

**KENT FLOOD RISK AND WATER MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, 4th November, 2026

10.00 am

Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall,
Maidstone





AGENDA

KENT FLOOD RISK AND WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 4th November, 2026, at 10.00 am Ask for: **James Willis**

Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone Telephone **03000 417831**

Membership (7)

Reform UK (4): Mr W Chapman (Chair), Mr J Baker, Mr J Finch and Mr M Paul

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr M Sole

Restore Britain (1): Mr R Ford

Conservative (1): Mr H Rayner

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

1. Apologies
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes of the meeting on 10th June 2026 (Pages 1 - 14)
4. KCC Severe Weather Response Activity - Report (Pages 15 - 26)
5. Public Health - Water Borne Pollution - Report (Pages 27 - 34)
6. Environment Agency - Update
7. Southern Water - Update
8. Lower Medway IDB - Update

EXEMPT ITEMS

(At the time of preparing the agenda there were no exempt items. During any such items which may arise the meeting is likely NOT to be open to the public)

Benjamin Watts
Deputy Chief Executive
03000 416814

Tuesday, 27 October 2026

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT FLOOD RISK AND WATER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 10 June 2026.

PRESENT: Mr J Baker, Mr W Chapman (Chair), Mr J Finch, Mr M Paul, Mr R Ford and Mr H Rayner

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M A J Hood, Mr S Jeffrey (Maidstone Borough Council), Charles Mackonochie (KALC), Cllr D Kent (Tonbridge Wells Borough Council) Mr R Yates (Swale Borough Council) and Cllr T Hills (Folkestone & Hythe Borough Council)

IN ATTENDANCE: Andy Jeffrey (Head of Resilience and Emergency Planning) Louise Smith (Flood and Water Manager) Carol Valentine (Highways Asset Drainage Manager) Mr David Goff (Chairman-Kent Flood Action Group Forum) and James Willis (Democratic Service Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

21. Apologies
(Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Boughton and Cllr Summersgill. An update on the Membership of the Committee was provided and welcomed Mr Ford and Mr Rayner

22. Declarations of Interest
(Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Minutes of the meeting on 04.03.26
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2026 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chair.

24. KCC Severe Weather Response Activity Report
(Item 4)

Andy Jeffery, (Head of Resilience and Emergency Planning), was in attendance for this item

1.The officer discussed the following key points:

- a) Provided an update on the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum's water supply disruption

plan, which covered the multi-agency response to water outages. The officer explained that, following discussions at previous meetings, work had commenced to review and update the plan, with a more detailed report to be presented at a future meeting.

- b) The officer informed the committee that a detailed report on the most recent water outages would be included in the next committee meeting, as the incidents fell within the next reporting quarter.
- c) Reassured Members of the committee that, ahead of the summer period, the County Council was working with partners within the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) to ensure that plans and incident response capabilities were in place and effective, enabling all responding agencies to manage any disruption over the coming months.

2. In response to the report Members asked the following:

- a) Concerns were raised regarding recent water supply disruption in Thanet, including the provision of 12 litres of water to individuals on the Priority Services Register (PSR), the deployment of water tankers, and the establishment of bottled water stations at Manston Airport and a local supermarket were all highlighted.
- b) Discussions referred to recent correspondence with water companies and noted reports that reservoir levels were lower than usual. Concern was expressed regarding the resilience of the water supply during periods of increased demand, and questions were raised about how close the affected area had come to water shortages. Members also sought clarification on the specific factors that had contributed to the recent supply disruption.
- c) The officer acknowledged the concerns raised but advised that they were unable to respond to questions requiring detailed technical input from the relevant water companies and specialist engineers responsible for the infrastructure discussed.
- d) Questioned the County Council's current response to water supply disruptions and expressed concern that limited progress appeared to have been made. Concern was also raised regarding the level of information being provided by water companies and the extent to which a lack of transparency hindered effective scrutiny. Members emphasised the County Council's public health responsibilities and the importance of ensuring that water companies were held to account.
- e) Members raised additional concerns regarding groundwater flooding and its impact on local communities. It was noted that groundwater entering the ground could infiltrate sewerage networks, creating operational pressures that required the regular deployment of tankers to remove wastewater and maintain essential sanitation service.
- f) Discussed the significant inconvenience caused to residents, including frequent tanker movements within villages, and referenced previous past discussions and a site visit undertaken by an officer.
- g) Members queried that that groundwater flooding was not addressed within the report and queried whether such issues were widespread across Kent or specific to certain areas and requested that future reports include information on the extent and locations of groundwater flooding across the county to better understand the scale of the issue.

