

# Joint County and District Council Flood Scrutiny Group

## Final Report



**Flooding in Filey, July 2007**  
By kind permission of the Filey Flood Working Group

**June 2009**

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## 1.0 Chairman's Foreword

The risk of flooding is here to stay. This was the overwhelming message received by the Joint Scrutiny Task Group on flooding. We have all seen pictures in the media of the devastating effects of the major floods in 2007 in Hull, South Yorkshire and Gloucestershire, which prompted Sir Michael Pitt's comprehensive review, but flooding affects communities much closer to home.

People from communities in North Yorkshire that have flooded all tell a similar story; flooding causes great distress and can be traumatic for a sustained period of time. This strengthened our resolve to carry out this timely assessment of how well prepared we are in terms of flood prevention, planning and recovery and also puts forward proposals for what communities can do to mitigate the worst effects.

Flooding is a topical issue. Sir Michael Pitt's report has prompted national and local debate on what local authorities and agencies can do in partnership. This provided the Task Group with a steer on how its work might be conducted. Whilst we provide an assessment of our preparedness to respond to the recommendations under Pitt, our report is more than that; it sets out our conclusions on the attitudes of agencies involved in flood planning and their commitment towards working together. From the evidence we looked at and from the many discussions we had, our assessment is that we are well prepared. Agencies demonstrated they have a strong track record of working effectively and closely together at a strategic level and it is particularly pleasing that individuals on the ground respect and trust one another and work collaboratively, particularly on an informal basis.

I am grateful for all the advice that individuals from those organisations contributed to this exercise.

Having established we are organisationally well prepared and the infrastructure is sound, the Task Group cast its eye over what could be done to improve community engagement in flood planning. It is hardly surprising that people's attention and interest in flooding matters is at its highest when they are personally affected. Furthermore we were not surprised to find that most people unaffected by flooding tend not to concern themselves with it. There is an argument for doing what we can to raise awareness that flooding is potentially a county-wide risk. In practical terms, information and support might be best targeted in those areas where the flooding risk is at its greatest. Our report comes forward with constructive proposals in this context which we believe adds significantly to the debate.

Finally, I believe that this report and the work undertaken shows how community leaders across authorities working together with good support can reflect the wishes and views of their constituents and come forward with proposals that can improve the quality of life for people in the communities we serve.

I hope you find the report informative and useful.



**Cllr John Blackburn**

## **2.0 PART ONE - BACKGROUND**

### **3.0 Objectives/Terms of reference**

3.1 The Joint County and District Council Flood Scrutiny Group was set up in Autumn 2008 with the objective of reviewing how prepared North Yorkshire is for flooding incidents, and to make recommendations regarding community resilience. The terms of reference for the review were:-

- *To consider the key agencies' responsibilities and their working relationships with the County Council and each other*
- *To review the procedures for flood prevention, response and recovery.*
- *To establish what arrangements there are for involving and consulting local communities and neighbourhoods in determining flood prevention plans and in flood response and recovery arrangements.*
- *To assess the extent to which the County Council and its partner agencies encourage and take into account local views and intelligence.*
- *To make recommendations for appropriate action by the County Council and partner agencies, particularly relating to the most appropriate locality arrangements and structures for improving community awareness and influence.*

### **4.0 Membership of the Group**

4.1 The group was made up of six County Council elected members (three representatives from the Safe and Sustainable Overview and Scrutiny Committee and three representatives from the Environment and Heritage Overview and Scrutiny Committee) and one elected member from each of the seven District and Borough Councils.

4.2 The membership was as follows

Cllr Michelle Andrew (Vice Chair)	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Val Arnold	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr John Blackburn (Chair)	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Geoffrey Cullern	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr David Fagan	Selby District Council
Cllr John Flinton	Scarborough Borough Council
Cllr Richard Grange	Harrogate Borough Council
Cllr Mrs Frances Greenwell	Hambleton District Council
Cllr Richard Hall (substitute: Cllr Herbert Tindall)	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr William Heslop	Richmondshire District Council
Cllr David Lloyd-Williams	North Yorkshire County Council
Cllr Elizabeth Shields	Ryedale District Council
Cllr Paul Whitaker	Craven District Council

4.3 The Group was supported by Ray Busby and Rachel Rushforth, Scrutiny Support Officers and Laura Broadbent, Graduate Development Scheme.

## 5.0 Meetings and visits

5.1 A summary of the meetings and activities of the group is given below.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Meeting/activity</b>	<b>Focus/outcome</b>
Tues 9 December 2008	Multi-agency workshop on flood planning and response	To consider arrangements for multi-agency working on flood prevention, response and recovery
Tues 20 January 2009	Task group meeting Environment Agency offices, York	Visit EA Flood Incident Room - Briefing on multi-agency flood plans and community flood planning in North Yorkshire
Tues 10 February 10am – 3pm	Visit to Hull City Council	To speak to officers and councillors at Hull CC about lessons learned from the 2007 floods
Tues 3 March 10am – 12 noon	Task group meeting Northdale, Northallerton	Discussion with Alan Purdue, Morpeth DC re. recovery planning and joint working with partners - Report on Joint media warning and information group
Tues 31 March 10am – 12 noon	Task group meeting County Hall, Northallerton	Presentation by NYCC Emergency Planning Team - Feedback from the Parish Council questionnaires
Tues 28 April  10am – 1pm Workshop 1 – 1.30pm Lunch 1.30 – 3pm Meeting	Workshop on community resilience including input from the National Flood Forum and from local flood groups  Followed by Task group meeting  The Spa, Scarborough	Workshop: To learn about good practice in North Yorkshire and nationally  Meeting: To discuss the conclusions of the group - Analysis of the Parish Council questionnaires
Mon 18 May	Task group meeting County Hall, Northallerton	To discuss and agree the final report and recommendations of the task group

## PART TWO – REVIEW OF ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PROCEDURES

### 6.0 Problems of flooding in North Yorkshire

- 6.1 According to the North Yorkshire Community Risk Register, which provides public information about the hazards that have been identified within the county, the frequency of flooding in North Yorkshire makes it one of the biggest risks at local authority level (other major risks being pandemic flu and severe weather). There is mounting evidence that the UK is experiencing unusual and variable weather which may in part be attributable to the effects of global climate change. Models of what the climate might be like in the future suggest that events we now consider to be 'extreme' will become more commonplace.
- 6.2 A recent Yorkshire and Humber Regional Climate Change Adaptation Study<sup>1</sup> has projected climate changes across the region to the 2050s using state-of-the-art modelling techniques. It identifies the following key changes for the Yorkshire and Humber region:
- Annual average daily temperatures rising, by almost 2°C;
  - Extreme hot temperatures will increase, with summer temperatures more regularly reaching 34°C;
  - A reduction in annual rainfall of up to 6%, although by less in upland areas;
  - Greater seasonality of rainfall, with increases in winter combined with significant reductions in summer;
  - In northern and upland areas an increase in the number of extreme rainfall events;
  - Dry spells (over 10 consecutive days without rain) are expected to increase in number;
  - Significant reductions in the number of days of frost and snow;
  - Marginal increases in winter average wind speeds, although summer and autumn speeds reduce slightly;
  - Sea levels will rise by around 0.35 metres.
- 6.3 In North Yorkshire, over recent years, unexpected flooding has occurred in areas that haven't previously flooded. The risk to communities of being affected by a flooding incident is therefore increasing.
- 6.4 Flooding can generally be categorised into four types:
- a) **River flooding** – usually caused by excessive rain entering the rivers and smaller watercourses. Rivers vary in the way they respond depending on their capacity and available access to the floodplain. River flooding can largely be forecast and the Environment Agency monitors river levels. North Yorkshire has 14 main river catchments that can be the cause flooding. Selby has experienced major problems with main river flooding and an £18m flood defence improvement scheme has recently been completed. Malton experienced two bad floods in quick succession and as a result flood defences were built, at a cost of £12 million, to minimise the effects of river flooding. In 2005, excessive rainfall caused the River Rye to flood, affecting Helmsley. Flood defence options are being explored for Pickering, such as small retention

dams and land usage. A flood defence scheme for the River Skell in Ripon is currently being designed.

