

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 16 November 2018

Subject: **Flood Review**

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1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To provide an update on delivery of the 10 recommendations the Overview and Scrutiny Committee made in September 2016, which formed part of the Leeds City Region Flood Review developed in response to the 2015 Boxing Day flood events.
- 1.2 This report has sought to also focus on the particular interests highlighted by the Committee in the past and consider the question of what would be different if the flood events happened again in the future.

2. Information

Background – 2015 Boxing Day Floods

- 2.1 The Boxing Day floods severely affected several parts of the Leeds City Region; in particular, the Calder Valley, Leeds City Centre, York and towns along the Aire and Wharfe valleys in the Bradford district.
- 2.2 Over 2,000 businesses and 5,000 homes were affected, and more than 3,600 jobs were put at risk. In Calderdale alone, some 19,000 jobs were impacted in the months immediately after the 2015 flood event. The impacts on local business productivity cost the Leeds City Region economy up to £365m in 2016 alone (0.5% of p.a. economic growth). However, the long term impact on local businesses is still to be fully understood, particularly in terms of places where flooding has occurred more than once in recent times and the consequential impacts this is having not only on the ability of businesses to trade, but also on their ability to continue to obtain affordable insurance.

Leeds City Region Flood Review

Development of the Review

- 2.3 As a response to the broad extent and severity of the 2015 flooding events and because the greater frequency and severity of future floods are likely to be inevitable due to climate change, the Combined Authority requested that a Leeds City Region Flood Review be undertaken. The Review was prepared with contributions from the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP), all 10 City Region council partners, North Yorkshire County Council, the Combined Authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Canals and River Trust and the West Yorkshire Local Nature Partnership.
- 2.4 The Review was approved by the Combined Authority and subsequently published in December 2016¹ (Executive Summary attached at **Appendix 4**). It reported on:
1. The **economic impact** of the flooding on Leeds City Region;
 2. The lessons learnt and best practice in relation to **emergency response and civil contingency** arrangements;
 3. How **recovery** from such a civil emergency can be improved in the future; and
 4. The potential steps that need to be undertaken to improve our **resilience and preparedness** over the longer term.
- 2.5 The remit of the Review was to better understand the causes and impacts of the flooding and develop recommendations for action that, when implemented, would reduce the likelihood and impacts of flooding and enable more effective and joined up response and recovery phases to be put in place across the City Region. The Review did not have all the answers; further work and activity is ongoing to implement the Review Recommendations.
- 2.6 The Review highlighted the significant scale of the challenges, which will require a strategic approach that considers priorities and resources and encompasses short and long-term actions to address flood risk and food management in a more effective and holistic manner.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendations

- 2.7 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee conducted its own inquiry into the Boxing Day floods over two sessions on 23 March 2016 and 13 July 2016 concluding with a report to the Combined Authority on 22 September 2016 making 10 recommendations which ultimately formed part of the 19 Flood Review recommendations endorsed by Combined Authority on 1 December 2016.

¹ Full report available at: [http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/Research and publications/Leeds-City-Region-Flood-Review-Report-FINAL.pdf](http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/Research%20and%20publications/Leeds-City-Region-Flood-Review-Report-FINAL.pdf)

- 2.8 The conclusions and recommendations from the 22 September 2016 scrutiny report are summarised in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.9 A table providing an overview of how the Committee's recommendations relate to the Flood Review's 19 recommendations is available at **Appendix 2**. The table confirms that each of the 10 recommendations of the Committee are addressed by at least one of the Flood Review's 19 recommendations.

Delivery of the 19 Flood Review Recommendations

- 2.10 Work has progressed on a number of the Flood Review recommendations. This work has been led by Combined Authority officers on a day-to-day basis with the work being managed at an operational level by the Senior Flood Officers Group.
- 2.11 The Senior Flood Officers Group comprises West Yorkshire and York Chief Highway Officers and representatives from the Combined Authority's Policy and Delivery Directorates, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and the Yorkshire and Humber Chief Executives Group – Flood Risk Forum. The Group reports to City Region Chief Executives and the Combined Authority.
- 2.12 **Appendix 3** provides a summary of progress against each of the Flood Review's 19 recommendations to date.