- h) Officers responded to previous concerns regarding groundwater flooding and the inclusion of related information within the report. The officer explained that groundwater flooding did not fall within the County Council's direct responsibilities in the context of the report and advised that while such information may be held by the County Council, it would largely be derived from partner agencies. As a result, it had been agreed that the report should be limited to information generated by the County Council itself, on which officers could provide informed comment.
- i) The officer clarified that where groundwater flooding resulted in incident responses involving the County Council, these would be included within the report under the incident response section and that the provided report covered the period January to March and, to their knowledge, the County Council had not responded to groundwater flooding incidents during that quarter.
- j) Members discussed the role of the committee in providing oversight of these matters and noted the value of having representation from both District Councils and the County Council. Additional comments emphasised the importance of effective communication, coordination and information sharing between the County Council and district councils during emergency incidents in order to respond effectively to residents' concerns.
- k) Highlighted the need for continued scrutiny of the water company's emergency response arrangements and requested further information on the implementation of planned improvements.
- l) Members expressed concern that further water supply incidents were likely during the summer period and emphasised the importance of understanding when the mitigation measures identified by the water company would be implemented and become operational.
- m) A Member requested that any future report submitted to the Committee provide greater detail on the anticipated timescales for delivering proposed improvements. This was considered particularly important in relation to the establishment of alternative bottled water distribution locations and the implementation of other response and resilience measures.
- n) In response the officer addressed the concerns raised and that they were able to comment on improvements to Kent County Council and Kent and Medway emergency response procedures, including the development of the water supply disruption plan previously referenced but was unable to comment on aspects that lay beyond their own responsibility or sat within other organisations.
- o) The Committee sought an update on the reported failure of the storm warning system during Storm Goretti in January and its impact on coastal areas of Kent. The Committee was advised that, to the best of their knowledge, the incident had not required a significant response from Kent County Council's Emergency Planning Service. Members requested that clarification be sought from the Environment Agency regarding the reported failure and any lessons learned.
- p) Additional concerns were raised regarding water supply outages. While the improved email communications issued by officers during incidents were welcomed, concern was expressed that updates relating to water distribution hubs were not always provided in a timely manner. Members emphasised the importance of reviewing and strengthening incident response arrangements to ensure that information was communicated more effectively during future disruptions.

- q) Discussed current planning and development practices, noting apprehensions that new developments were sometimes permitted to raise ground levels or building foundations to reduce flood risk to those sites. It was highlighted that such measures could have implications for drainage arrangements and surface water management in surrounding areas.
- r) Attendees were reminded that the Select Committee Review established by Full Council was the agreed mechanism through which water outages and wider water-related matters would be examined in detail. The recent Short Focused Inquiry (SFI) was also discussed.
- s) Members reiterated the importance of having an appropriate mechanism to monitor and review progress in implementing the recommendations and to examine developments arising between formal reports to the Committee.
- t) The discussion highlighted the need for continued oversight of water supply resilience, infrastructure planning and partnership arrangements to ensure that concerns raised by residents were addressed effectively.

RESOLVED to note the verbal update on KCC Severe Weather Response Activity Report

25. Romney Marshes Flood and Climate Change Assessment - Presentation (Item 5)

Louise Smith (Flood and Water Manager) – was in attendance for the item.