- b) **Coastal flooding** – caused by a combination of high tides and waves. A build up of low pressure can coincide with high tides and lead to a tidal surge which can cause serious flooding. Tidal flooding, where high tides and coastal surges cause flooding further upstream, is also a problem. Have a sophisticated tidal warning system. The Environment Agency monitors tides and issues warnings accordingly. Scarborough district has a full coastal boundary which exposes it to risk and particular areas at risk are Sandsend, Whitby, and the Foreshore Road and Spa areas of Scarborough.
- c) **Ground water flooding** – caused by water rising up from the underlying rocks or from water flowing from abnormal springs. This tends to occur after long periods of sustained high rainfall, causing the water table to rise.
- d) **Surface water flooding** – occurs when natural and man-made drainage have insufficient capacity to deal with the volume of rainfall. This is an increasing problem, particularly in urban areas and on highways. New developments can increase run-off from roads and hard landscaping, and developers are now encouraged to include green space to absorb run-off water. Much of the flooding that occurred in North Yorkshire in June 2007 was caused by excessive surface water. Areas badly affected included Gilling West, Stokesley, Norton and Malton, Filey, Thirsk, Selby, South Milford and Bolton Percy.

## 7.0 Flood Prevention

There have been a number of flood alleviation schemes in North Yorkshire that have reduced the flooding risk drastically for those people living near the coast, rivers and watercourses. Flood alleviation projects in the Yorkshire region are either funded nationally or through the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee's local levy programme. The local levy raises funds from local authorities to meet the cost of local schemes not eligible for national funding and is supported by matched funding from Yorkshire Forward.

The Group was concerned to know about the impact of drain and gully maintenance and dredging of rivers on preventing flooding. We were told that NYCC Highways has a programme of gully clearing and sets aside specific resources for this. All gullies are emptied twice a year. However, the clearing schedules are being reviewed and Highways are looking at different frequencies in different areas, to take account of local conditions.

Regarding dredging, except in specific circumstances, the Environment Agency tend not to use this as a means of reducing flood risk. With a man-made drain which has no natural flow, there is scope for dredging to stop debris building up. However, for rivers and watercourses, dredging is usually ineffective because the natural flow will lead to it silting up again. In fact, a flood can have the effect of scouring the river.



## **8.0 National Context**

### **8.1 The Pitt Review**

8.2 The review of the 2007 floods carried out by Sir Michael Pitt contained 92 recommendations, which were the result of months of evidence-gathering<sup>2</sup>.

8.3 In relation to the Group's remit, the following recommendations are particularly relevant:-

- Local authorities should have a local leadership role for flood risk management.
- Inaction during the 2007 floods was exacerbated by unclear ownership and responsibilities.
- Clarifying and communicating the role of each of the [main] bodies would improve the response to flooding.
- The public need to be provided with better education and publicity about preparing for, and dealing with, the risks of flooding.
- The public need to be aware of a flooding risk before they can take action to minimise it.
- Predicting where flooding will occur and the potential consequences are vital if managers, emergency planners and responders are to reduce risk and effects of flooding.
- All upper tier local authorities should establish Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review work by public sector bodies and essential service providers in order to manage flood risk, underpinned by a legal requirement to cooperate and share information.
- People affected by the floods suffered illness (mental and physical) in large numbers.
- Sandbags are still widely regarded as an important focus for community action and they should not simply be withdrawn.
- Involving the community in local planning increases awareness and lessens the risk of fatalities and damage.
- Local authorities should coordinate a systematic programme of community engagement in their area during the recovery phase.

### **8.4 Government's response and the draft Floods and Water Management Bill**

8.5 In December 2008 the Government supported changes in response to all the Pitt Review recommendations and published an action plan for implementing them.<sup>3</sup>

8.6 At the end of April 2009 the Government launched a consultation on the draft Floods and Water Management Bill.<sup>4</sup> The draft Bill proposes to strengthen and extend existing flood and water legislation, including implementing appropriate recommendations from the Pitt Review.

8.7 The draft Bill proposes that local authorities lead on local flood risk management. It is proposed that County and unitary authorities would be responsible for local flood risk assessment, mapping and planning in relation to

ordinary watercourses, surface run-off and groundwater. They would also lead the production of local surface water management plans. There would be a duty for all relevant authorities (including water companies and internal drainage boards) to co-operate and share information.

8.8 The Group noted that a multi-agency Flood Management Working Group had been set up to take forward a joint approach to the new legislative requirements. A response to the draft Bill will be made by the County and District Councils and by the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum.

8.9 Both the Pitt Review and the draft Bill make it clear that success depends on greater co-ordination and co-operation between local partners. It was in this context that the scrutiny group carried out its review.

## 9.0 Roles and responsibilities relating to flooding in North Yorkshire

9.1 There are many different agencies that have some level of responsibility in relation to flooding.

9.2 Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004<sup>5</sup>, agencies were divided into two groups; Key Responders (Category 1) and Key Co-operating Responders (Category 2). These are as follows:

<b>Category 1</b>
Police (incl. British Transport Police)
Fire Services
Ambulance Services
HM Coastguard
Local authorities
Port Health Authorities
Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts, Foundation Trusts (and Welsh equivalents), Health Protection Agency
Environment Agency and Scottish Environment Protection Agency

9.3 Category 1 responders have a statutory duty to assess the risk of emergencies and use this to inform contingency planning

- Put in place emergency plans and business continuity arrangements.
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection and to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.
- Share information and cooperate with other local responders.
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity (local authorities only).

<b>Category 2</b>		
<b>Utilities</b>	<b>Transport</b>	<b>Others</b>
Electricity distributors and transmitters	Network Rail	Strategic Health Authorities

Gas distributors	Train Operating Companies	Health and Safety Executive
Water and sewerage undertakers	London Underground	
Telephone service providers	Transport for London	
	Highways Agency	
	Airport operators	
	Harbour authorities	

<b>Other coordinating authorities</b>
Government Office
Military
Voluntary Organisations

## 10.0 The role of the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (NYLRF)

- 10.1 The North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (NYLRF) was set up to organise the co-ordinated response to major incidents in North Yorkshire. The Forum consists of representatives from the Emergency Services, Local Authorities, Health, Environment Agency and other professional and voluntary agencies.<sup>6</sup>
- 10.2 The NYLRF has proved to be effective and pro-active in developing and maintaining major incident plans and procedures as a joint capability to respond to any major incident within North Yorkshire.
- 10.3 The NYLRF is headed by the Strategic Group which is comprised of senior officers of Category 1 and other Responder agencies. It is chaired by the Chief Executive of North Yorkshire County Council. Each tier of groups is coordinated by a senior member of staff from the agency most appropriate to the subject. The NYLRF maintains a community risk register.

## 11.0 The current role of Local Authorities

- 11.1 The role of local authorities during an emergency is to support the emergency (blue light) services in the immediate response and to take a lead in the recovery phase to ensure that life returns to normal as quickly as possible for the community affected.
- 11.2 During the response phase local authorities can assist in the provision of reception/rest centres, short and long term accommodation, providing food, environmental health and highway services, equipment and transport, organisation of temporary mortuary facilities, provision of welfare support, media liaison and engagement and co-ordination of voluntary organisations. District/Borough councils can also provide sandbags.
- 11.3 As a Highway authority, the County Council has a role in investigating highway flooding; implementing the closure of roads and diversion routes in conjunction

with the Police and supplying appropriate signage; clearing debris from the highway; clearing blocked gullies and taking emergency action to deal with flooding as appropriate.

## **12.0 The role of the Environment Agency (EA)**

- 12.1 The Group visited the EA's offices in York and was shown around the Flood Incident Room by Colin Atkinson, Flood Incident Management Team Leader.
- 12.2 The EA is a Departmental Public Body responsible to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.<sup>7</sup> It works to reduce the chance of flooding by managing land and river systems. It is consulted upon land usage and gives recommendations and directions to developers and planning authorities. In relation to the upper catchment areas, it makes suggestions to try to reduce run-off and the speed that water enters the river systems. In terms of maintenance, the EA has responsibility for main rivers and critical watercourses if there is a flood risk.
- 12.3 The EA also looks at solutions such as changes in land use, temporary defences, better flood warning and self-help schemes, and building and maintaining flood defences.
- 12.4 The draft Flood and Water Management Bill proposes a national strategic overview role for the EA for all forms of flooding and coastal erosion. The EA is also working more closely with the Met Office to enhance their forecasting and warning capabilities.
- 12.5 The EA has trained duty officers who monitor the weather, river and sea levels around the clock. They keep a constant check on river levels and tides by use of rain and tide gauges and flood forecasting equipment. The Group met and talked to 2 duty officers about how the monitoring and warning system works.
- 12.6 If the threat is serious, the duty officer arranges for flood warnings to be issued. In flood risk areas, if people are signed up to the Floodline Warning Direct service, they will automatically be issued with flood warnings via their phone (call or text), email, fax or pager. Warnings also go to local authorities, the police, fire, and other emergency response organisations. Warnings are also issued to the media.
- 12.7 Members were told that the joint Met Office/Environment Agency warning system would be active from April. One of the recommendations of the Pitt Review was that the Government should significantly increase the take-up of flood warning scheme.
- 12.8 The current flood warning scheme is available to people living in a flood risk area. However, take-up has been relatively low and the system is under review. It is expected that a new scheme will be launched in the Autumn 2009 and this could take the form of an opt-out scheme for people living in flood risk areas rather than people having to opt in.

