

Report of the Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Development and Regeneration

Cabinet – 20 October 2016

THE MANAGEMENT OF FUTURE RISKS OF FLOODING FROM THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

Purpose:	To seek Cabinet agreement to commit to the implementation of a Strategic Flood Risk Management Strategy to protect Swansea's Central Area and secure its potential for future development and investment.
Policy Framework:	Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (2016), Swansea Local Development Plan (Deposit Draft) (2016) Well Being of Future Generations Act (2015)
Reason for Decision:	In order to progress the development of key sites in the Central Area, including the Vetch site, a public statement of intent is required to demonstrate that the Council will take responsibility for managing future flood risk.
Consultation:	Planning, Highways, Legal, Finance and Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Cabinet make a formal commitment to develop long term proposals for a Strategic Flood Risk Management Strategy for Swansea's Central Area. 2) The Vetch Flood Consequence Assessment should be formally submitted to Natural Resources Wales and incorporate a statement that the City and County of Swansea will make a long term commitment to implement a Strategic Flood Risk Management Strategy for Swansea's Central Area.
Report Author:	Gail Evans
Finance Officer:	Mike Hawes/Jeff Dong
Legal Officer:	Jonathan Wills
Access to Services Officer:	Ann Williams

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A Flood Consequence Assessment was recently undertaken to support the redevelopment of the Vetch field site (planning application ref 2015/1751), and this has confirmed that large parts of Swansea's Central Area are at risk from the effects

of tidal flooding due to climate change. Flooding has the potential to affect a significant number of existing commercial and residential properties in the Central Area, and the risks will potentially preclude the development and investment in a number of key development and regeneration proposals in the City centre.

- 1.2 This report briefly outlines the technical context for tidal flood risk and climate change in the City Centre, and highlights the approach recommended by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), which involves the City and County of Swansea making a broad commitment to a future managed adaptive approach towards the risks of tidal flood risk and climate change flooding.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 The recent Vetch site Flood Consequence Assessment (FCA) confirms that ingress of tidal flood water can occur via an underpass between the foreshore and Oystermouth Road west of the Civic centre, and also by complex overland flooding from the River Tawe, through the City centre and the marina following local topography.
- 2.2 The flooding will affect a significant number of existing commercial and residential areas, and also priority development and investment opportunities including notably the Vetch site, Sailbridge site and St David's/Quadrant site. The risks of flooding will ultimately preclude the development of these sites, and could cause considerable economic and social damage in the City centre. It is important to state that not the entire City centre is at immanent risk from flooding from climate change. But it is clear from the work to date and technical advice from Natural Resources Wales that action will be required to implement strategic measures to protect a number of areas of the City centre within longer time frames of 50, 75 and 100 years.

3.0 Policy approach

- 3.1 Welsh Government Planning Guidance Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development and Flood Risk outlines the approach towards development and flood risk in Wales since its introduction in 2004. A recent update to this guidance (23/08/16) states that consideration must also be given to the impacts that climate change may have on developments over the lifetime of development.
- 3.2 The City and County of Swansea Is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) responsible for the management of flood risk in Swansea. In the light of the recent FCA studies, and prevailing guidance, NRW as technical advisors on flood risk issues recommend that the City and County of Swansea should provide a 'robust public statement' outlining the intention to manage tidal flood risk from climate change impacts. This is described as a 'managed/adaptive approach, and NRW highlight that this approach is set out in Government guidance and reference 'Flood and Coastal Appraisal Guidance FCDPAG3 Economic Appraisal Supplementary Note to Operating Authorities- Climate Change Impacts October 2006 (published by DEFRA). Such a forward thinking approach by the Authority, taking into account future needs of communities and working sustainably to prevent future problems would align with the principles of the Well Being of Future Generations Act (2015).

4.0 Way Forward

- 4.1 A preliminary assessment suggests that a Tidal Flood Risk Management Strategy for Swansea's Central Area would involve the stopping up of the underpass west of the Civic centre between the foreshore and Oystermouth Road, and a potential options to construct a traditional flood wall or raising of land levels by up to around 1m along the River Tawe. The flood wall would need to extend from the A483 to the south, including the river frontage of the Sainsbury's store, Sailbridge site, and towards the mouth of the Maritime Quarter and Trawler Road.
- 4.2 A further Strategic FCA has already been commissioned to more fully understand the implications of tidal flooding for the wider City centre and its priority development sites including St David's/Quadrant. The appointed consultants will be working closely with NRW, and will scope out the principles for potential flood mitigation measures. City and County of Swansea will in due course require specialist input to develop flood mitigation options and develop a business case for delivering the scheme which will involve further design and feasibility work. There is the potential for Welsh Government funding to assist with further feasibility work under the Coastal Risk Management Programme.
- 4.3 The Swansea Local Development Plan -Deposit Plan (2016) (LDP) already sets out a policy on the avoidance of risks of flooding and recommends a sustainable approach to meet the requirements of TAN15 and the relevant Catchment Flood Management Plans and Shoreline Management Plans. In recognition of the City centre's role as a destination of regional and national significance Swansea's Central Area is identified as a strategic development area(SDA) in the LDP, and includes a requirement for the delivery of 'appropriate measures to manage the risks of flooding from fluvial, pluvial and tidal sources'. In the light of more recent and emerging information from FCA studies, it is considered that the Council's Strategic policy response to tidal flood risk and climate change could be further reinforced within the Deposit LDP, as a possible future focussed change.
- 4.4 In accordance with the approach outlined above in 3.2, CCS will provide a written statement appended to the Vetch FCA. This will indicate the Council's long term commitment to undertake improvements to flood defences at the River Tawe and Swansea foreshore to align with projected tidal flood risk from climate change. Further site specific FCA information in preparation for other key development sites could also include similar statement of intent and identify the projected timescales that improvements will be required to align with projected climate change flood risk impacts.
- 4.5 The delivery of flood defences will be a key infrastructure requirement for the future development, sustainability and viability of the City centre. Design, feasibility, delivery options, phasing and funding sources will need to be considered further, and will need to include appropriate developer contributions and grant funding.

5.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment Screening has been undertaken and concludes that a full EIA report is not required as there is generally a low equality impact.

The Screening will be reviewed during the further development of any Tidal Flood Risk Strategy or scheme.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 This report does not bind the Council to any immediate financial commitment. Future commitments to a Tidal Flood Risk Mitigation Strategy or similar schemes for the City centre will be the subject of further FPR7 reports, and any financial commitment will need to be supported by further Council decisions.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council should ensure there is sufficient Insurance cover in place in respect of its property and land holdings to mitigate any increased risk of flooding.

Background Papers: Swansea Central Area Regeneration Framework (2016)
Swansea Local Development Plan Deposit Draft (2016)

Appendices: None.