

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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17 September 2013
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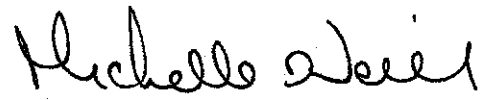
Mervyn Storey asked:

To ask the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development for an update on the development of flood risk management plans.

ANSWER

Management of flood risk is determined by the EU Directive (2007/60/EC), commonly known as the Floods Directive. To date my Department, in its role as Competent Authority, completed the preliminary flood risk assessment in 2011. Information from this work then enabled the significant flood risk areas to be determined. Currently, detailed flood hazard and risk maps are being developed for these areas, which are to be prepared by 22nd December 2013. The maps will provide detail on the nature and extent of flooding from different sources within each settlement and this information will be included in the Flood Risk Management Plans to be drafted. To inform the plans, Local Flood Forums have been established for each river basin district. Statutory Agencies, Community Leaders and Elected Representatives with an interest in flood risk management are members of these forums. The plans are to be in draft by December 2014 and finalised a year later. The enclosed leaflet describes how the Floods Directive is being implemented and highlights the

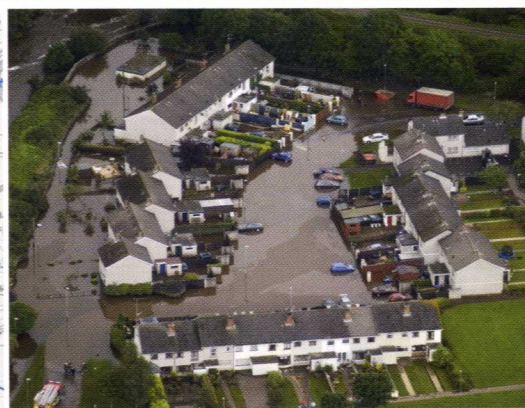
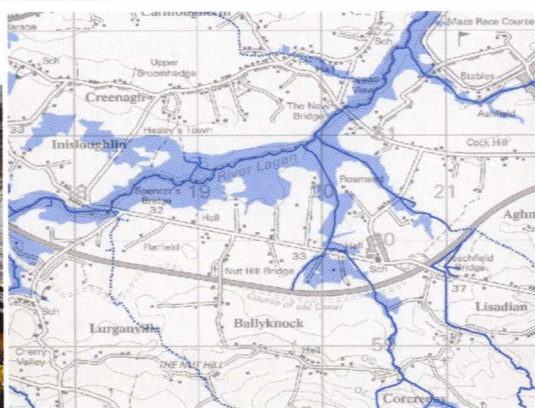
key delivery stages and milestones (a copy of the leaflet has been placed in the Assembly library).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle O'Neill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MICHELLE O'NEILL MLA



The EU Floods Directive



Helping protect communities



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

www.dardni.gov.uk

AN ROINN
**Talmhaíochta agus
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÁNNYSTRIE O
**Fairms an
Kintra Fordèrin**



Introduction to the Floods Directive

Flooding is a natural occurrence and in Northern Ireland can be from a variety of sources including rivers, high tides and heavy rainfall. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, through its Rivers Agency and with the cooperation of other government departments, agencies and stakeholders, aims to understand the likelihood of flooding in Northern Ireland and manage the harm that it causes.

As flooding can have devastating impacts, protecting the needs of the community is at the heart of the Floods Directive approach. It aims to manage the adverse consequences that flooding has on all of the following:

- human health
- the environment
- cultural heritage
- economic activity

Flood risk is a measure of the impact of flooding and the likelihood that it will occur.

While many areas in Northern Ireland may be at flood risk, the Directive requires us to identify those at significant risk and carry out further study on these areas. A detailed methodology of how we identified areas of significant risk is available at www.dardni.gov.uk/riversagency

Four stage strategy

A four stage strategy is being undertaken which will ensure that new plans will be in place to manage flood risk across the country by 2015.