12.9 From July 2009, local authorities will be able to be included as 'professional partners' in the advance warning scheme, which means they can get a five day advance warning of severe weather. In addition, Elected Members and other community representatives can receive an 'area of interest' warning, which means they can receive flood warnings for areas in which they do not live. To sign up for this, Members would need to contact the EA with their address and telephone number.

### **13.0 The role of the Water Authority**

13.1 The local water authority, in this case Yorkshire Water, is responsible for all of the public sewer systems in the region but it is not responsible for private sewers, which are the joint responsibility of each property that drains into them.

13.2 During a flood, the role of the water authority is to ensure that water supplies are not interrupted and to work closely with the Environment Agency throughout the event to prevent environmental damage. Yorkshire Water also runs and maintains pumping stations during the flood and pumps out excess water.

### **14.0 The role of the Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs)**

14.1 IDBs are independent bodies that have general supervision over all matters relating to the drainage of land within their area. There are numerous internal drainage boards across North Yorkshire that maintain, improve and construct new works for the purposes of land drainage. They may also undertake flood defence works on ordinary watercourses within their district (that is, watercourses other than 'main river').

### **15.0 The role of individuals**

15.1 Individuals are responsible for the drainage of their own land, and for accepting and dealing with the natural flows from adjoining land. A riparian owner (who lives beside a river) must accept flood water flowing through his land, even if caused by inadequate capacity downstream. A landowner can be required by the relevant drainage board, under statute law, to carry out repair and maintenance work to a watercourse where he/she has a legal responsibility to do so, but has failed to carry that out responsibility.

### **16.0 The role of the Emergency Planning Unit (EPU)**

16.1 The Group was given a briefing by Robin Myshrall, Head of the North Yorkshire EPU and other members of his team.

16.2 The EPU has a central co-ordinating role in planning for potential crises in conjunction with many partner agencies such as the District/Borough Councils, utility companies, County Council Directorates, emergency services, the Environment Agency, voluntary groups and local communities. The plans include setting up reception centres, dealing with the media, coastal oil pollution, crises relating to schools and many others. All of these enable the County Council to respond quickly and effectively to any incident that may affect the local community. The Unit operates a duty officer system 24 hrs a day, 365

days a year, providing the local authority's link with the emergency services and supporting them where required. Following an incident, the EPU work with partners to debrief, review plans and discuss lessons to be learnt and included in future planning.

- 16.3 The North Yorkshire EPU covers emergency planning for the County Council and six districts (excluding Harrogate district). Harrogate retains its own emergency planning facility.

## **17.0 The role of the Major Incident Response Team (MIRT)**

17.1 The Group heard about the work of the Major Incident Response Team (MIRT) from its Manager, Paddy Chapman. MIRT is a county-wide service that can be accessed by the County Council, District/Borough Councils and emergency services. Paddy leads a team of 33 volunteers drawn from across the caring community who offer practical and emotional support to individual and communities in the aftermath of a major incident. The aim of the team is to support and assist people to regain control of their lives. The team is supported by a network of carers and befrienders, and it works closely with voluntary organisations.

17.2 During the Filey flood incident, MIRT members fed back information from members of the public which informed officers who were planning the response and recovery. The team can therefore provide a link between the community and the emergency responders. However, MIRT is a limited resource and in the case of multiple emergencies in different parts of the county, it would be deployed on the basis of highest priority.

## **18.0 The role of the NYLRF Joint Media Warning and Informing Group**

18.1 The Group spoke to Helen Edwards, Head of Communications at North Yorkshire County Council about the North Yorkshire Joint Media Warning and Informing Group. The Group is made up of a range of representatives who provide communications advice and support on warning and informing the public about emergencies.

18.2 Helen said that the Group would be updating the communications plan and mapping all channels of communication. She said that the Group had not carried out a full simulation of an emergency situation that involved all media, but this was something that would be done. She said that elected members would need to be integrated into the communications plan, as they were often the first point of call for disseminating information in an emergency.

## **19.0 The Role of the Elected Member**

19.1 Councillors are well placed to understand the needs and wishes of local people and balance those against the demands of professional officers and community groups. How this relates to flooding matters is less straightforward, especially as the relationship between the elected member and flood planning and recovery has attracted little research or guidance.

19.2 The Group had a discussion about the possible roles and issues in this context including: -

- Encouraging constituents and community groups to engage constructively with agencies.
- Representing communities in discussions and negotiations, brokering agreements and feeding local intelligence and information into flood planning.
- This understanding of the flood planning process and being informed of its results, will assist in efforts to urge communities to develop Community Emergency Plans.
- A responsibility to promote and spread the message that communities can help themselves particularly on the benefit of domestic self help measures to mitigate the damaging effects of flooding.
- If appropriately informed, the local Member can be one of the contact points to help raise morale and communicate and cascade information. The flood warning scheme for example is a useful tool in helping communities to prepare for severe weather and flooding.
- To consider flooding issues at a strategic level, particularly in the light of Pitt's proposals around enhanced scrutiny of flooding activity.

19.3 The Group recognised however member involvement in flooding matters is not without its complications:–

- It became clear that the perception of elected members, what they do and their responsibilities, can differ from agency to agency.
- Being seen to be a “leader” on flooding matters in a community could be an onerous burden, especially when considering the competing demands and expectations of constituents, community groups and agencies.
- There are concerns about continuity; ward representatives change.
- It is unrealistic and probably unworkable for a local elected representative to have any type of a co-coordinating type role in the recovery phase because of the availability of the local member when an incident breaks, often at very short notice. The recovery phase cannot wait.
- Rescue is a specialised activity and there are Health and Safety Issues with taking on a more “advanced” role. There was however very much a case for the local Member being knowledgeable about the role of the MIRT and some discussion about mutual advice and support.

19.4 This raises the need for regular briefing and training. In general terms, joint County and District/Borough Council training on emergency planning would be

beneficial, and should be a key part of the new member induction programme. The group advocates refresher training for existing members.

- 19.5 Looking further ahead, Multi-Agency Flood Plans will provide agencies with a wealth of information around local flooding issues. Whilst it is not necessary or practical to share all this information, it could form the basis of more focussed training and information for those Members who represent wards which are identified as “at risk”.

## **20.0 The role of Insurance Companies**

Insurance companies have an increasingly important role to play in helping people to better manage the risk of flooding to their properties.

The Group contacted the Association of British Insurers (ABI) with a number of questions regarding insurance in flood-risk areas. We found that the ABI is starting to work more closely with the Environment Agency to share information about claims in high risk areas and is also working with the National Flood Forum to prepare guidance for property-owners on resilient reinstatement of properties.

The response from the ABI is reproduced at **Annex 1**.

## **21.0 Multi-agency flood plans**

- 21.1 The Group heard from Wendy Muldoon in the EPU about multi-agency flood planning in North Yorkshire. Selby, Ryedale and Harrogate areas currently have a multi-agency flood plan in place, and Craven, Scarborough, Hambleton and Richmond are in the process of developing plans.
- 21.2 The Selby plan includes a community risk summary sheet that shows the flooding history of an area, properties at risk, vulnerable properties and critical infrastructure. It also gives information on flood defences and alleviation measures and flood warnings given for the area. The plan is to be exercised later this year, and the Group was reassured that all multi-agency flood plans are exercised on a regular basis. Future flood plans will consider the role that voluntary and community services (VCS) play. At present, there is only one VCS representative in the planning process, but it is expected that other major VCS organisations will become involved, and VCS representatives are named in other plans (Rest Centre Plans, Community Plans, etc).
- 21.3 The Group also heard from Stephanie Renno, who works in Flood Incident Management based at the Environment Agency. She explained that her role was to facilitate the creation of multi-agency plans and that her post was funded by a local authority levy from the Regional Flood Defence Committee.
- 21.4 Stephanie explained that Local Resilience Forums are encouraged by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to develop a specific flood plan to complement other plans and to provide more detail to generic Major Incident Plans or Strategic Emergency Response Plans. She said

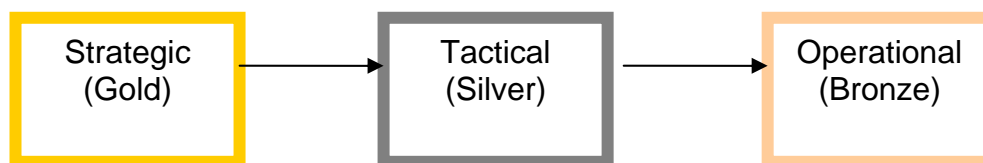


that North Yorkshire is ahead of the game in terms of partners sharing information and good practice.

