Memorandum of Understanding for flood risk management in the Upper River Great Ouse catchment to Produce a joint Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment

This Memorandum of Understanding is to record the working partnerships between Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Milton Keynes Council and the Environment Agency, Anglian Water Services Ltd (AWS) and the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards under the new Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 for the production of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA).

Under the new legislation, the Environment Agency (EA) is responsible for producing an overarching national flood risk management strategy and for managing the Main River network. Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Milton Keynes Council are the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and are responsible for coordinating local flood risk management, such as Preliminary Flood Risk assessments, local strategies, and for keeping records. The IDB is responsible for the Strategic Ordinary Watercourses system in its drainage district and is focused on local flood Risk Management and local delivery. The AWS is the statutory undertake for water and wastewater provision.

The Flood Risk Regulations 2009 places a duty on each LLFA to prepare a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment by 22 June 2011, using readily available data, the flood maps from the EA, and local knowledge. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010, paragraph 13 (4) enables one Flood Risk Management Statutory Authority to arrange for a flood risk management function to be exercised on its behalf by another flood risk management statutory authority, who are listed under paragraph 6 (13).

Under this mechanism, the Bedford Group of Drainage Boards will produce a single cross political boundary Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for the geographical area administered by the three principal LLFAs in the Upper Great Ouse catchment, as supported by the EA. Each constituent LLFA will, in accordance with its own policy take the assessment through the relevant internal scrutiny process. To achieve consistency a single joint scrutiny and approval group will be established comprising an IDB subcommittee of six LLFA nominated Members representing the three LLFAs, i.e. two members from each authority representing all main parties.

All partners will work in the spirit of the Act, which is to achieve the aspiration of establishing the need for greater coordination and cooperation between partners within flood risk management. All PFRA data will be shared with all parties, subject to any restrictions agreed with the initial data provider.