

**BOROUGH OF POOLE**  
**EMERGENCY COMMITTEE**  
**29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008**

**5**

**THE PITT REPORT**

**PART OF PUBLISHED FORWARD PLAN: No**

**1. PURPOSE AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1. The purpose of this Report is to inform Members of the current status of the Pitt Report on the floods of 2007, to describe the key findings and recommendations made in the Report, and to put this in context by outlining the flood risk relating to the Poole Area.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. Members are asked to note the status of the Pitt Report and recommendations.

**3. BACKGROUND**

3.1. In August 2007, Sir Michael Pitt was asked by Ministers to conduct an independent review of the flooding emergency that took place in June and July 2007, and to make specific recommendations to help the UK better able to respond to future flooding events

3.2. An interim report was published in December 2007 with the final report published on 25th June 2008.

3.3. The final report contains 92 recommendations which aim to:

- a. Reduce the risk of flooding.
- b. Reduce the impact of flooding.
- c. Improve the interactions with the planning systems.
- d. Improve the emergency response.
- e. Inform and prepare the public.
- f. Ensure a smooth transition from response to recovery.
- g. Ensure an effective recovery.

3.4. At **ANNEX A** is a listing of the 92 recommendations

## 4. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. The key recommendations contained within the report are:

- The Government should publish an action plan and establish a Cabinet Committee to improve the country's ability to deal with flooding and to implement the Pitt recommendations.
- A National Resilience Forum should be established to facilitate national level planning for flooding and other emergencies
- A Select Committee should be established to assess progress of the review's recommendations.
- The Environment Agency should have national oversight of all flood risk, including surface water and groundwater flood risks.
- Local Authorities should be the lead agency for local drainage, including mapping of drainage systems and audit of local water assets to assess flood risk and clarify responsibilities for maintenance.
- A duty should be places on all relevant organisations to share information and co-operate with the EA and Local Authorities in managing flood risk.
- There should be more investment in protecting critical infrastructures by utilities and more spare capacity in system(s) to allow for emergencies.
- An overhaul of building and planning controls to prevent building developments in areas of high flood risk.
- Better flood warning systems to be developed by the EA and the Met Office.
- A funded, national capability for (inland) flood rescue together with a statutory duty placed on Fire and Rescue Authorities.
- Information to the public on how they can be better prepared for flooding.

4.2. The responsibility for implementing many of these recommendations within the wider Dorset area will fall to the Flood 'Capabilities Group' which is chaired by the Environment Agency (EA) and which is part of the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Local Resilience Forum. The Borough of Poole representatives on this group are the Coastal Works Team: Stuart Terry and Dave Robson.

**4.3. At the time of production of this report, the Government Office of the South West (GOSW) has advised not to take any action on the recommendations at this time. This is because guidance from central teams is awaited on which of the recommendations will or perhaps will not be taken forward. This guidance is not expected until later in the year.**

## **5. LOCAL FLOODING RISKS WITHIN POOLE**

5.1. Flooding can occur from a number of sources: from rivers (fluvial flooding), from the sea via storm surges, from land, particularly when the ground is saturated and cannot absorb rainfall, from groundwater sources and from surcharging drains and sewers.

5.2. The primary sources of flooding risks in the Poole area are:

a. From the sea: with risks to the Poole Bridge area, Creekmoor, Hamworthy and Sandbanks.

b. Fluvial flooding of the Stour: with minor risks (due to functional floodplains) to Merley and Bearwood.

5.3. Flooding events have to date been minor in nature and have not affected residential properties. In March of this year the co-incidence of a high (spring) tide, low pressure and gale force SW winds presented the greatest potential flooding risk for a number of years, however this still did not result in flooding of properties but caused the temporary closure, due to flooding, of Sanbanks Road, Shore Road and Banks Road in the Easter sector of Poole Harbour, and West Quay Road and New Quay Road in the vicinity of Poole Bridge. **It should be noted that these road closures only lasted for approx. 20 minutes during the peak of high tide, after which the flood waters receded rapidly.**

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

6.1. The full Pitt report was published in June 2008 and contains a set of recommendations that seek to prevent flooding and to mitigate the effects of flooding incidents in the UK.

6.2. There are 92 recommendations that were published, and the Government is now considering which of these will be adopted and which will not.

6.3. Those recommendations that are adopted will be addressed in the Dorset Area by the Flooding Capabilities Group of the Local Resilience Forum which is chaired by the Environment Agency (EA).

6.4. The flooding risk profile for Poole is relatively minor with no fluvial (river) risks and primarily short-term risks resulting from a 'sea surge' scenario of co-incident high tides, low pressure and SW gales. To date there have been no significant effects other than very short term road closures.

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