21.5 In drawing up a plan, partners are required to go through a self-assessment process. The assessment has identified that more information is needed about the risk of surface water flooding and identification of critical infrastructure. There is also a need for more specific information in the identification of vulnerable people. The focus is on partners taking a community-based approach to planning. She said that it was expected that Defra would assess the plans in terms of percentage of readiness.

## 22.0 Response, Control and Co-ordination of a Major Incident

22.1 Fundamental to successful response, control and co-ordination of a major incident is the liaison involving responders. There is a recognised management structure, based on three levels of command.



22.2 The need to implement one or more of the management levels will depend on the nature and size of the incident. Each responding organisation will have its own command structure that may fit the above, but it is responsible for its own resources.

22.3 However, it is necessary to have multi-agency working at Silver and Gold level in response to a major incident. Each agency will liaise fully and continually with each other in the incident.

22.4 If the incident is extensive, a Silver Command Centre will be set up, initially chaired by the Police. This group is responsible for a single incident or discrete geographical area. If there are numerous flooded areas within North Yorkshire there could be the need for a Strategic level of management, as in November 2000, to ensure the Strategic priorities are achieved

22.5 The multi-agency Gold will be aware of issues regionally/nationally, and will consider long term community involvement, enquiries and investigations.

22.6 Each organisation will have been involved in drafting their own plans or have been engaged with the Local Resilience Forum on writing/testing/exercising multi-agency plans. These plans, procedures and systems are understood by responding agencies. Due to each incident being different i.e. scale/time frame etc, plans and systems have to be flexible and adapted during the incident.

22.7 The example at **Annex 2** shows some of the current plans available when responding to a flooding incident.

## **PART THREE – INFORMATION FROM OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

### **23.0 Lessons learned from severe flooding incidents**

23.1 The Group spoke to officers and elected members in two other local authority areas that had experienced recent severe flooding – Hull and Morpeth. The Group wanted to find out about the lessons they had learned from their experiences.

### **24.0 Case study 1 – Hull**

*Hull is a unitary authority and it manages most of its own housing stock. It is a beacon authority for emergency planning. In June 2007, Hull experienced large-scale flooding which had a severe and lasting impact.*

*Two square miles of the city flooded  
Over 8,500 homes were damaged by the flooding  
91 (of 99) schools were affected  
1300 business were affected*

*In Hull, 95% of the land is at or below sea level and the city also acts as drainage for the surrounding East Riding. In ordinary circumstances, excess water is pumped into the Humber to avoid flooding, but the volume was too great for this to be effective and a number of pumps failed altogether.*

*The Council organised for teams of people to go around neighbourhoods to ask people about their needs, so that the most vulnerable people could be identified and their needs prioritised. People's needs were classified into 3 categories:-  
Gold – Over 60 or disabled or single parent of child under 5  
Silver – not insured  
Bronze – everyone else*

*At the time, there was no comprehensive information on where vulnerable people were, but Hull now maintains a register, which includes data from social services and Council Tax. They have not experienced difficulties with data sharing/data protection. A Flood Advice Line was set up. Council tax was suspended for flooded properties.*

*In total, 91 out of the city's 99 schools flooded which meant that 114,000 school pupil days were lost overall. It took until February 2008 for all pupils to be back in their own schools. Strong partnership with Children's and Young People's services was essential*

#### **Review of the flooding**

*A strategic drainage partnership has been established, and this is attended by the Chief Executive of Yorkshire Water. All drainage is in the process of being mapped and risk assessed. Hull CC is part funding a PhD for an engineer to assist with this process.*

*New-build schools are being developed to be more flood resilient, as are council properties during renovation.*

*A protocol has been set up for releasing staff resource for managing an emergency and for extended periods following the emergency.*

*A campaign has been launched to promote self-help amongst residents so that they are prepared for any future flooding. Questions have been put to the Council's customer panel to find out how informed residents feel about the council's role in a flooding emergency and also how aware people are of their own role in preparing for flooding.*

*The council is looking at how insurance patterns are changing following the floods, to see if take-up has increased.*

*Hull CC had some difficulty engaging the voluntary and community sector immediately after the floods due to health and safety/contractual issues. They have since developed a process to fully utilise and involve this sector.*

*Hull CC have issued a booklet to every household on planning for emergencies*

*Some homes in Hull are having an ongoing problem with secondary flooding because the water table rose during the floods and hasn't returned to normal. The council is conducting a study to find out the scale of the problem, as 30 new cases per month are emerging.*

*There have been massive landfill costs from clearing flooded properties.*

*The impact on the physical and emotional health of people affected has been significant, but it has not been easy to measure because there was no baseline to compare it with.*

## **25.0 Case Study 2 - Morpeth**

*In 2008, Morpeth experienced severe flooding with over 1000 properties flooded, and the loss of community infrastructure such as GP surgeries and the leisure centre*

*Castle Morpeth District Council (now part of the new unitary authority Northumberland County Council) had a Recovery Coordination Group and a recovery document. This meant that there was a clear handover from Police to local authority and there were named individuals to lead various working groups from a number of partner organisations. The group had explicitly given space for the voluntary sector to take a full role as partners.*

*The day after the flood, the group had skips on affected streets and the 'Green and Clean' teams were clearing up. They had set up a flood information centre in the middle of the affected area and had issued and delivered the first of the daily flood bulletins giving basic health, safety and support information.*

*For a period of time after the flood, the group continued to replace skips for as long as they were needed. The flood information point grew with participation from partner agencies and voluntary groups, and churches worked together to provide a welfare drop-in centre.*

*The British Red Cross coordinated the voluntary sector activities, and this ranged from moving furniture and cleaning up (Lions and Rotary) to emotional and psychological support (Red Cross) to advice on financial and insurance matters (Citizens Advice).*

*Morpeth stressed the importance of having a people-centred recovery. They said that the local authority's role in recovery is to provide facilitative leadership, but the voluntary and community sector is key to assisting the community to recover.*

## 26.0 PART FOUR –COMMUNITY FLOOD PLANNING

### 27.0 Information Gathering

- 27.1 The Group gathered evidence on community flood planning in two ways.
- 27.2 Firstly, it sent a questionnaire to parish and town councils (through the Yorkshire Local Councils Association email network) asking whether they had a local emergency plan and/or a local flood group. 68 parish and town councils responded. There are 587 parish and town councils in North Yorkshire, of which approximately 85% are members of the YLCA. This means that the response rate to the Group's questionnaire was approximately 13%.
- 27.3 Of the parish and town councils that responded, over 50% had experienced flooding in their local area. 27% of parish and town councils have a community emergency plan or flood plan and 14% have a flood group for their area. The chart at **Annex 3** gives a summary of the results.
- 27.4 The Group also discussed community flood planning with representatives of flood groups from two areas that have recently experienced problems with flooding; these were Boroughbridge and Filey.
- 27.5 The representatives from the Boroughbridge Flood Group said that in their view, where a community emergency plan is in place, the flood group would like more delegation of powers for the community to act. One example given was the power to make temporary road closures to stop vehicles going down flooded roads and causing a backwash onto properties, thereby making the impact worse for those properties.
- 27.6 Filey experienced a major flood in July 2007 but had previously had some localised flooding. The Flood Working Group has been actively working with partners to protect the town against future flood events, and their efforts were recognised in the Pitt Review. The Group has carried out two residents' surveys in the areas known to have been affected. On both occasions the results have been mapped by the local authority and areas of flooding identified. The evidence from the surveys was used initially to secure Government funding to engage consultants to investigate the causes of flooding and recommend solutions. Scarborough Borough Council then secured £226k for the next stage of the consultants' work, which is ongoing. It is expected that when this is completed, a funding bid for the construction of flood alleviation measures will be prepared and submitted.
- 27.7 Scarborough Borough Council was also awarded approx. £46k by the Red Cross to assist those affected by the 2007 flood. The Borough Council invited the Flood Working Group to manage and arrange the distribution of the money. The majority of the fund was spent on flood resilience measures for the individual properties – mainly air brick and door barriers.

