

GMCA PLANNING AND HOUSING COMMISSION

DATE: 24 JANUARY 2020

SUBJECT: GREATER MANCHESTER FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT REVIEW

REPORT OF: JILL HOLDEN, GREATER MANCHESTER FLOOD AND WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME MANAGER, GMCA

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To review the current organisational arrangements which have been established to support the delivery of flood and water management activity across Greater Manchester.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

PHC is requested to

- (i) Note the report**
- (ii) Agree to receive an update at the next meeting on:**
 - a. the Regional Flood and Coastal Committees timetable for investment decisions and**
 - b. Overview from the Environment Agency (and United Utilities) on the existing flood risk management programme for Greater Manchester**

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1. Summary

- The Flood & Water Management Act 2010 introduced a new approach to flood and water management.
- All Greater Manchester Local Authorities became 'Lead Local Flood Authorities' (LLFA's) responsible for delivery of a strategy for local flood risk management, maintaining an asset register and managing flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses.
- 12 Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCC) were established by the Environment Agency including NW RFCC, bringing together members appointed by LLFA's and other Risk Management Authorities (e.g. United Utilities).
- NW RFCC agrees investment priorities and approves the flood and coastal investment programme and its membership is drawn from 5 sub regional partnerships including Greater Manchester (GM).
- Greater Manchester has 3 political members on RFCC.
- GM Flood and Water Management Board (FWMB) was established in 2012 to support the delivery of the LLFA's new duties. Its membership includes the 3 GM NW RFCC political members, EA, UU, the LLFA and resilience/civil contingency team reps.
- Endorses GM's flood risk management programme submitted for Grant in Aid and or Local Levy funding to the NW RFCC.
- Stronger political buy-in is required to ensure maximum influence around Greater Manchester investment opportunities at NW RFCC.
- The 3 RFCC political members are representative of Greater Manchester not individual LA's.
- FWMB is an officer led group and without all 10 districts represented by political members it is difficult to gauge Greater Manchester's collective political views or strategic priorities in respect to FRM priorities.
- The LLFA's duties are now well established and the current investment programme is coming to its conclusion in the next financial year. The FWMB will be abolished as priorities for flood and water management are now more concentrated around the wider delivery and investment linking to infrastructure and GMCA's emerging governance framework.
- The planning and housing portfolio brief has been extended to include infrastructure. There is the need to integrate flood and water management work more closely with strategic work on infrastructure investment and with policy around place making - growth/development, resilience and transport.
- LLFA local government settlement not ring fenced. Issues around staff and funding constraints, retention of technical expertise and managing public expectations.
- The implications of this include a risk to Greater Manchester's reputation around delivery – reduced confidence year on year which could impact future

investment opportunities and an inability to identify more innovative funding solutions which are wider than reliance on Grant in Aid and Local Authority capital.

2. **Flood and water governance changes.**

- FWMB will be abolished. Strategic engagement with RMAs will be undertaken through the Strategic Infrastructure Board (SIB) (and associated working groups) and political/district engagement will be addressed via the Planning and Housing Commission (PHC) which includes relevant political representation from all 10 Local Authorities.
- Greater Manchester PHC has recently reviewed its Terms of Reference and executive members with the planning and/or housing portfolio from all 10 districts are now commissioners.
- The Greater Manchester PHC will be a conduit for the NW RFCC members. Through this route all districts are represented providing a direct route to the City Mayor
- Greater Manchester NW RFCC representatives will be invited to the PHC if they are not already members (i.e. if the RFCC member is not the Executive member for planning and/or housing).
- This will provide a stronger political buy in to flood and water management, a direct line of sight to NW RFCC and support to help deliver the Grant in Aid/capital flood risk management programme .
- The former FWMB work plan is now embedded into the draft Greater Manchester SIB Blue and Green Challenge group work programme reporting to Greater Manchester SIB.
- Delivery of flood risk management works will continue through the technically focused Flood Risk Officers Group (FROG) where every LLFA is represented and provide technical support to the SIB through Challenge/T&F groups.
- Statutory duties will continue to be monitored through FROG.
- Role of GM Flood and Water Management Programme Manager (FWMPM) be embedded with GMCA structures. The role would become the point of contact and conduit for FRM functions, engaging internally and externally with districts/LLFA's and partners, reporting through to NW RFCC with a focus around investment and programme delivery, Strategic Infrastructure Board on strategic matters involving external partners (for example EA, UU), and Planning and Housing Commission
- The role is 50% EA and 50% LLFA funded. This has been secured for 2020/21 but the EA is reviewing its revenue spending in October 2020. In Greater Manchester the post of FWMPM has been employed by Rochdale on behalf of the 10 districts. It is proposed that, subject to funding, this post becomes a GMCA post from 2021/22.

3. **Conclusion**

The proposed approach will help to:

- Deliver integrated place based outcomes;
- support our lobbying with Government for additional capital support for flood risk management,
- Help to better align investment by embedding work on flood risk and water management within Greater Manchester's wider policy landscape and
- Provide a focus on programmes to deliver multiple benefits. Immediate opportunities include the identification of investment opportunities outwith Grant in Aid funding, resilience of existing infrastructure as well as embedding flood risk protection in our growth plans (including in our town centres)