1. The officer provided a presentation covering the following key points:

- a) The study had originally been proposed by the previous Chair of the Committee. The purpose of the study was to highlight the risks faced by Romney Marsh and surrounding areas and to set out the work undertaken to date, alongside the next phases of activity.
- b) The officer provided an overview of Romney Marsh, explaining that it is a low-lying area of reclaimed wetland covering approximately 250 square kilometres. Members were advised that the area is protected by an extensive network of tidal flood defences, which play a vital role in reducing the risk of coastal flooding across the marsh.
- c) Outlined the work completed to date and the planned future phases of the study, which were intended to manage and mitigate the identified risks. The importance of ongoing assessment, investment and partnership working was emphasised to ensure the long-term resilience of Romney Marsh
- d) Advised that Main Rivers within the area were managed by the Environment Agency, while ordinary watercourses were the responsibility of the Romney Marsh Internal Drainage Board. Members were informed that drainage was achieved through a combination of gravity-fed systems and pumping stations, and that the area supported approximately 14,000 households and 700 businesses.

- e) Discussed that increased rainfall, sea level rise and the potential for tide locking were expected to increase flood risk across Romney Marsh, although the extent of these impacts remained uncertain. Members were informed that the Romney Marsh Impact Assessment would improve understanding of these risks and help identify options for future flood risk management and adaptation
- f) Explained that Romney Marsh was exposed to flood risk from a range of external sources, including tidal inundation from the English Channel and fluvial flooding associated with Main Rivers, particularly the River Rother.
- g) It was advised that these flood risks were being considered through a range of existing studies, the findings of which would inform the current assessment. Members were informed that the Romney Marsh Impact Assessment would focus on watercourses within the study area, including how flood risk may change over time and the potential effects of sea level rise.
- h) Members were informed that Kent County Council had appointed Arcadis Consulting to undertake Phase 1 of the Impact Assessment, to support a submission to the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy.
- i) Phase 1 of the study had involved a review of existing flood risk data for Romney Marsh. Members were informed that the area contained an extensive network of watercourses, with a series of outfalls regulating the discharge of water to external bodies. It was noted that Main Rivers could drain to multiple outfalls and that watercourses managed by the Internal Drainage Board formed an interconnected drainage system across the marsh.
- j) Members were advised that pump operation data for pumped outfalls had been reviewed as part of Phase 1. It was noted, however, that information relating to gravity outfalls was limited and would be examined further during Phase 2 of the assessment.
- k) Southern Water had provided data on surface water sewers and pumping stations, identifying six catchments serving urban areas within the study area. It was highlighted that this information would support Phase 2 in assessing flood risk impacts on the sewer network.
- l) Historical flood data had been gathered from the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, Kent County Council and East Sussex County Council. Data had shown that recorded flooding had primarily occurred around Camber, New Romney, Dymchurch, Lydd and inland at Brookland.
- m) Funding for Phases 2 and 3 had been secured through the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Local Levy, with contributions of £120,000 from the levy and £10,000 from Southern Water, alongside further contributions sought from Folkestone and Hythe District Council and the Internal Drainage Board.
- n) Phase 2 would involve modelling to assess interactions between watercourses, pumps and outfalls and it was explained that the study area would be divided into catchments based on outfalls, with modelling used to assess flood storage and risk to key locations.
- o) The officer advised that, due to the low-lying and pumped nature of the catchments, flood volume was likely to be a more significant factor than peak flows and that the Environment Agency had recommended the use of the Coastal Design Sea Level 4 dataset for deriving

tidal levels, with allowances applied to account for sea level rise.