27.8 The representative of the Filey Flood Working Group felt that the local knowledge offered by long standing residents is as important as professional input in a flooding incident. He cited as an example that the school where Silver Command was set up during the 2007 flood was itself subject to flooding and that, had local knowledge being tapped into, a more suitable venue might have been chosen.

## **28.0 Assessment of Technical Capabilities**

28.1 One of the Pitt Review recommendations related to the need for local authorities to assess and, if appropriate, enhance their technical capabilities to deliver the wide range of responsibilities in relation to local flood risk management.

28.2 The Group recognised that if local authorities are to fulfil their lead role on flood risk management and also meet public expectations, they need to have the necessary technical resources. Whilst it was not within the Group's remit to scrutinise resourcing issues, the Group would suggest that this be taken on board by County and District/Borough Councils, subject to the outcome of the considerations about the Draft Floods and Water Management Bill.

## **PART FIVE – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN FLOODING**

### **29.0 Citizen Engagement in Flooding: Context**

29.1 Over the past 10 years, participation policy and practice in the UK has undergone a dramatic shift. Local government now routinely consults citizens about services and other issues and the community and voluntary sector is included in local partnership arrangements.

29.2 Legislation which came into force on 1 April 2009 has imposed a new statutory duty on local authorities – to inform, consult and involve citizens and communities in the design, delivery and assessment of services<sup>8</sup>. Local authorities are expected to engage with local people in the design and delivery of services.

29.3 This means that authorities consider, as a matter of course, the possibilities for provision of information to, consultation with and involvement of *representatives of local persons* across all authority functions.

29.4 Authorities should provide *representatives of local persons* with appropriate information about services, policies and decisions which affect them or might be of interest to them. The provision of information should support *representatives of local persons* to have their say and get involved where appropriate.

29.5 Sir Michael Pitt's comprehensive appraisal of all aspects of flood risk management was in large measure shaped by the extensive consultation he undertook with representatives but particularly with those people whose homes and lives were so badly affected.

***Sir Michael 'has rightly put the needs of ordinary people at the heart of his Review'***

- 29.6 Raising awareness, communicating on flood risk issues and especially making progress on community engagement builds community and personal self resilience. Pitt maintained this that can contribute significantly to preparedness and response activity, covered in his Recommendation 76 which states that by the end of 2008:

***Local authorities should coordinate a systematic programme of community engagement in their area during the recovery phase.***

**30.0 Attitudes and Perceptions to Community Engagement in Flooding**

- 30.1 The Group encountered a range of attitudes towards the notion of community engagement with flooding issues, albeit mostly positive. Where individuals were negative or pessimistic, more often than not they quoted real problems in tackling apathy and disinterest. These were also concerns relating to lack of staff continuity, about being adequately trained for public participation work, resource worries and the possibility of increasing community anxiety and the likely economic blighting of an area.
- 30.2 The Group spoke to several people who agreed that increased community participation is all part of the urgent need for people to recognise the seriousness of the greater likelihood of flood risks. EA research<sup>9</sup> suggests there is a lack of appreciation of the real consequences of a flooding incident, especially from those who have not suffered from such an event. Yet the public cannot be treated as one target group, as in reality they are made up of many different groups with different perceptions.
- 30.3 These differences cannot be wholly attributed to a difference in understanding but more with a difference in perception or reaction to the level of risk identified. Generally speaking those who experience flooding more frequently are more able to accept and respond to the risks. This is of course only to be expected, but for the Group it means there is every opportunity and reason, to help facilitate communities to respond to flood risk.

**31.0 Helping Communities to Help Themselves**

- 31.1 Other local authorities the Group looked at provided demonstrable evidence of the benefits of an inclusive approach, particularly in terms of access to local intelligence and keeping up morale.
- 31.2 The National Flood Forum<sup>10</sup> provides support and advice to communities and individuals that have been flooded or are at risk of flooding. It is run by people who have experienced the trauma, loss and frustration that go with flooding or have first hand experience of supporting the victims of flooding both during and after the event.
- 31.3 Its Chief Officer Mary Dhonau commented to the Group that working with and encouraging local community self-help groups can help reduce flood risk. This

claim, backed by joint EA/Defra research<sup>11</sup> suggests citizen engagement can be particularly successful in developing flood response plans (where local community members might for example take responsibility to act as flood wardens and cascade flood warning information throughout their community). (There is an opportunity to do this as part of the development of multi-agency flood plans across the county).

- 31.4 The EPU provides a template Community Emergency Plan document that can be a focus for community action and a useful source of information for local people and emergency responders when an incident occurs. The EPU teams will visit the parish council or local group to discuss the plan, and give assistance to prepare a plan, but it is then down to key people in the community to take it forward.
- 31.5 Research suggests by engaging with and providing members of the public who are at risk of flooding with the right information they can take individual actions to mitigate the effects of serious flooding incidents. Mary Dhonau stressed the many practical steps that homeowners can take to reduce the cost of flood repairs and speed up recovery times. As part of efforts to raise awareness of flood risk and community resilience, she believes the emphasis should be on how individuals and communities can take self-help measures to protect their property.
- 31.6 Mary said she felt that technology has moved beyond sandbags. There is now a range of simple and relatively cost-effective methods of keeping floodwater out of property during a short-lived flood. Recently the British Standards Institute<sup>12</sup> (BSI) has developed a "Kitemark" Certification Scheme for such products which include such things as door boards, flood barriers and air brick covers. Many are expected to take the place of traditional sandbags in certain situations.
- 31.7 The National Flood Forum produces an excellent fact sheet<sup>13</sup> which outlines the steps that homeowners living in flood risk areas can take to minimise the damage caused if flooding occurs.

## **32.0 Public Involvement in the Flood Planning Process**

- 32.1 Effective public participation and involvement can help build trust and understanding between public and professionals. There is great potential to capitalise on the ability of community networks and champions to gather information that can then feed into the development of plans and appropriate risk communication strategies and assist in flooding response. Defra research highlights examples where community groups have identified possible causes of flooding, for example a local group in the Sussex area conducted an audit of blockages in the river that could have contributed to the flooding that affected their properties.
- 32.2 The LRF exercises leadership in flood response and recovery matters but by necessity however, much of the LRF attention is internal facing and is not easily shared with the public. The LRF does however work closely with volunteer groups to build capacity. These voluntary agencies are also a source of expertise in flood risk planning.

- 32.3 There are examples of agencies engaging at a local level, communicating information on flood risk issues and listening to their concerns. Self-help and community pressure groups are not formally included in the LRF Multi-Agency Flood planning process. When groups do exert influence on flooding matters, the Group's impression was that it tends to be as a result of direct contacts and relationships with individual agencies.
- 32.4 These liaison arrangements are important if the messages of self-help, community and personal resilience are to be got across. Statutory agencies cannot help everyone.
- 32.5 The North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership and Local Strategic Partnership could also have a useful role to play in efforts to raise general public and agency awareness of community resilience and in so doing encouraging third sector involvement.

### **33.0 Community Groups in North Yorkshire**

- 33.1 There are flood action community groups in operation throughout the county in various forms, most obviously and typically within areas which have experienced flooding. It was encouraging from our the Group's consultations with communities involved in genuine participation such as Boroughbridge and Filey that individuals have begun to own the flood risk environment and had developed not just a sense of trust generally towards agencies and organisations in their localities, but with the staff they came into contact with.

## **PART SIX – FUTURE SCRUTINY OF LOCAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **34.0 Scrutiny of Flooding Matters**

- 34.1 Over the last few years the NYCC Safe and Sustainable Overview and Scrutiny Committee has received regular updates on flooding matters. It has not to date been thought necessary therefore for the Committee formally to examine in depth major flooding events that have happened in North Yorkshire.
- 34.2 The Pitt Review recommends that scrutiny at the local level is very important and there are two recommendations that specifically apply to this in the Pitt Report.

**Recommendation 90:** All upper tier local authorities should establish Oversight and Scrutiny Committees to review work by public sector bodies and essential service providers in order to manage flood risk, underpinned by a legal requirement to co-operate and share information

**Recommendation 91:** Each Oversight and Scrutiny Committee should prepare an annual summary of actions taken locally to manage flood risk and implement this Review, and these reports should be public and reviewed by Government Offices and the Environment Agency.



