

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 17th July 2002

Time: 2: 00 pm to 5:00 pm

Venue: Committee Room 3, National Assembly Building

COMMITTEE REPORT ON FLOOD DEFENCE FUNDING REVIEW

Purpose

To update the Committee on progress on the Consultation Exercise relating to the Review of Flood and Coastal Defence Funding Mechanisms and Administrative Arrangements.

BACKGROUND

1. On February 27th 2002 I presented a paper (EPT-05-02) seeking your initial views on the consultation paper on the "**Review of the Flood and Coastal Defence Funding Mechanisms and Administrative Arrangements**". This consultation suggested a range of possible changes relating to both funding and institutional arrangements.
2. I indicated at that meeting that I would keep you updated on progress with the consultation exercise. This paper describes progress with regard to that exercise.

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS.

3. Following a public launch on 13th February 2002 consultation papers were dispatched to a wide range of organisations with a request for comments.
4. While the exercise covers both England and Wales and is being lead by DEFRA all consultees in Wales were asked to copy their responses direct to the Assembly.

RESPONSES RECEIVED

5. By the end of May over 300 consultees had been received across England and Wales of which 36 were received from consultees in Wales. A list of those Consultees is provided in Appendix 1.
6. Generally the consultations received from bodies in Wales are of high quality. Comments were generally well thought out and clearly expressed. It is clear that much thought and effort has gone into their preparation and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed.
7. Officials are currently considering the consultations. To date a brief factual assessment of the consultations has been undertaken. Early indications from this assessment are that there is little consensus amongst the consultees in terms of the best way forward. Given the complexity of the current arrangements for flood and coastal defence this is not surprising. There was however general agreement on the following issues.
 - There was a general acceptance of the need for both the review and for possible changes to both funding and institutional arrangements.
 - There was general acceptance that the majority of funds would continue to originate from Exchequer with little scope being seen for raising significant additional funds elsewhere.
 - Support for key principles to be met by any institutional arrangements i.e. Efficiency and effectiveness; simplicity and transparency; accountability; local democratic input; autonomy.
 - Need for short term streamlining proposals;
1. Officials are continuing the process of assessing consultations. Once this process is complete the results will be made available to Committee members.

NEXT STEP

2. The next step will be to convene a steering group to consider the responses received across England and Wales and to recommend the way forward.

SUMMARY

3. The consultation period for this Review is now complete and consultations are currently being assessed. While early indications are that there is no general consensus as to the "best" way forward there is general agreement that the findings of the steering group are sensible and that there is a need for change to both the funding mechanisms and institutional arrangements.

SUE ESSEX

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

JULY 2002

APPENDIX 1

Respondees to the Flood and Coastal Defence Funding Review

-

Responses via email:

British Geological Survey

British Holiday and Home Parks Association

Cardigan Bay Coastal Group

CIWEM

Coastal Group Chairs

Conwy County Borough Council

Council of Mortgage Lenders

Dee and Clwyd LFDC

Environment Agency

Flintshire County Council

Forest Enterprise

Gwynedd County Council

Gwynedd LFDC

H R Payne

Huw Edwards MP Monmouth

Liverpool Bay Coastal Group

NFU

SW Wales LFDC

Wales Coastal and Maritime Partnership

WaterVoice

WLGA (Draft)

Responses in hard copy:

Association of Drainage Authorities

British Geological Survey

British Holiday & Home Parks Ass Ltd

Caldicot and Wentlooge Levels DB

Carmarthenshire County Council

Ceredigion County Council

Countryside Council for Wales

Country, Land and Business Association

Farmers' Union of Wales

ICE

Lattice Property

Northumbria RFDC

Powysland IDB

RFDC Wales

Severn Estuary Coastal Group

SW Wales LFDC

WaterVoice

WLGA

Wrexham County Borough Council