

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE FLOOD FORUM – OPERATING PRINCIPLES
(Report by the Head of Administration)**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report updates the Cabinet on progress made on arranging the first Huntingdonshire Flood Forum.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its meeting held on 27th February 2003, the Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a multi-agency drainage forum to encourage the resolution of local land drainage and flooding problems.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Forum, which is to be held on an annual basis, is to provide local councils and the relevant agencies with an opportunity to share information of mutual interest and to provide greater clarity with regard to the roles and responsibilities of those agencies. It is also designed to provide individual local councils with an opportunity to raise concerns specific to their areas and for the agencies to initiate action, where possible, to seek to resolve those issues.
- 2.3 Members of the Cabinet are also reminded that at their meeting on 3rd April 2003, they established a working party to consider the Council's own response to flooding incidents within the District. The membership of the working party comprises Councillors Bates, Clarke, Chandler, Simpson and Vanbergen.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR FIRST FORUM

- 3.1 The first meeting of the Forum has been arranged for Wednesday, 12th November 2003 at 6.00pm. Invitations have been issued to all Town and Parish Councils who have also been invited to submit questions and outline problems in advance of the meeting.
- 3.2 Representatives from the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Association of Drainage Authorities and Cambridgeshire County Council Highways and Civil Protection Units also have been invited to attend.
- 3.3 Attached at Annex 1, is a protocol that has been developed in consultation with the lead agencies outlining the operating principles for the Forum.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Cabinet are invited to:

- (i) note the contents of the proposed operating protocol;
- (ii) appoint a Chairman for the Forum;
- (iii) appoint representatives from the District Council to attend the Forum as appropriate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the Cabinet Meetings held on 27th February 2003 and 3rd April 2003.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE FLOOD FORUM PROTOCOL

1. The purpose of the Forum is to provide the agencies and the local councils with an opportunity to share information of mutual interest and to provide greater clarity with regard to the roles and responsibilities of the agencies. It also provides individual local councils with an opportunity of raising concerns specific to their areas and for the agencies to initiate action, where possible, to seek to resolve those concerns. It is intended to enhance, rather than substitute for, the contact that already exists between local councils and the agencies
2. An initial meeting of the Forum will be held in November 2003. Thereafter, the Forum will meet annually in March of each year, starting in March 2004.
3. The following agencies will routinely be represented at meetings of the Forum:
 - Anglian Water
 - Cambridgeshire County Council
 - Environment Agency
 - Huntingdonshire District Council
4. Other agencies may be represented at meetings of the Forum, at their own discretion, and including:-
 - Cambridgeshire Constabulary
 - Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service
 - Association of Drainage Authorities
5. Every Huntingdonshire Town Council, Parish Council and Parish Meeting (the "local councils") will be entitled to send one person to meetings of the Forum.
6. Huntingdonshire District Council will provide a chairman for meetings of the Forum and will administer the meetings and associated activities.
7. The format for meetings of the Forum will be as follows:
 - a report from the agencies of any significant legislative, policy or programme changes since the last meeting — followed by questions;
 - a presentation of any case studies from land drainage/flooding issues resolved since the last Forum which demonstrate good practice and/or key learning points — followed by questions;
 - issues relating to the support by the agencies for community based flood warning/flood protection self-help groups — followed by questions;

- a report by the agencies of the preliminary assessment of issues submitted for consideration by local councils (see 8 below)
8. Invitations will be issued to the local councils not less than two months before the date of any meeting of the Forum.
 9. Local councils wishing to raise land drainage and/or flooding issues which are specific to their area shall submit a brief outline of the issue to Huntingdonshire District Council not less than four weeks before the date of the Forum. Where possible the outline should include:
 - the address of properties/description of land at risk of flooding;
 - if flooding has actually occurred, the date of the last incident and an indication of the frequency of occurrence;
 - an indication of the severity of the most recent flooding incident – e.g. garden flooded, or water entered garages/outhouses, or water entered dwelling to a depth of x inches;
 - the possible cause of the problem (if known); and
 - details of any person/persons responsible for the land where the problem is believed to originated.
 10. The agencies will meet to review the submissions from local councils in advance to enable them to make a preliminary response at the Forum. Initially consideration by the agencies will be at an operational level and they will seek to establish a lead agency to be responsible for resolving the issue.
 11. Not more than four weeks after the Forum is held the agencies will meet to agree an approach to resolving any issues raised at the Forum. A note of the issues presented/discussed at the Forum and of the actions subsequently agreed by the agencies will be provided to local councils within two months, following the meeting of the Forum.