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Coastal Group Chairs
Agenda item Paper: June 2013

Annex 1 – Joint briefing from Defra, the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency

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Subject: Flood Risk Management Plans: the proposed way forward

Recommendations

The Coastal Group Chairs are asked to:

1. Note the approach to Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), as set out jointly by Defra, the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency published on 10th June.
2. Note the role of the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales under the Flood Risk Regulations (FRR) to prepare FRMPs for England and Wales that include flooding from the sea, and the proposal to draw relevant information from SMPs to meet this requirement.
3. Consider the role of the Coastal Groups leading on the delivery of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) and how best the contributing SMP information can inform the FRMPs.
4. Provide a steer on how coastal erosion risk management actions should be regarded alongside the flood risk information being drawn into the FRMPs.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Under the Flood Risk Regulations, the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales and Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) where the risk of flooding from local flood risks is significant (as described in [Government guidance](#)¹) need to prepare Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) by December 2015. The FRMPs are important because they set out how to manage potential adverse consequences of flooding on human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity.
- 1.2 We consulted on the approach to developing FRMPs and, after considering feedback, Defra, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency now propose an approach (Annex 1) whereby:
 - the Environment Agency/Natural Resources Wales prepare plans in partnership with other Risk Management Authorities that draw information about all sources of flooding into one place in a way that is co-ordinated across catchments;
 - the plans draw from existing sources of information (eg CFMPs, SMPs and Local FRM Strategies);

¹ <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/flooding/documents/interim2/flood-risk-method.pdf>

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- those preparing the plans aim to consult at the same time on draft FRMPs and draft River Basin Management Plans (prepared under the Water Framework Directive).

1.3 The Environment Agency is developing a database to enable the collation of Flood Risk Management Plan information from existing plans, and it intends to enable Natural Resources Wales, LLFAs and other RMAs to use the system (input their information, view and query information belonging to other RMAs). In this way, we seek to store and use knowledge and evidence in an efficient and effective way and allow cross border FRMPs to be accommodated.

2.0 The role of SMPs, Coastal Groups and lead authorities in delivering the FRMPs

- 2.1 SMPs set out important information relating to the management of flooding from the sea. There may be some additional information related to sea flooding that the Flood Risk Regulations require (e.g. flood hazard and risk maps, and conclusions drawn from these maps), and Defra, Welsh Government, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales are setting out guidance on the requirements over the coming months.
- 2.2 The value of the existing SMP governance, along with the role of the Coastal Groups and lead authorities is recognised in monitoring and delivering the SMP action plans and this is expected to continue.
- 2.3 We want Coastal Groups and lead authorities for SMPs to be involved in developing FRMPs and how information from SMPs will be drawn into the FRMPs at a local level. Nationally we will highlight to the Coastal Chairs any national guidance, while EA and NRW local teams will liaise directly with Coastal Groups and lead authorities.
- 2.4 Objectives, measures and other relevant information drawn from the SMPs have already been subject to appropriate SMP change processes and approvals prior to being drawn into the draft FRMPs. It is the Environment Agency's intention to seek approval from Regional Flood and Coastal Committees for the aspects of the final FRMPs that cover flooding from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs, and it will be valuable to be able to signpost the provenance of those aspects drawn from the SMPs. Governance arrangements for Wales are currently being considered by Natural Resources Wales.
- 2.5 As part of the draft FRMP, we will make relevant SMP information available for consultation from July to December 2014, alongside the consultation on the draft River Basin Management Plans prepared under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). We recognise the potential challenges in making available for consultation the policies and actions set out in the SMPs. However, aligning this consultation with the broader FRMP and RBMP consultation offers opportunities to identify broader benefits and additional contributions to deliver outcomes for communities and the environment. We seek views from the Coastal Group Chairs on how this consultation can work best.

3.0 Coastal Erosion Risk Management

- 3.1 Our focus for the Flood Risk Regulations is to prepare Flood Risk Management Plans that cover flooding. However, we recognise the value of considering flood and coastal erosion risk management together. The recent consultation on the approach to developing FRMPs also highlighted support for coastal erosion risk management to be integrated into FRMPs in future cycles, with 67% of responses in favour.
- 3.2 Coastal erosion management actions within the SMPs could be held within the FRMP database alongside the sea flooding actions from the SMPs. This would allow all FCERM management actions to be held and monitored in one place. We are keen to appreciate the aspirations for this approach in the first cycle of planning (i.e. for draft FRMPs prepared by July 2014).

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4.0 Conclusion and recommendations

The Coastal Group Chairs are asked to:

1. Note the approach to Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs), as set out jointly by Defra, the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency published on 10th June.
2. Support the on-going delivery and monitoring of Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs), and the roles of Coastal Groups and lead authorities, in contributing SMP information to FRMPs.
3. Consider how best to manage consultation on SMP information drawn into the FRMPs.
4. Consider and provide a steer of how coastal erosion risk management actions should be regarded alongside the flood risk information.