Summary of the Flood Review's impact following the 2015 flood events

- 2.13 Earlier sections of the report (see **Appendix 3**) outline that significant progress has been made in delivering the Flood Review recommendations.
- 2.14 The progress with these recommendations will have an impact on future flooding events. The section below outlines some of the key aspects of change and progress since publication of the Flood Review.
- 2.15 **Economic Impact of Flooding:**
1. A consistent definition of critical infrastructure to be protected in the event of floods has been developed and drawn into a database of critical infrastructure. This has been mapped across the City Region to enhance the resilience of the City Region.
 2. The Combined Authority has enhanced the approach to economic modelling which supports bids to government for additional local funding.
- 2.16 **Emergency response recovery and resilience:**
1. Provisions for local people and businesses in high risk areas has been enhanced with support in place to develop 'Personal Emergency Plans' and providing suitable materials and support for future events. Improving their resilience in the event of future flooding events.
 2. Repeated testing of resilience through annual flood exercises in Calderdale to test the council and partners in both response and recovery to a flooding incident

3. Flood Stores have been established across West Yorkshire in local communities at risk of flooding. These are run by local volunteers and they contain equipment for residents to assist with cleaning up after flood events run by local volunteers
4. Joint community events are held with other organisations in flood risk areas which includes promoting both the Environment Agency's flood line and resilience measures for both home owners and businesses

2.17 Planning, risk reduction and mitigation for future events:

1. The Combined Authority has progressed a joined up approach to funding flood alleviation schemes. This approach will lead to efficiencies in capital funding programmes in the future for example:
 - i) The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) Sustainable Urban Development call through development of resilient and ecologically sound schemes; and
 - ii) Integration of flood mitigation considerations into transport/highway investment opportunities.
2. The Combined Authority is supporting the development of consistent flood mitigation planning approaches and guidance across the City Region and sharing best practice through existing consultation and engagement processes.
3. The partners in the city region are now working together collectively to develop a whole catchment approach to flood risk and resilience schemes. This includes: the Yorkshire Water pilot scheme for reservoir management.
4. The Combined Authority and LEP is continuing to support business resilience and recovery. Since 2015 over 60 businesses have been supported with approximately £3m of funding.
5. The Combined Authority has brought partners together to support delivery of the Flood Alleviation for Growth and Economic Resilience programme with a total value of circa £110m with over £98m of funding from partners including £20m from the Combined Authority. These projects are either complete, on site or due to start on site before the end of 2018/19:
 - Flood Alleviation Scheme 1 (Leeds), £53m, complete Oct 2017
 - Skipton (Craven), £17m, complete Sept 2018
 - Mytholmroyd (Calderdale), £30m, on site
 - Wyke Beck Valley (Leeds), £4.5m, on site
 - Natural Flood Management Calder and Colne (Calderdale and Kirklees), due to start before end 2018/19
6. In addition there is an indicative pipeline of additional projects, one from each West Yorkshire council partner, which are expected to come forward and progress through the assurance process, in order to draw down the £20m Growth Deal 3 programme allocation.

- 2.18 If flood events happen in the future, the City Region will be more prepared and resilient as a result of the Flood Review and the associated work of the Combined Authority and partners.

- 2.19 The importance of flood mitigation and resilience has also remained a core element of the Combined Authority's policy/strategy and delivery agenda.
- 2.20 The Combined Authority is continuing efforts to draw in more funding to deliver future schemes for post 2021 investment to support the work of the Environment Agency and our city region council partners. Subject to funding, these schemes will be delivered within a full river catchment approach and comprise a mix of complementary techniques. This will include capital (hard) infrastructure schemes such as weirs, linear flood defences and natural flood management (soft) techniques such as tree planting and flood storage areas.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

5. Staffing Implications

- 5.1 There are no staffing implications directly arising from this report.

6. External Consultees

- 6.1 No external consultations have been undertaken.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the progress that has been made delivering the Committee's and the Flood Review's recommendations.

8. Background Documents

[Minutes: Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting](#), 23 March 2016.

[Minutes: Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting](#), 13 July 2016.

Report: [\(Item 5\) Flood Response](#) – Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 22 September 2016.

[Minutes: Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting](#), 22 September 2016.

Report: [\(Item 7\) Leeds City Region Flood Review](#) – West Yorkshire Combined Authority, 1 December 2016.

[Leeds City Region Flood Review – full report](#)

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Flood Review conclusions and recommendations (22 September 2016)

Appendix 2 – Alignment of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's 10 recommendations and the Flood Review's 19 recommendations

Appendix 3 – Flood Review Work Programme update (October 2018)

Appendix 4 – Leeds City Region Flood Review – Executive Summary
Full report circulated to the Committee separately due to size, and available publicly online on the LEP website at: <http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/Research%20and%20publications/Leeds-City-Region-Flood-Review-Report-FINAL.pdf>