacts for Warwick District Council within this report and those recommendations that require resources from Warwick District Council can be met within existing budgets.

6. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 This scrutiny was undertaken to investigate whether there were other ways the Council and its partners could respond to a flooding emergency. This feeds into the underlying theme of the Council's Corporate Strategy which is the aim to deliver a better quality of life for the communities within Warwick District.

7. **BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 A joint panel of Councillors from Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council was established following the severe weather of June and July 2007 to investigate whether it was possible to lessen the impact of severe weather conditions in Warwick District.

- 7.2 This investigation was completed and the recommendations agreed to by the Warwick District Council Executive in September 2008. One of these recommendations was that a progress report be submitted back to the WDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee in February 2009.
- 7.3 When officers Members' Services started contacting County Council officers with regard to progress of the recommendations they were informed that the WCC Cabinet were not due to consider the final report until 8 January 2009. Therefore the final report had not yet been sent to all the parties who had had an input into the scrutiny review.
- 7.4 In addition on reviewing the original report there was not a clear definition of who should be responsible for each outcome and what the desired impact of that outcome was.
- 7.5 The report to WCC Cabinet on 8 January 2009 explains that the "Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that the Panel's report should be passed on to Cabinet when the outcome of the Pitt Review was known". The decision of the Cabinet was that they agreed the recommendations in the report and in doing so asked the Warwick Area Committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations the County Council was responsible for. In addition the Cabinet commended the report and the work of the two Councils and asked that this be passed to other authorities in Warwickshire as an example of good practice in resolving flooding matters.
- 7.6 WDC Members' Services will be writing to all participants involved with the review (after this meeting) explaining the situation and where appropriate informing them that we will be contacting them in five months seeking an update on the progress of the recommendations.
- 7.6 Whilst officers recognise that this scrutiny review was a big step forward in how scrutiny work was undertaken by this Council and generally speaking was a success it has raised several concerns for officers and brought forward some key learning points and ways of ensuring that this situation does not repeat itself in future.
- 7.7 For these reasons in future as part of establishing the scrutiny it should be agreed who will take responsibility for circulating the final report to any participants and following up the actions and reporting back to Committee. In addition at the conclusion of any scrutiny a table (as set out at appendix 1) should be established for ease of use in monitoring the progress of any recommendations and responses to them.
- 7.8 The suggestions made above have already been recognised during the scrutiny of CCTV and the group adopted similar processes to ensure that these basic aspects are completed. This can be accounted for because, at present WDC has dedicated support for the Overview & Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Groups which has enabled a greater level of consideration and thought to be put into this process.

- 7.9 It should be recognised by Members that recommendation 2 has now been implemented for WDC members, although the information will not be updated annually, but as when required to ensure that Members have up to date information.
- 7.10 Since the conclusion of this review the Government has responded, in December 2008, to the Pitt review outcomes. This response passed the responsibility for surface water flooding and problems associated with this to upper tier authorities which would be Warwickshire County Council.

APPENDIX 1

	Recommendation	Responsible Body	Recommendation Accepted	Timetable for implementation
1	Self protection be promoted in that residents are encouraged to prepare for an emergency. The Environment Agency to lead on this with the support of Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council by using all means to raise awareness	Environment Agency, supported by WCC and WDC EPU Teams		
2	Both the Emergency Planning Unit and Members' Services for Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council to work together to ensure that emergency guidance and the contact information is provided annually to Councillors	WCC & WDC EPU teams		
3	Warwickshire County Council and Warwick District Council request the Primary Care Trust and other agencies that support vulnerable people to provide further information to the Humanitarian Assistance subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum on how neighbours could help vulnerable people in an emergency without putting themselves at risk and the information be coordinated where possible by the Emergency Planning Unit	WCC & WDC EPU teams		
4	The Emergency Planning Unit review the communication proposals outlined in (Appendix 1, paragraph 4.6 to the report) to see whether they could be implemented and report back to the Local Resilience Forum in 6 months time	WCC EPU Team		
5	Councillors and residents to be given information in leaflet or card form so they can contact the right provider (Environment Agency - brooks, rivers; British Waterways – canals; and Severn Trent – sewage). The panel to decide who should be given this task and have them report this information to Communicating with Public subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum in 6 months time	Local Resilience Forum		

6	Suggest to the Public subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum to consider the feasibility of having named individuals, with the remit to update the Council on river levels	WDC EPU team		
7	With the Environment Agency's assistance and training, existing groups such as Neighbourhood Watch be encouraged to set up a flood awareness group in conjunction with the Emergency Planning Units community emergency planning initiatives;	WCC EPU and EA		
8	As part of the emergency planning process that District, Town and Parish Councils consider where would be the best places to store flood warning signs, sandbags, emergency boxes with supplies, etc. to ensure that they can be easily accessed in an emergency situation. It is an opportunity for an enhanced role for all Councillors to take part in helping their community. This to be reviewed by Emergency Planning Unit in 6 months time and for them to report back to Warwick Area Committee	WCC & WDC EPU teams		
9	The Environment Agency to conduct a feasibility study to hold a roadshow in Leamington or other appropriate sites in Warwick District to raise public awareness. To arrange and invite the Emergency Planning Unit, Severn Trent, Primary Care Trust and any other emergency providers they consider would be useful for the public to meet to obtain information	Environment Agency		
10	The Planning Department to liaise with Severn Trent and British Waterways to clarify and develop new protocols and report back to Warwick District Council in 6 months time	WDC Planning		

11	Warwickshire County Council Highways to provide guidance and warning signs to Parish Councils to enable them to erect them to slow down traffic and suggest that Warwick Area Committee consider reviewing the effectiveness of providing warning signs to Parish Councils in 12 months time or after a flooding event	WCC Highways		
12	A copy of the report to be given to Warwick District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Executive, Warwick Area Committee, WCC Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, WCC Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Local Resilience Forum and all those that participated in the review to comment on the findings and recommendations of the panel	WDC Members' Services		
13	The Local Resilience Forum to continue to monitor the outcomes of the Pitt Review and report this to the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Local Resilience Forum		