- p) The officer explained that the proposed modelling would improve understanding of water level management and long-term flood risk associated with climate change.
 - q) Members were advised that the outputs from Phase 2 would inform the detailed scope of Phase 3. Phase 3 would provide a high-level assessment of potential options to manage future water levels and flood risk across Romney Marsh.
 - r) Phase 3 of the assessment would explore a range of potential flood risk management options, including innovative approaches and lessons learned from comparable environments elsewhere in the United Kingdom and Europe.
 - s) A multi-criteria assessment would be used to identify suitable options, alongside providing high-level cost estimates and clarified that Phase 3 would not be a detailed options appraisal, but would instead act as a guide for future decision-making, further work and investment.
 - t) Members were informed that the overall assessment would improve understanding of water level management in low-lying areas, particularly those reliant on pumped and gravity outfalls, and identify potential approaches to managing future flood risk.
1. Members discussed the following points:
- a) Members commended the officer on the hard work undertaken and praised the details captured within the presentation.
 - b) Questions were raised if there was any scope to capture and store excess water for later use. The officer advised that consideration was being given to opportunities for capturing and storing surface water for irrigation purposes, including the potential to reduce flood risk and could reduce reliance on mains water for agricultural uses, particularly for non-potable purposes, including irrigation and livestock supply.
 - c) In response to questions regarding whether solar farm developments could increase flood risk, the officer advised that, in their role as a statutory consultee within the Sustainable Drainage Team (SDT), proposals for solar farm developments were routinely assessed as part of the planning process to ensure that flood risk and drainage implications were appropriately considered.
 - d) It was noted that assessments considered the volume of surface water generated by developments and the proposed management of runoff. The officer advised that developments were expected to limit discharge rates to no greater than greenfield runoff levels, with runoff arrangements reflecting the previous use and characteristics of the site.
 - e) Where necessary, developers might be required to incorporate on-site storage and adopt sustainable drainage measures to manage water appropriately.
 - f) A Member referred to Thanet Earth, the largest commercial greenhouse complex in the United Kingdom, and noted concerns raised locally following reports that the site had been required to disconnect from the Southern Water supply. Concern was expressed regarding the potential implications for water resilience and future demand on local water resources.

- g) In response, the officer advised that they were not aware of the specific case at the time of the meeting but acknowledged the importance of engagement with water companies and major water users. Members were informed that collaborative work between Kent County Council and Thanet Earth was ongoing in relation to rainwater harvesting and water resilience measures
- h) Members asked what lessons could be learned from the work being undertaken in Romney Marsh and whether the approach could be applied to other coastal communities across Kent.
- i) In response, the officer advised that partner organisations, including the North Kent Internal Drainage Board, were undertaking similar work relating to water level management. It was noted that findings and lessons learned would be shared across these projects to support a consistent and informed approach to flood risk management across Kent.
- j) Members were advised that the Environment Agency's Shoreline Management Plans identified locations where managed realignment may be required in the future, recognising that it would not be feasible or sustainable to maintain existing coastal defences in all areas indefinitely.
- k) In response to questions regarding whether the power station had been included within the study, the officer advised that the current focus was on understanding the implications of flood risk for communities and businesses within the study area. It was noted that the project remained in the early stages of Phase 2 and that there would be scope to consider additional factors, including critical infrastructure, as the assessment progressed.
- l) Members queried the scope of the study, officers advised that consideration could be given to activities undertaken by the nearby nuclear power station, including its flood defence infrastructure, and whether these had any implications for the surrounding area.
- m) A Member asked whether Government funding was being sought to support investment in water storage infrastructure for farmers. In response, the officer advised that current discussions were focused on securing investment from water companies, as increased water storage capacity could help reduce demand on the mains water supply and deliver wider resilience benefits.
- n) It was noted that Government funding had not been pursued at this stage. The officer advised that water companies were expected to play a key role in supporting such initiatives, given the potential benefits to water supply resilience and the reduction of demand on the mains network.

