

Synopsis of Pitt Review

1. The Pitt Review was commissioned to consider all available evidence on the flooding that occurred in England during June and July 2007. The Final Report was published in June 2008.
2. The Pitt Review's **Terms of Reference** were to focus specifically on issues around:-
 - a. *Flood risk management, including the risk posed by surface water flooding and the way in which the public and private sectors might adapt to future risks.*
 - b. *The vulnerability of critical infrastructure, including:*
 - i. *The ability of critical infrastructure to withstand flooding, and what improvements might be made.*
 - ii. *The resilience of dams and associated structures, and what improvements might be made.*
 - c. *The emergency response to the flooding, including social and welfare issues.*
 - d. *Issues for wider emergency planning arising from the actual or potential loss of essential infrastructure.*
 - e. *Issues arising during the transition period from the response to recovery phases.*
 - f. *Issues arising during the recovery phase.*
3. The Terms of Reference set out specific **objectives**, as follows:-
 - i. *To understand why the flooding was so extensive.*
 - ii. *To learn lessons on how in future we can best predict, prevent or mitigate the scale and impact of flooding incidents in a potentially changing environment.*
 - iii. *To look at how best to co-ordinate the response to flooding in future, including the significant social implications for communities.*
 - iv. *To establish what access to support, equipment, facilities and information is needed by those involved in the response at local, regional and national levels.*
 - v. *To ensure the public has as much access as possible to information on the risk of flooding to allow them to take appropriate precautions, be adequately informed on developments as an emergency unfolds, and be looked after properly in the immediate aftermath.*
 - vi. *To establish how the transition from response to recovery is best managed.*
 - vii. *To identify those aspects of the response that worked well and should be promoted and reinforced.*
 - viii. *To look at how best to co-ordinate the recovery phase in the future.*
 - ix. *To establish what support and information is needed by those involved in the recovery phase at local, regional and national levels.*

- x. *To identify those aspects of the recovery phase that worked well and should be promoted and reinforced.*
- xi. *To make recommendations in each of these areas to improve the UK's preparedness for flooding events in the future.*
- xii. *To make recommendations, drawing on the experience of the flooding incidents, to improve the UK's broader ability to manage the loss of essential services in any future emergencies.*

4. Four **principles** guided the Review:-

- *the needs of those individuals and communities who have suffered flooding or are at risk.*
- *change will only happen with strong and more effective leadership across the board*
- *we must be much clearer about who does what*
- *we must be willing to work together and share information.*

Recommendations

6. The Final Report contains 92 recommendations. Almost one third of the recommendations are relevant to local authorities and are as set out below:-

- 7. *There should be a presumption against building in high flood risk areas, in accordance with PPS25, including giving consideration to all sources of flood risk, and ensuring that developers make a full contribution to the costs both of building and maintaining any necessary defences.*
- 8. *The operation and effectiveness of PPS25 and the Environment Agency's powers to challenge development should be kept under review and strengthened if and when necessary.*
- 9. *Householders should no longer be able to lay impermeable surfaces as of right on front gardens and the Government should consult on extending this to back gardens and business premises.*
- 10. *The automatic right to connect surface water drainage of new developments to the sewerage system should be removed.*
- 11. *Building Regulations should be revised to ensure that all new or refurbished buildings in high flood-risk areas are flood-resistant or resilient.*
- 12. *All local authorities should extend eligibility for home improvement grants and loans to include flood resistance and resilience products for properties in high flood-risk areas.*
- 13. *Local authorities, in discharging their responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to promote business continuity, should encourage the take-up of property flood resistance and resilience by businesses.*
- 14. *Local authorities should lead on the management of local flood risk, with the support of the relevant organisations.*
- 15. *Local authorities should positively tackle local problems of flooding by working with all relevant parties, establishing ownership and legal responsibility.*