- 34.3 In its response, the Government supported these recommendations, but the draft Flood and Water Mgt Bill does not explicitly mention it. It seems unlikely therefore that there will be a prescribed process to adhere to; nevertheless there is an expectation that flooding matters will be on the scrutiny agenda.
- 34.4 As lead authority, it falls to NYCC to identify an approach within its overview and scrutiny arrangements. As things stand, this can be within an existing committee or committees: it does not have to mean establishing a new or stand-alone committee.
- 34.5 Flooding is an area where many agencies and organisations are involved, at national, regional and local level so the task group fully understands the case for cross cutting scrutiny. In the absence of guidance the Group is of the opinion that as a joint County and District/Borough scrutiny exercise, this review had worked well and could be adopted for future projects looking at issues that affect the County as a whole.

## **PART SEVEN – SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NYCC EXECUTIVE**

### **35.0 Preparedness for Demands of the Pitt Review and Impending Legislation**

35.1 The Group has reviewed the Selby multi-agency flood plan; arrangements for emergency planning; the Local Resilience Forum structure; and the Environment Agency's flood warning system. It has also considered the lessons learned by other local authorities and our own communities that have experienced severe flooding.

### **35.2 RECOMMENDATION 1: To note that, having carried out the review, the Task Group's view is as follows:-**

- **The structural framework for flood planning, which is lead by the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum, is sound.**
- **Operational relationships between agencies are productive and this will stand them in good stead for the proposed new statutory duty for all relevant authorities to co-operate and share information. Ryedale, Selby and Harrogate have multi-agency flood plans in place, and plans for Scarborough, Hambleton, Richmondshire and Craven are being developed.**
- **The group's assessment is that the building blocks are in place in North Yorkshire for multi-agency working.**

### **36.0 Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities**

36.1 Members looked at how agencies work, their structures and the relationships between them at both a strategic and operational level. From a professional perspective, the roles are clear to representatives of those organisations.

36.2 From a member of the public's perspective however in a flooding incident it is not always apparent who is 'in charge', particularly after the immediate response phase gives way to the recovery phase. Agencies said that they tend to take on issues that are not formally their responsibility or where there is overlap in order to provide a good service to the public. The district/borough councils have a significant role in the recovery, but they do not have a responsibility to take the overall lead.

36.3 It is of course not uncommon for the public to be unaware of the differing responsibilities of public sector bodies and in the main this has no impact upon the service received. For example, there can be an assumption that County Council is responsible for all drainage, not just highways drainage and it is easy to see how this can give rise to unrealistic expectations about what can be done. However, communities and people in the grip of a flooding situation can be desperate for re-assurance and guidance, so from their perspective, information and understanding of the right person to contact is vitally important.

**36.4 RECOMMENDATION 2: To clarify roles, the following be considered for action:-**

- **That agencies involved in flood planning review how they inform the public about their own and other agencies' roles and responsibilities in a flooding situation.**
- **That agencies continue to take opportunities to explain the roles and responsibilities and give contact details, when engaging with community groups.**

36.5 The Group recognised that development control is a central part of the process of managing flood risk, by avoiding development in risk areas and, where building does take place, by ensuring that risk is reduced. The Pitt report recommended that where development is allowed on the floodplain, buildings should be made more flood resilient. Local Planning Authorities must take account of Planning Policy Statement 25 which sets out Government policy on development and flood risk. Planners and developers clearly have an important role to play, the Group discussed how planning authorities can influence this. Because of time and resource constraints the Group was unable to look in depth at the issue but Members felt that this would benefit from further scrutiny.

**36.6 RECOMMENDATION 3: That the role of Local Planning Authorities in flood risk management be considered as a topic for further scrutiny review.**

## **37.0 Flood Planning and Community Engagement**

37.1 The Group's research shows that several parishes have flood groups and community emergency or flood plans in place. The Group also heard from flood groups that local intelligence could be a vital part of the flooding planning process.

37.2 Where communities and flood groups have developed local flood response plans, these can potentially provide useful risk management information on local conditions and on the voluntary and community resources that might be available in the recovery phase.

**37.3 RECOMMENDATION 4: That in respect of community engagement, agencies involved in flood planning be requested to:-**

- **ensure that community-level planning both integrates with and influences, where appropriate, higher-level plans (such as multi-agency flood plans and specific response plans)**
- **ensure that the intelligence and views they get from engagement with communities and their representative groups are fed into and inform the Local Resilience Forum's work.**

### **38.0 Self-Help measures**

38.1 Agencies cannot help everybody. There are many things individuals can do to protect themselves and their property ranging from simple devices to improved design features. For example, new BSI accredited products are on the market which can make a huge difference when combating the worst effects of a flooding incident

**38.2 RECOMMENDATION 5: That agencies involved in flood planning offer advice on how individuals and communities can take self-help measures to protect their property as part of ongoing engagement with communities.**

### **39.0 Action during the Recovery Phase**

39.1 The group praised the excellent work done by MIRT in an emergency situation in restoring morale, keeping people informed and dealing with the emotional and traumatic effects of flooding. Many people need support in a flooding situation but it can be a particularly difficult time for some individuals who might be vulnerable for many reasons. The group encountered imaginative ways of identifying these individuals but recognised there were certain barriers around disclosure of personal information etc.

**39.2 RECOMMENDATION 6: That every effort is made to overcome barriers to sharing information about vulnerable people so as to improve support to them in a flooding incident.**

39.3 The Group valued the contribution of the voluntary and community sector during and after a flooding incident, and helping the community to recover in the longer-term. The third sector is of course very varied and diverse and a recommendation which called for greater involvement would be too simplistic and unhelpful. There may be potential advantages however, so we suggest further thought be given to this.

**39.4 RECOMMENDATION 7: That the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum consider further how best to involve the voluntary and community sector as a key partner in the multi-agency flood planning process.**

#### **40.0 Elected Member and Community Leadership Issues**

40.1 Elected Members All of which raises the questions of training and development needs. In general terms, joint County and District/Borough Council training on emergency planning would be beneficial, and should be a key part of the new member induction programme. The group advocates refresher training for existing members.

40.2 Looking further ahead, Multi Agency Flood Plans will provide agencies with a wealth of information around local flooding issues. Whilst it would be neither sensible nor practical to share all this information, it could from the basis of more focussed, bespoke training and information for those Members who represent wards which are identified “at risk

**40.3 RECOMMENDATION 8: That joint briefing sessions on emergency planning for County and District councillors are arranged on a regular basis. In particular, all new County and District councillors should be offered a place on one of these briefings as part of their induction programme.**

## Glossary of flooding terms

**Catchment** - The area of land drained by a river and its tributary streams. Sometimes referred to as the 'drainage basin'.

**Culvert** - A covered channel or pipeline.

**Drain** - A pipeline, usually underground, designed to carry wastewater, and/or surface water from a source to a sewer.

**Floodplain** - Any area of land over which water flows or is stored during a flood event or would flow but for the presence of flood defences.

**Gully** - A structure to permit the entry of surface water runoff into a sewerage system.

**Highway** - Any road, track, bridleway or public footpath in private or public ownership that is not associated with an individual property.

**Main River** – A watercourse shown as such on a main river map. This can include smaller watercourses of local significance.

**Ordinary Watercourse** – A watercourse that does not form part of a main river. It includes every river, stream, ditch, drain, cut, dyke, sluice, sewer (other than a public sewer) through which water flows and does not form part of a main river.

**Planning Policy Statement 25 (PPS25)** – This documents sets out Government policy on development and flood risk. The aims are to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, and to direct development away from areas of highest risk.

**Private sewer** - A sewer for which responsibility is not vested in the sewerage undertaker. Generally it is collectively owned and maintained by the owner(s) of the building(s) it serves.

**Public sewer** - A sewer for which responsibility is vested with the sewerage undertaker to maintain it.

**Pumping station** - A structure containing pumps, piping, valves and other mechanical and electrical equipment for pumping water, wastewater and other liquids.

**Risk** - Risk is a combination of the chance of a particular event, with the impact that the event would cause if it occurred. Risk therefore has two components – the chance (or *probability*) of an event occurring and the impact (or *consequence*) associated with that event.

**Runoff** - Water from precipitation that flows off a surface to reach a drain, sewer or receiving water.

**Sewage** - Wastewater and/or surface water conveyed by a drain or sewer.

**Sewer** - A pipe or conduit that carries wastewater or drainage water serving more than one property.

**Sewerage system** - A network of pipelines and ancillary works that conveys wastewater and/or surface water from drains to a treatment works or other place of disposal.

