

Flood Resilience & Adaptation

1 - Outline

1.01 With the changing climate, Flintshire faces an increased risk of flooding of all types.

1.02 Coastal flooding and fluvial flooding receive a significant amount of attention and investment, with clearly delineated responsibilities in terms of the planning process, mitigation, management and emergencies.

1.03 Surface water flooding has historically been dealt with at a lower level, with local authorities taking steps to make improvements where this occurs regularly in populated areas without any overarching national strategy. This reflects the less predictable nature of surface water flooding and the often smaller scale measures needed to address it.

1.04 In respect of surface water flooding, climate change poses two problems. Firstly, any increase in rainfall will lead to more stagnant water that cannot be absorbed by the ground immediately. Secondly, increased frequency of extreme weather events are likely to see drainage systems across the county more regularly overwhelmed and flooding of homes more frequently occur. When these two risks are combined, with a period of increased rainfall followed by an extreme weather event, it is likely that infrastructure will struggle to cope. Whereas we know where coastal and fluvial flooding is likely to take place, extreme weather events leading to flash surface water flooding can impact anywhere in Flintshire.

2 - Purpose of Inquiry

2.01 The inquiry will review the current position in terms of high risk areas for surface water and small watercourse flooding, and the likely impact of climate change on these areas.

2.02 The inquiry will also seek information on the costs of a range of infrastructure upgrades that may be required to protect homes in the county.

3 - Form of Inquiry

3.01 The inquiry will gather evidence and make recommendations on a county-wide basis. However, in order to facilitate a thorough exploration of the particular technical challenges, the inquiry will also look at a case study from the county where surface water flooding is currently a problem.

3.02 The case study for the inquiry will be the Sandycroft / Pentre / Lower Mancot area due to the scale of the issues at this location.

3.03 The inquiry will take written and oral evidence from relevant persons and bodies as to the substantive issues and the funding position.

3.04 The inquiry will result in a report containing recommendations that the committee may choose to adopt. These recommendations may be addressed to other parts of the council, to the Welsh Government, or to any other body as the committee sees fit.

3.05 The inquiry will conclude and the report be submitted for consideration no later than the July meeting of the climate change committee.

3.06 The following are to be invited to submit written evidence:

- Andy Roberts, Flintshire County Council
- Andy Farrow, Flintshire County Council
- Natural Resources Wales
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water (sewerage)
- Representatives of the Welsh Government (climate adaptation and resilience)
- Residents of Flintshire who are affected by this issue

3.07 In addition to the persons listed above, any other person or organisation who wishes to do so may submit written evidence. All written evidence should be submitted in advance of the March meeting of the climate change committee.

3.08 To facilitate the provision of written evidence, a series of questions shall be drafted in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the committee to which witnesses may wish to respond in their evidence.

3.09 The committee will consider a witness list for oral evidence sessions at the March meeting.

4 - Recommendations

4.01 That the inquiry be established on the basis set out above.

4.02 That provision is made for an oral evidence session, including a venue, in either April or May.