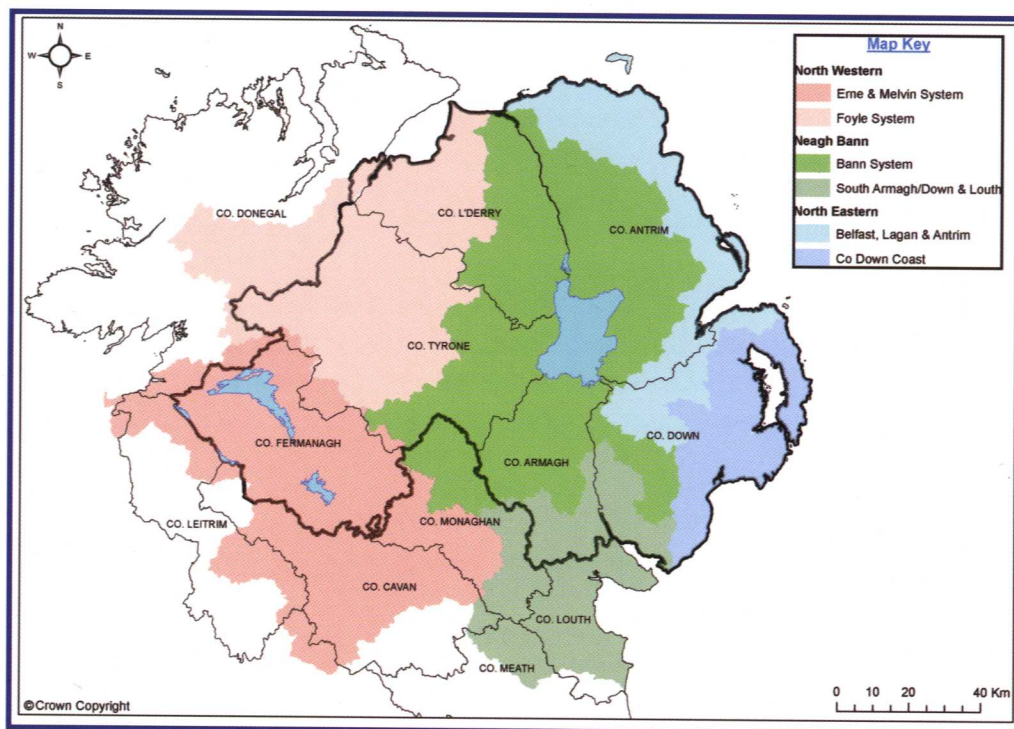
Stage 1	Create NI legislation to implement the Directive	Dec 2009
Stage 2	Undertake a preliminary flood risk assessment Identifies Significant Flood Risk Areas (SFRAs)	Dec 2011
Stage 3	Produce flood hazard & flood risk maps Maps to be produced for the SFRAs	Dec 2013
Stage 4	Produce flood risk management plans Plans will contain objectives and measures to manage flood risk in SFRAs	Dec 2015

Areas of study

The Directive requires flood risk to be addressed within large geographical areas. This means that our research and recommendations will consider all of the main sources of flooding within a catchment and the impact these sources may have on one another. By assessing the 'bigger picture', government can make the best use of its available resources and can work with others to ensure that long term improvements are achieved.

To implement the Directive, our rivers and coastlines have been assigned into three River Basin Districts (see map). The North Western and Neagh Bann are classed as International River Basin Districts as the catchments include areas within the Republic of Ireland. While we are only responsible for areas within Northern Ireland, we will coordinate our plans for those catchments with the Office of Public Works which is responsible for implementing the Floods Directive in the Republic of Ireland.

To help localise our assessment and the eventual output of the flood risk management plans, we have further broken down the River Basin Districts into six local plan areas. This approach will help ensure that those involved can better relate to the boundaries, scale and local nature of flood risk.



Flood risk management plans

The end result of the Directive is a flood risk management plan for each River Basin District. These will set out objectives, measures and an action plan for managing flood risk.

The plans will focus on:

Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not building houses and industries in present and future flood-prone areas • Adapting future developments to the risk of flooding • Promoting appropriate land-use, agricultural and forestry practices
Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structural and non-structural measures to reduce the likelihood and impact of floods
Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing the public about flood risk and what to do in the event of a flood

Who's involved?

Rivers Agency is engaging with key stakeholders to ensure that the views of a wide range of interested parties are represented in the final flood risk management plans. To do this, it has set up a number of groups to develop policy and direct the process.

As part of this process the public will be provided with information about the significant flood risk areas, the availability of flood risk and hazard maps, and will have the opportunity to comment on the draft flood risk management plans.

Other information

- The preliminary flood risk assessment, flood maps and flood risk management plans will be reviewed, and if necessary updated, every six years.
- Flood risk management through the Floods Directive takes place alongside government's ongoing programme of drainage and flood alleviation measures.
- For further information on the EU Floods Directive and Rivers Agency, visit www.dardni.gov.uk/riversagency
- For useful advice on how to prepare for a flood, alter your home to protect against flooding or what to do in the event of a flood, visit www.nidirect.gov.uk