RESOLVED to note the Romney Marshes Flood and Climate Change presentation

26. KCC Highways and Transport - Road Drainage Presentation
(Item 6)

Carol Valentine (Highways Asset Drainage Manager) – was in attendance for the item.

1. The officer presented the following information:

- a) Introduced the item by outlining the structure and responsibilities of the highway's drainage team, with particular reference to duties under section 100 of the Highways Act. The officer explained that the team's role was to ensure that surface water was kept off the highway and that highway assets were maintained and constructed to keep roads as reasonably safe and practicable from flooding.
- b) The officer advised that the team comprised of 24 staff and was organised into four principal functional areas. Two teams focused on planned works and capital delivery, while the remaining two were responsible for maintenance and technical support activities.
- c) Members were advised that the team had managed a high volume of enquiries, receiving more than 8,500 enquiries during 2025/26 compared with an average of approximately 8,000 enquiries each year. Members were informed that, despite the team's small size, workload levels remained consistently high, and the work undertaken was essential to maintaining highway safety and managing flood risk across the county's highway network.
- d) Highlighted a number of ongoing challenges, including issues relating to third-party assets, securing compliance from landowners regarding drainage responsibilities, and coordinating works with district and borough council partners. It was noted that these factors could affect the timely delivery of maintenance and flood risk management activities.
- e) In addition, the team would also be responsible for a large number of assets, including up to 250,000 drains, around 250 ponds and lagoons, 15 pumping stations (20–30 pumps), and approximately 8,500 soakaways. The team was further supported by an electronic asset system used to identify hotspots, target recurring issues, and inform future investment. Maintenance was a key function, including cyclical, risk-based cleaning, with high-speed and strategic roads serviced annually.
- f) Aspects further outlined how the cyclical maintenance operated on a risk-based approach, with strategic and high-speed roads (e.g. key routes) would be cleaned annually and Minor roads were cleaned every one to two years, depending on risk factors such as flood history, road hierarchy and traffic level. It was anticipated that all roads would now be cleaned at least every two years.
- g) Confirmed that the annual maintenance programme was established at the start of each financial year and delivered throughout the year. Members were advised that, in addition to planned maintenance activities, reactive works were undertaken in response to urgent issues reported by residents and highway users to ensure that highway drainage assets continued to operate effectively and that flood risk and highway safety were appropriately managed.
- h) In addition, it was highlighted that while there was no statutory duty under the Highways Act to address internal property flooding and the service recognised the distress caused and sought to respond where possible. The Officer further expanded upon the investigation process of drainage systems and rooting out the causes of issues that could

impact the public.

- i) Plans for the 2026/27 maintenance programme included the cleansing of approximately 60,000 drainage assets across the strategic highway network, together with associated pipework where silt and debris commonly accumulate. Members were informed that around 9,000 gullies located on high-speed roads were cleaned annually, with these works typically scheduled between April and September.
- j) It was further noted that approximately 80,000 gullies on the minor network would be cleaned on an annual or biennial basis, depending on risk. The officer emphasised the significant scale of the drainage maintenance programme.
- k) Issues identified through routine maintenance activities were referred to the planned works team where more substantial drainage interventions were required. Members were informed that these schemes were then assessed by the relevant teams, with engineers responsible for the design, development and delivery of any necessary works.
- l) Advised that delivery of drainage improvement works was undertaken by external contractors, with the team responsible for managing contractor performance, programme delivery and budgets. Members were informed that the capital drainage budget was approximately £5 million per annum over the next three years and was used to deliver drainage improvements and reduce flood risk. It was further noted that opportunities to secure additional funding were actively pursued where available to enhance the programme and increase the scale of works delivered.
- m) Storm event responses were discussed and the notable challenges faced. The officer advised that the team sought to minimise disruption to residents and road users wherever possible through coordinated response arrangements and the deployment of appropriate flood mitigation measures. Members were also provided with a brief overview of the flood defence measures in place and the compensation arrangements available in certain circumstances following flooding incidents.
- n) A programme would be developed for the inspection and improvement of ponds and lagoons. Members were informed that the required works would be phased over the next three to five years to bring these assets up to the required standard and support their ongoing effectiveness in managing drainage and flood risk.
- o) Discussed that a mainline cleansing programme would be introduced to address blockages within drainage pipes beyond gullies, particularly in strategic locations.
- p) Flooding hotspots would be more comprehensively mapped within the asset management system to support improved planning ahead of winter highlighted the importance of collaboration and innovation, including the use of new technologies to better predict and manage flooding risk. Longer-term scheme planning would be developed in partnership with contractors to support delivery over a two-to-three-year period.