**Sewerage undertaker** - An organisation with the legal duty to provide sewerage services in an area. In England and Wales these services are provided by water service companies.

**Unadopted or Private Sewers** – Sewers which are not owned by the sewerage undertaker are likely to be unadopted and privately owned.

**Watercourse** - A natural or artificial channel for passage of water.

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Gary Collins	Yorkshire Water
Mike Collins	Langthorpe Parish Council
Geoff Craggs	Boroughbridge Town Council
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Simon Hodges	Yorkshire Water
Deborah Hugill	North Yorkshire County Council
Mike Lodge	Craven District Council
Wendy Muldoon	North Yorkshire County Council
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Stephanie Renno	Environment Agency
John Riby	Scarborough Borough Council
Kay Ritchie	North Yorkshire County Council
Mike Roberts	North Yorkshire County Council
Jonathan Spencer	North Yorkshire County Council
Ian Strong	Yorkshire Local Councils Association
Mike Thompson	Selby District Council
Denise Wilson	Adult and Community Services
Simon Wright	North Yorkshire County Council

## **Annexes**

**Annex 1** – Response from the Association of British Insurers to questions put by the Flood Scrutiny Group

**Annex 2** – Diagram showing the current plans available when responding to a flooding incident.

**Annex 3** - Results of the Survey of Local Flood Planning in North Yorkshire

**Annex 4** – Structure of the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum

## References

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- <sup>1</sup> Yorkshire and Humber Regional Adaptation Study [www.adaptyh.co.uk/home.htm](http://www.adaptyh.co.uk/home.htm)
- <sup>2</sup> Sir Michael Pitt Report [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thepittreview)
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- <sup>7</sup> The Environment Agency [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/)
- <sup>8</sup> Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- <sup>9</sup> Community and public participation :Risk Communication and Improving Decision Making in Flood and Coastal Defence *Authors:* Jeremy Richardson, Joanne Reilly, Peter J. S. Jones,  
[www.homepages.ucl.ac.uk/~ucfwpej/pdf/SWKconf%20paper.pdf](http://www.homepages.ucl.ac.uk/~ucfwpej/pdf/SWKconf%20paper.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> National Flood Forum Web Site [www.floodforum.org.uk/](http://www.floodforum.org.uk/)
- <sup>11</sup> Improving Community and Citizen Engagement in Flood Risk Management Decision Making, Delivery and Flood response <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SCHO1005BJTC-e-e.pdf>
- <sup>12</sup> BSI website [www.bsi-global.com/en/?lang= e](http://www.bsi-global.com/en/?lang= e)
- <sup>13</sup> NFF Fact Sheet Flood Resilient Homes What homeowners can do to reduce flood damage [www.floodforum.org.uk/infoanddownloads/abiflood\\_resilient\\_homes.pdf](http://www.floodforum.org.uk/infoanddownloads/abiflood_resilient_homes.pdf)



**Response from the Association of British Insurers  
to questions put by the Joint Flood Scrutiny Group  
re. flood-related insurance**

1. Why do insurance companies not reinstate with flood-proof flooring, raised electrical sockets etc?

Insurers are generally willing to reinstate properties using resilient measures such as these, where they are cost-neutral or where policyholders are willing to pay any increased costs. Raising electrical sockets can be cost-neutral where for example plasterboard is being replaced and wiring is fed from above. However policyholders do not always find this acceptable. Also we agree that more needs to be done to ensure all property owners are aware of and consider the options.

2. To encourage householders to build resilience in to their homes, does the insurance industry produce a list of approved flood resistant or resilient measures/products that people can use in their homes? Is there an incentive for homeowners to use these, such as reduced premiums?

There isn't any list as such because generally we are dealing with items of individual choice. However we have produced a booklet in conjunction with the National Flood Forum explaining what the options are, which is available at <http://www.abi.org.uk/BookShop/ResearchReports/Flood%20Repair%20Doc%201.pdf> The National Flood Forum also list products in their Blue Pages, which can be access from their web site.

Insurers try to charge premiums that reflect the risk of future flooding although this depends on obtaining information to help understand what this is and it may be more than policyholders have previously being paying. Where property owners can supply an independent professional opinion on the impact of any measures taken to reduce the future flood risk, insurers are happy to take this into account in assessing terms. Even when an independent professional opinion on this isn't available, they will consider any information on this that can be supplied. Keeping water out of a home is difficult and property owners are always advised to take independent professional advice on this. Government and insurers want to encourage development of expertise in producing Flood Risk Mitigation Surveys to help property owners, by those professionally qualified and experienced in carrying them out. This and what property owners should ask for in such surveys, is more fully explained in the following document prepared by government

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/adaptationandresilience/floodgrantguidance.pdf>

3. What is the position if homeowners were, on their own initiative, to reinstate their homes with more flood-resilient products – how would their insurance cover be affected?

See above – they are advised to seek professional advice in doing this, and this advice should include an assessment on the impact the measures will have on the future flood risk. If they supply this to insurer, they will be happy to take this into account in assessing the terms for future flood insurance.

4. Do insurance companies take into account risk of a second or third claim as part of the risk calculation in order to reach a more realistic long-term figure i.e. to offset initial extra cost of flood proofing?

I'm not sure what is intended by the question. If the question is 'Will insurance companies, in reinstating properties following insured damage, pay to flood-proof properties to avoid having to pay more for claims for future damage, then that is only possible if the measures are cost-neutral. They can only pay for claims based on the level of cover that has been purchased. If there is a risk of further flood damage then the policyholder must pay a premium that reflects this future risk. If however they take action to reduce that risk, then of course this should reduce the future premium. However as a rule, insurers don't pay to reduce the future risk, this is a matter for property owners themselves.

5. Clearing up after a flood and getting homes back to normal is important for public morale, but this can sometimes appear to be delayed by insurance companies. What is the industry doing to ensure that people can get on with the clear-up and replacement of items as quickly as possible?

The insurance industry is very keen to reduce the time needed to handle claims so that they can get people back into their homes as soon as possible. However, this can be difficult when an event such as happened in 2007 occurs, with the pressure this brings on all involved – claims staff, loss adjusters, building contractors, alternative accommodation etc.. And of course it is important to ensure that surface 'finishings' are stripped out of properties to facilitate the drying process and that the property is properly dried-out before reinstatement work can commence. There is certainly no desire to delay things in any way and a lot was done in 2007 to bring in extra staff from other areas including overseas', to make emergency payments and to use contractors chosen by policyholders where this was requested by them etc.. Nevertheless, individual companies will be assessing their performance in this respect and doing what ever they can to learn from the experience of handling an event of this magnitude. One area of research being considered by Ciria is the time needed to ensure that homes are properly dried out and whether or not new 'super-driers' can be used to safely reduce this time.

6. In one area of North Yorkshire, flood defences have been put in place and homes behind these defences have a 'one in 50 year' risk of flooding. They are finding difficulty getting insurance. What advice can you give to people in this position?

Considering the cost of damage that can arise in a flood, a 'one in 50 year' risk level is considered very high by insurers. ABI would recommend that property owners consider what can be done to protect their individual property or to reduce the cost of damage that might be caused in a future flood. They should then discuss this with their existing insurer to see what cover can be provided,

even although insurers can't guarantee that they will always be able to provide cover at this risk level. Anybody who is not currently insured for flood is advised to discuss the situation with an insurance broker who can advise on insurers who specialise in insuring properties at a high risk of flooding.

7. In the experience of some members of the group, insurance companies put up the 'excess' amount to high levels for areas affected by flooding. What are your comments on this?

Insurers can only consider future insurance based on their perception of the future risk and the likely cost of damage should a flood occur. Where properties have previously flooded and nothing has been done to reduce the risk of future flooding, they may feel that they can only provide cover with a flood excess. This is more likely to be the case where the damage caused was extensive. Insurers don't apply excesses lightly, as they appreciate that property owners often prefer to pay a slightly higher premium. However in some cases they feel that they are essential. Property owners are also generally more motivated to take action to reduce the future risk when excesses apply than when premiums are raised.

8. Does the industry publish rules/guidelines to indicate at what point they would not insure a property that had been flooded or is at risk of flooding?

