



Headquarters  
Hydebank  
4 Hospital Road  
BELFAST  
BT8 8JP

Telephone: 028 9025 3355  
Fax: 028 9025 3455  
Web: [www.riversagency.ni.gov.uk](http://www.riversagency.ni.gov.uk)

William Francey  
Director of Health & Environmental Services Dept  
Belfast City Council  
Belfast City Hall  
Belfast  
BT1 5GS

5 January 2010

Dear William

### **Floods Directive: Belfast Flood Risk Stakeholder Forum**

I refer to our meeting of the 3 December 2009 attended by senior officials of both Belfast City Council and Rivers Agency.

At the outset let me express my gratitude to you and Suzanne for engaging on behalf of Belfast City Council in such a positive fashion on what is going to be an interesting project.

The profile of flooding is at the highest in the view of both the public and our elected representatives so it is important that we adopt a joined up approach to the assessment and management of flood risk for the City of Belfast and the wider catchment.

The Agency believes that the formation of the Belfast Stakeholder Forum will assist with the development of the Flood Risk Management Sub Plan for Belfast and this provides the most appropriate vehicle for enabling public participation as required by the EU Floods Directive.

As discussed at our meeting the Floods Directive is now transposed into local legislation and is called the Water Environment (Floods Directive) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2009. These Regulations place a statutory duty on Northern Ireland Departments, District Councils and Northern Ireland Water to exercise their relevant functions in a manner which secures compliance with the Directive.

I wish to acknowledge receipt of the RPS Report into flooding incidents in 2007/2008 and consider this to be a good example of the level of information exchange and assistance sought within the spirit of the Regulations. I can confirm that this has been given to the Area Engineer for Belfast and he intends to meet with a representative from Belfast City Council to discuss.



At the meeting we also explained that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is the Competent Authority for the purposes of implementing the requirements of the Floods Directive and this role has been delegated to Rivers Agency.

Could I formally ask you to confirm the participation of the Belfast City Council in the proposed forum as this will allow us to begin to arrange the practical aspects of these meetings? We anticipate about four meetings each year and the input from the various stakeholders will be used to inform the Flood Risk Management Plan. We would particularly value the Councils assistance in indentifying, agreeing and making contact with the relevant Non-Departmental stakeholders. We would also wish to promote a joined up approach between Belfast City Council and Rivers Agency to these forums and would suggest that a co-chair arrangement is developed.

I look forward to working closely with you in what is a challenging but worthwhile project which I know will deliver significant community benefits.

Yours sincerely

**John C Clarke**  
**Chief Executive**

**Copy to: David Porter, Director of Development**  
**Joe Nicholson, Head of Strategic Planning Unit**