16. *Local authorities should collate and map the main flood risk management and drainage assets (over and underground), including a record of their ownership and condition.*
17. *All relevant organisations should have a duty to share information and cooperate with local authorities and the Environment Agency to facilitate the management of flood risk.*
18. *Local Surface Water Management Plans, as set out under PPS25 and coordinated by local authorities, should provide the basis for managing all local flood risk.*
19. *Local authorities should assess and, if appropriate, enhance their technical capabilities to deliver a wide range of responsibilities in relation to local flood risk management.*
26. *The Government should develop a single set of guidance for local authorities and the public on the use and usefulness of sandbags and other alternatives, rather than leaving the matter wholly to local discretion.*
28. *The forthcoming flooding legislation should be a single unifying Act that addresses all sources of flooding, clarifies responsibilities and facilitates flood risk management.*
38. *Local authorities should establish mutual aid agreements in accordance with the guidance currently being prepared by the Local Government Association and the Cabinet Office.*
39. *The Government should urgently put in place a fully funded national capability for flood rescue, with Fire and Rescue Authorities playing a leading role, underpinned as necessary by a statutory duty.*
41. *Upper tier local authorities should be the lead responders in relation to multi-agency planning for severe weather emergencies at the local level and for triggering multi-agency arrangements in response to severe weather warnings and local impact assessments.*
42. *Where a Gold Command is established for severe weather events, the police, unless agreed otherwise locally, should convene and lead the multi-agency response.*
43. *Gold Commands should be established at an early stage on a precautionary basis where there is a risk of serious flooding.*
64. *Local Resilience Forums should continue to develop plans for door-knocking, coordinated by local authorities, to enhance flood warnings before flooding and to provide information and assess welfare needs once flooding has receded.*
66. *Local authority contact centres should take the lead in dealing with general enquiries from the public during and after major flooding, redirecting calls to other organisations when appropriate.*
68. *Council leaders and chief executives should play a prominent role in public reassurance and advice through the local media during a flooding emergency, as part of a coordinated effort overseen by Gold Commanders.*
76. *Local authorities should coordinate a systematic programme of community engagement in their area during the recovery phase.*

83. *Local authorities should continue to make arrangements to bear the cost of recovery for all but the most exceptional emergencies, and should revisit their reserves and insurance arrangements in light of last summer's floods.*
85. *Local Recovery Coordination Groups should make early recommendations to elected local authority members about longer-term regeneration and economic development opportunities.*
90. *All upper tier local authorities should establish Oversight and Scrutiny Committees to review work by public sector bodies and essential service providers in order to manage flood risk, underpinned by a legal requirement to cooperate and share information.*
91. *Each Oversight and Scrutiny Committee should prepare an annual summary of actions taken locally to manage flood risk and implement this Review, and these reports should be public and reviewed by Government Offices and the Environment Agency.*
92. *Local Resilience Forums should evaluate and share lessons from both the response and recovery phases to inform their planning for future emergencies.*

Proposed New Legislation

7. Although the final Pitt Review was not published until June 2008, there was an interim report in December 2007, stating that flooding legislation should be updated and streamlined into a single unifying Act of Parliament. In May 2008, a proposed draft Floods and Water Bill was announced in the Legislative Green Paper. It is understood that this Bill will address all sources of flooding, clarify responsibilities and facilitate flood risk management.
8. It is expected that a consultation draft Bill will be published in spring 2009. Meanwhile, the content of the draft Bill is being scoped and DEFRA say that "*there will be opportunity for stakeholder engagement throughout the process*". It is understood that stakeholder involvement will be through public consultation and pre-legislative scrutiny by the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs Select Committee. These processes will assist DEFRA's preparation of the Bill which is not expected to be introduced to Parliament until late 2009.
9. The Bill is expected to up-date and consolidate or amend existing legislation, including:-

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Coast Protection Act, 1949 • The Reservoirs Act, 1975 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Land Drainage Act, 1991 • The Water Resources Act, 1991
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10. The Bill is expected to take a comprehensive approach to flooding, including surface water, groundwater and reservoirs, and to replace the current 'defence & protection' focus with a risk management approach, including adaptation, resistance, resilience and managed realignment. The Bill is also expected to deal with water resource and quality issues, including abstraction licensing, hosepipe bans and pollutants.
11. The Bill is likely to address issues in the EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) that came into force in November 2007. This requires Member States to assess all water courses and coast lines for their risk from flooding, to map the flood

extent and assets and humans at risk in these areas and to take adequate and coordinated measures to reduce this flood risk. This Directive also reinforces the rights of the public to access this information and to have a say in the planning process.

12. The aim of the EU Floods Directive is to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. The Directive requires Member States to carry out a preliminary assessment by 2011 to identify the river basins and associated coastal areas at risk of flooding. They would then need to draw up flood risk maps by 2013 for such areas and establish flood risk management plans focused on prevention, protection and preparedness by 2015, with a six-yearly review cycle thereafter.
13. The above issues are expected to be addressed in ways that also satisfy the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/E) that requires all inland and coastal waters within defined River Basin Districts to reach at least 'good' status by 2015 aiming for a healthy water environment, taking account of environmental, economic and social considerations.