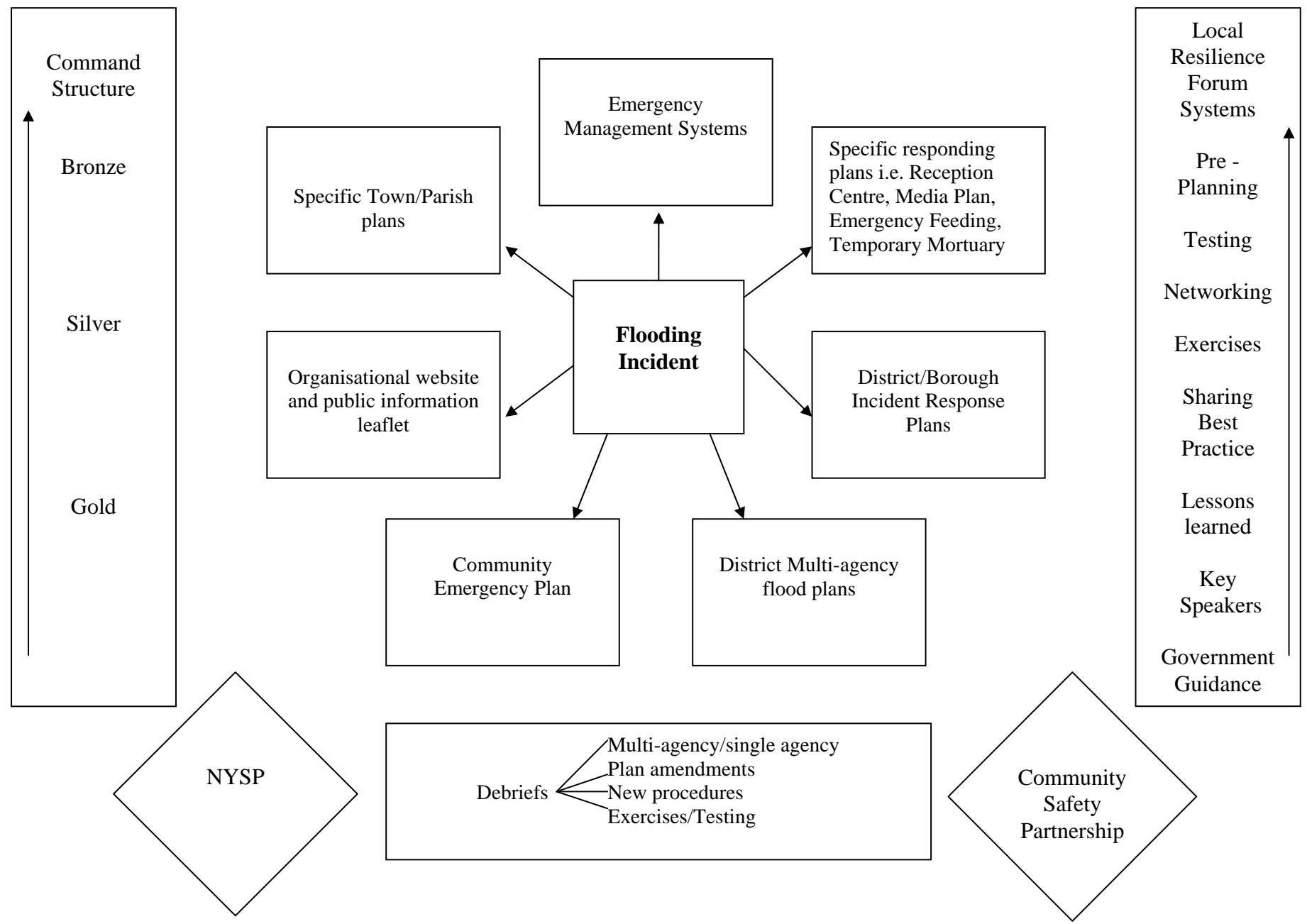
No, as it depends on individual circumstances and on both the risk of flood occurring as well as the likely cost of damage. Although the flood agreement provides no guarantees on cover in difficult situations, insurers will generally work with existing customers to consider what can be done to manage the risk and to provide as much cover as possible. In practice flood cover is only removed in very few, very difficult situations where future flooding is virtually inevitable.

9. In order to assist other agencies with planning for flood prevention, would insurance companies share their knowledge of areas where flood claims are concentrated?

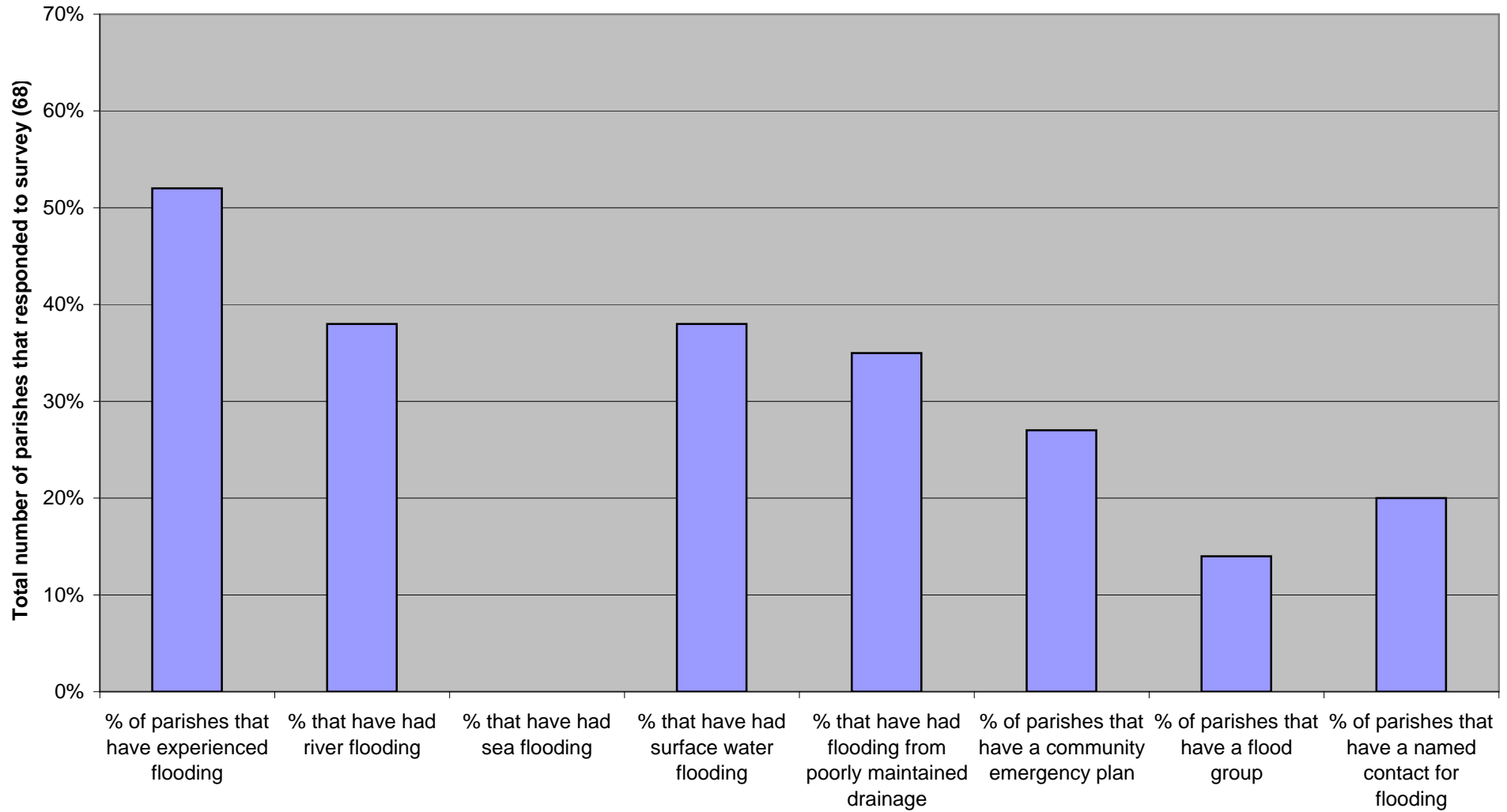
Insurers are discussing this possibility with the Environment Agency through the ABI.

10. Would insurance companies be prepared, in partnership with local authorities, to assist in advising residents on taking measures to protect their homes from flooding/minimising the damage?

Yes. Following recent research on resilient reinstatement of properties, ABI has agreed to work with the National Flood Forum to prepare further guidance on this for customers and insurers will consider how they can make use of this to ensure customers are better informed. This research report is available at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/adaptationandresilience/floodgrantguidance.pdf>



**Annex 3 - Survey on local flood planning in North Yorkshire**



# Structure of the NYLRF

Annex 4

