

The Pitt Review

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Environment Agency

Drivers for change

- The 2007 Summer floods
- The Pitt Report with 92 recommendations
- The Government Response to the Pitt Report on 17 December accepted all the recommendations
- The recent letter from Hilary Benn and John Healey to Council Leaders asks local authorities to take forward their leadership responsibility for local flood risk management, in advance of the Floods and Water Bill, through local partnerships

Two areas of work

- Reactive flood risk management:
 - flood forecasting and warning, flood emergency arrangements and recovery
- Proactive flood risk management:
 - flood risk assessment, planning and development control, urban drainage management, flood alleviation schemes, property and asset resilience

The reactive agenda

- The Civil Contingencies Act and Regional and Local Resilience forums provide the multi-agency infrastructure to take these matters forward
- Detailed work programmes are being taken forward in partnership
- Defra are consulting on the development of a National Flood Emergencies Framework to tie all the arrangements together (the Y&H consultation event will be on 23 March 2009)

The reactive agenda

- The EA is working on the following:
 - revising flood warning codes and info service
 - moving to an 'opt out' flood warning service
 - an extreme rainfall alert service and £5m joint flood forecasting centre the with Met Office
 - improving performance at Gold commands
 - supporting multi-agency flood plan development
 - helping the public make flood action plans
 - emergency plans for reservoir dam failures and rapid response catchments

The proactive agenda - fundamental requirements

- Risk assessments must take account of all types of flooding and the predominant risks in each locality need to be identified
- Parties with responsibilities must work together to agree priorities and develop joint strategies and plans
- We need to make the most of the limited funding and technical capabilities available
- Implementation needs to be based on sound science and sustainable practice

The proactive agenda – EA strategic overview

- The EA expects the Strategic Overview role for all forms of flood risk to include:
 - mapping and modelling all sources of flood risk
 - providing forecasting and warning services
 - providing guidance and tools for others (eg on planning, surface water management plans etc)
 - national prioritisation of central investment and development of a long term investment strategy

The proactive agenda - EA as operating authority

- The EA's national work will inform and support the work of other authorities and local partnerships
- The EA will also need to be an essential partner in most local partnerships as it has operational responsibility for main river and tidal flood risk
- The EA will remain a consultee on planning and will regulate land drainage

The proactive agenda - action being taken by the EA

- The EA is working on the following:
 - providing a flood risk screening service for critical infrastructure
 - issuing surface water flood risk maps to LRFs
 - producing high level inundation maps for reservoirs for discussion with LRFs
 - producing catchment profiles for rapid response catchments for review with LRFs

The proactive agenda - The Future: EA science priorities

- Understanding urban flood risk; modelling mapping and warning
- Responsibility for urban flood management; actions, assets and knowledge
- Developing pilots, partnerships and data sharing
- Building capacity to deliver urban flood management
- Linked to and supportive of the projects being overseen by the Y&H Learning Alliance

Examples of EA Science Projects that will drive future development in this field

- Integrated Urban Drainage Research Framework
- Refined Surface Water Flood Risk Mapping Project
- Pluvial Flood Warning Scoping Project
- All Sources of Flood Risk Prototype Mapping Tool
- Guidance on Retrofitting Surface Water Infrastructure
- Developing an 'Internet Portal' for information on Integrated Urban Drainage

The proactive agenda - other initiatives

- Transfer of private sewers to Water and Sewerage Companies wef April 2011
- £5m for property protection (LAs to identify communities and put in a bid via local EA offices). Round 1 bids need to be in by mid-March 2009
- Long Term Investment Plan (25 years)
- £200m increase in capital over 3 year period
- LA scrutiny committees and annual reports

The proactive agenda - the Floods and Water Bill

- Draft Bill for consultation in the Spring. It will consolidate all flood legislation. It will:
 - oblige co-operation and information sharing
 - take a more holistic approach to flood risk arrangements
 - revise committee structures and funding mechanisms
 - confirm roles and responsibilities including EA strategic overview and LA's local leadership role

The proactive agenda - partnership working and LA lead role

- LAs (upper tier & unitary) to be given lead responsibility for local flood risk management (all types of flooding). Next steps (Benn/Healey letter):
 - build local partnerships
 - understand local flood risks and ensure Strategic Flood Risk Assessments are in place as required by PPS25
 - develop Surface Water Management Plans in priority areas (2 pilots in Y&H, Leeds & Hull), then bid for funds for actions (top 50) £15m
 - assess technical capacity