

Government Must Do More To Protect Homes From Floods

Whitehall must do more to tackle the increased risk of flooding to prevent further devastation similar to that seen in last summer's period of severe rainfall, according to a newly released study.

June 27, 2008 (FPRC) -- Sir Michael Pitt, who led the independent review into the future of flood prevention, said that among a number of other recommendations, the government must establish a cabinet committee dedicated to limiting risk exposure. In doing so, the group must escalate flood prevention to a top-level security priority on the same standing as anti-terrorist and pandemic prevention operations, he said.

Following last year's floods, many thousands of people were displaced from their homes and were placed in temporary accommodation, some of whom still have not been able to return. Sir Michael urged the government to act now to prevent a similar event having comparable effect in the future. Among the recommendations was the development of a National Resilience Forum to help develop nationwide defence strategies for flooding and other emergencies.

Commenting on the publication of the review, moneysupermarket said it was a step in the right direction and would help to improve access to competitive home insurance policies, which it suggested many people are finding increasingly difficult to find. For those without adequate home cover, there is a likelihood that repairs arising from storm damage would have to be met with savings, personal loans or other forms of credit.

In a statement, the price comparison site commented: "The Association of British Insurers estimates that in some areas affected by the summer 2007 floods just a quarter of homes had contents insurance, yet in the aftermath, insurers received around 165,000 claims related to flooding - equivalent to four years worth of claims. Looking forward insurers may be reluctant to insure homes in flood risk areas, especially for properties where a claim for flooding has already been made. Anyone planning to buy a home on a flood plain should think carefully about the impact location might have on their premiums, or whether they can insure their home at all."

Sir Michael also iterated the importance of providing consumers with information about purchasing property in high-risk areas in order to allow them to make informed decisions about insurance and other important considerations. For those looking for an effective way to raise the capital to purchase their ideal home, taking out a secured loan may provide the necessary funds to put down the money for a deposit before the opportunity is missed.

Concluding, Sir Michael insisted that public authorities must be involved both locally and nationally, with regional bodies called upon to take a commanding lead in flood risk management. Meanwhile, at a national level, oversight and scrutiny committees were deemed necessary to ensure work was being undertaken effectively.

Earlier this year, Abbey Home Insurance indicated that as well as causing severe disruptions, turbulent weather can put a serious dent in people's finances too, with the average cost of home damage said to equal 2,699 pounds. For those in need of an effective way to cover such expenses, taking out a home loan may prove useful.

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