
Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

6th April 2011

Report of
Councillor Harvard

Title
Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Regional Flood Defence Committee 2010-2011

1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This reports sets out details of the work of the Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC) over the preceding twelve months and details of attendance by the City Council's representatives.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That scrutiny notes the contents of the report and that the Council continues to appoint to this body.

3 Information on Work of Outside Body

- 3.1 The Severn-Trent Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC) is a body through which the Environment Agency carries out its work on flood defence and land drainage. The region is known as either the Severn Trent region (official title) or the Midland region. The boundaries are based around the drainage areas of the rivers and tributaries in the region and this takes the region across the welsh border in parts. The RFDC is linked directly with the Government Environment Agency.
- 3.2 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and Flood Risk Regulations give the City Council a new leadership role in flood risk management. We are now a "Lead Local Flood Authority" with responsibility for developing, maintaining and applying a local flood risk strategy. In response to this we have transformed our Multi-Agency Surface Water Management Group into the "Flood Risk Management Group." The Environment Agency play a key role on this group and they now have responsibility for maintaining a strategic overview of all forms of flooding. The RFDC is therefore an important element in ensuring the new Act is effective and our continuing membership is essential.

- 3.3 The committee is responsible for preparing an annual, programme of flood defence maintenance and improvement works, determining the necessary funding and obtaining department for environment food and rural affairs (DEFRA) approval, providing and operating flood-warning systems. Much of the work of the RFDC is around the monitoring of both capital works and revenue maintenance costs of the Environment Agency's operations in the region.
- 3.4 The total National budget for National Flood Work is £521m, a significant reduction from last year's budget of £830m. Cllr Harvard has submitted bids to the fund for schemes as listed paragraph 4.1.
- 3.5 The RFDC consists of a Chairman appointed by the Secretary of State for DEFRA and representatives appointed by Local Authorities, DEFRA and the Environment Agency with the committee meeting quarterly.

4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment

- 4.1 Coventry City Council pays a £94K "levy" to the Environment Agency each year and membership of this committee is essential to ensure that the authority gets value for money from that contribution. Coventry City has identified possible sites for local levy funding these are:
- i. Land off Bar Road
 - ii. Cricket Close – rear gardens
 - iii. Chaplefields
 - iv. Canley Brook

Furthermore, with the onset of climate change and the dawn of potentially challenging weather conditions in the future, flooding and flood defence will be given increasing importance as an agenda by many different agencies including Coventry City Council.

5 Attendance Record and Remuneration for the Appointment

- 5.1 The City Councils representatives on the Regional Flood Defence Committee are Councillors Harvard and Gazey. In the period from February, 2010 to January, 2011 inclusive, there have been five meetings for LA members to attend – four Flood Defence Committee meetings and one meeting in September for Local Authority FDC members only. The only meeting Councillor Harvard has been able to attend since his appointment in June was the meeting held in July. Councillor Faye Abbott deputised for Councillor Harvard at the meeting held in September for Local Authority members only and Councillor Gazey was also in attendance at this meeting. Councillor Gazey also attended three more of the meetings, once as the member, in April, and twice to deputise.
- 5.2 There is no remuneration for the appointment.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

Description of paper

Schedule of City Council Appointment to Outside Bodies

Location

Customer and Workforce
Services Directorate, CH 60