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**Report to**

Communities and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Board (4)

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2014

**Report of**

Councillor Lancaster, Cabinet Member (Public Services)

**Title**

Report Back on the Work Of Outside Bodies – Regional Flood and Coastal Committee

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This reports sets out details of the work of the Regional Flood Coastal Committee (RFCC) over the last twelve months and information 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 Regional Flood and Coastal Committees

3.1 RFCC's were set up under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The committees have a chair appointed by the Minister, members from Lead Local Flood Authorities (allowing for local democratic input) and independent members recruited by the Environment Agency (EA) who have specialist skills or backgrounds.

3.2 The RFCC which replaced the former Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC) meets quarterly.

3.3 The RFCC's are bodies through which the Environment Agency Midlands carries out its work on flood risk management.

3.4 There are two Regional Flood and Coastal Committees operating in Midlands region.

- English Severn and Wye RFCC
- Trent RFCC

3.5 The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has appointed Tim Farr as the Chair of the new Trent RFCC, and Anne Wheeler as the Chair of the new English Severn & Wye RFCC. These appointments extend until 30 June 2015.

3.6 The role of RFCC members is to:-

- Ensure there are coherent plans for identifying, communicating and managing flood and coastal erosion risks across catchments and shorelines;
- Promote efficient, targeted and risk-based investment in flood and coastal erosion risk management that optimises value for money and benefits for local communities; and
- Provide a link between the EA, Lead Local Flood Authorities, Internal Drainage Boards, and other relevant bodies to develop mutual understanding of flood and coastal erosion risks in its area.

3.7 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and Flood Risk Regulations give the City Council a new leadership role in flood risk management, as a "Lead Local Flood Authority" with responsibility for developing, maintaining and applying a local flood risk strategy. In response to this Coventry City Council transformed its Multi-Agency Surface Water Management Group into the "Flood Risk Management Group in 2011. The EA plays a key role on this group as they have responsibility for maintaining a strategic overview of all forms of flooding. The RFCC is an important element in ensuring the new Act is effective and the Councils' continuing membership is essential.

3.8 The RFCC committee is responsible for preparing an annual programme of flood defence maintenance and improvement works, determining the necessary funding and obtaining DEFRA approval, and also for providing and operating flood-warning systems. Much of the work of the RFCC is around the monitoring of both capital works and revenue maintenance costs of the EA's operations in the region.

3.9 The total National budget for National Flood Defence Work for 2014/15 is £795m, Schemes submitted for funding bids are listed in paragraph 4.1.

#### **4 Benefits to the City Council of the Appointment**

4.1 Coventry City Council pays a £86,975 "levy" to the Environment Agency each year and membership of the RFCC is essential to ensure that the authority gets value for money from that contribution. Coventry City has identified sites for local levy / Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA) funding these are:

- i. Butt Lane Property Level Protection
- ii. Rowley's Green Property Protection
- iii. Broad Lane / Banner Lane

- 4.2 The City Council are continuing our efforts to identify projects which can benefit from funding for future flood defence projects.
- 4.3 Furthermore, with the onset of climate change and the increase of potentially challenging weather conditions, 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**

The City Council's representative on the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee is Councillor Rachel Lancaster. In the period from June 2013 to April 2014, there have been four meetings for LA members to attend. Councillor Lancaster attended three meetings. Neal Thomas, representative from the Highways Flood Risk Management and Drainage section, acted as Councillor Lancaster's Deputy on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014 as her apologies were given.

5.2 There is no remuneration for the appointment.

List of background papers

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