Dr Sue Reed
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1 July 2013



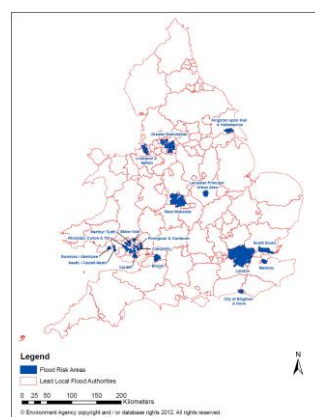
Flood Risk Management Plans - May 2013

The proposed way forward following the FRMP Consultation

Under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 (the Regulations) some Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs), Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency are required to produce Flood Risk Management Plans by December 2015 in England and Wales. We've consulted on the approach to producing these plans and, taking into account the responses, we're now proposing a preferred way forward.

Introduction

The Regulations implement the requirements of the European Floods Directive, which aims to provide a consistent approach to managing flood risk across Europe. We are currently in the first cycle of implementation, where some LLFAs (county councils and single tier authorities) need to prepare flood hazard and risk maps and Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) for the 10 Flood Risk Areas in England² and 8 in Wales (see adjacent figure). The Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales need to prepare flood hazard and risk maps and FRMPs for main rivers, the sea and reservoirs covering the whole of England and Wales.



Why did we consult on the approach to Flood Risk Management Plans?

FRMPs are important because they set out how risk management authorities and communities will work together to reduce the potential adverse consequences of flooding. Defra, the Welsh Government, the Environment Agency and the newly formed Natural Resources Wales (who took over the functions of the Environment Agency in Wales on 1st April 2013) wanted to raise awareness of the planning requirements and to get views on the possible approaches to delivering FRMPs for the first and subsequent cycles.

What was the response to the consultation?

The consultation closed at the end of October 2012 and there were over 80 responses from national organisations, risk management authorities, private companies and individuals.

"...nearly 70% of responses came from risk management authorities, with over half the responses from Lead Local Flood Authorities.

Nearly a quarter of all LLFAs responded to the consultation..."

The responses can be viewed on the Environment Agency web site:
<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal/ho/flood/plans/approach>

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What is the preferred approach to developing FRMPs?

Having reviewed the feedback the preferred approach to developing FRMPs in this planning cycle is for the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW):

*"...to prepare consolidated FRMPs in partnership with others so that they cover flooding from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs, as well as from surface water flooding
.....all in one place"*

² A further three Flood Risk Areas in England are currently under review

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The EA and NRW will work in partnership with LLFAs and other risk management authorities to develop these consolidated plans at a catchment scale by pooling information from various plans (Catchment Flood Management Plans, Shoreline Management Plans and Reservoir Plans for flooding from main rivers, the sea and reservoirs). The EA and NRW will seek for LLFAs to pool information from Local FRM Strategies (or Surface Water Management Plans) so that, as a minimum, it includes the Flood Risk Areas identified in the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA). This information on local flood risk management will be set within the context of the broader catchment plan.

What about outside the Flood Risk Areas?

While the focus for local flood risk management in this first planning cycle is on the Flood Risk Areas, we welcome LLFAs also pooling information covering areas that are outside of the Flood Risk Areas should they wish to. This means that information covering the whole of their LLFA patch could be pooled into the consolidated FRMP. This way we can build and share a picture of flood risk across all sources.

How would consultation of draft FRMPs work?

There is still more thinking to be done with LLFA partners but our current suggested way forward is for consultation on the draft consolidated FRMPs to be co-ordinated by the EA and NRW at a catchment scale. We see that there could be real benefits in undertaking this consultation at the same time as the consultation for the draft river basin management plans prepared under the Water Framework Directive from June 2014 and this is something that we should aim to do. We welcome the consultation on the draft consolidated FRMP being undertaken in partnership with LLFAs wherever possible: we think this would improve local engagement and foster local ownership. We do not propose delaying progress on Local FRM Strategies. Where feasible, LLFAs may want to consider including options for implementing their local strategy into the consultation of draft FRMPs, in particular where there are opportunities for synergies across the wider catchment for concerted action such as with land management measures. FRMP and RBMP are both processes aimed at focussing partnership action to deliver environmental and social benefits. We will look to find simple ways of doing this planning together, to deliver more outcomes and save time and money.

What about future planning cycles?

For future planning cycles, Defra and the Welsh Government are currently supportive of extending the coverage of FRMPs so that they include the whole of England and Wales for all sources of flood risk, and are prepared in partnership by all risk management authorities. Building on experience in this first planning cycle, we aim to be able to deliver closer alignment between flood risk management planning and River Basin Management Planning under the Water Framework Directive in the future. How this planning may be co-ordinated effectively can be considered further under the emerging Catchment Based Approach: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/quality/water/legislation/catchment-approach/>

What next and where can I find out more?

We appreciate the views that have been shared with us through this consultation and we will aim to share the draft proposal widely so that others, particularly LLFAs and other Risk Management Authorities, can consider its merits in more detail (See the EA web site for the Summary Report: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/portal/ho/flood/plans/approach/>).

We welcome further feedback from risk management authorities, particularly those who have not shared their thoughts previously (e-mail the EA at: FRMPConsultation@environment-agency.gov.uk). In the next few months we will set out further guidance on this preferred approach to developing FRMPs.