2. Members raised the discussed points:

- a) In response to Members' questions, officers advised that there was no countywide ranking or 'league table' of flooding hotspots. It was further noted that questions relating to insurance claims and compensation arrangements fell outside the scope of the

presentation and would be more appropriately directed to the relevant insurance specialist.

- b) Members raised concerns on flood events impacting Drill Lane Ford in Ickham. A number of cyclists had been injured in 2026 and members asked if better signage could be explored to help combat the current issues faced. The presenting officer addressed the concerns and would look to talk with the Highways Improvement Team to explore what has been completed to date and what further options are available.
- c) In relation to a question regarding recurring flooding at pedestrian subways in Maidstone, the officer acknowledged the long-standing nature of the issue and advised that the matter would be reviewed in greater detail to better understand the causes and potential solutions.
- d) Questions were raised on the regularity of drain cleanings and debris removal. In response the officer discussed the forward and ongoing programme of maintenance and suggested exploring publishing timetables to make the wider public aware of the areas that will be treated. The officer would look to update the committee on the current publishing progress.
- e) In response to concerns raised on the flooding of Church Road, the officer acknowledged the ongoing impacting issues and highlighted that a number of solutions that had been explored. The presenting officer suggested meeting with the Member to discuss the options in greater depth.
- f) Members highlighted the restricted budgets that had been in place and asked how big of a scale was the current outstanding drainage works. In response it was discussed that the authority had been managing a significant backlog of approximately £5 million in 2023–24. It was noted that this level of backlog was comparable to, or in excess of, the annual budget available.
- g) The officer advised that the backlog had the potential to increase over time, placing additional pressure on available resources. Efforts were being made to address the situation, including improvements to processes and the introduction of new assets where possible, in order to manage demand and mitigate further growth in the backlog.
- h) Concerns were raised on the drainage option for the proposed 1500 homes to be located in Paddock wood. The officer acknowledged the points made and discussed that all new development proposals were referred to the drainage team as part of the authority's established approval process. This had ensured that drainage considerations were incorporated at an early stage.
- i) A Member sought clarification regarding the proposed changes to the frequency of cleansing on the minor road network. It was noted that the current arrangement involved a three-year cycle, while the new contract proposed more frequent servicing.
- j) The officer explained that all minor roads would be included within a two-year rolling programme. This meant that if a minor road was cleaned in one year, for example in 2026, it would next be cleaned in 2028, ensuring consistent coverage across the network.

RESOLVED to note the Highways and Transport-Road Drainage presentation.

27. Kent Flood Action Group Forum - Update

(Item 7)

Mr David Goff (Chairman-Kent Flood Action Group Forum) – was in attendance for the item.

1.Mr Goff discussed the following:

- a) Introduced the role of Flood Action Groups, explaining that they were volunteer-led groups with significant local knowledge and experience of flooding issue and worked closely with local communities and partner agencies to raise awareness of flood risks and preparedness.
- b) Advised that Flood Action Groups monitored local conditions, coordinated community responses and often acted as flood wardens, including supporting vulnerable residents during flood events and also played a role in advocating for improvements to flood management arrangements.
- c) Discussed the collaborative works with the Kent Resilience Forum and the Environment Agency and outlined that Flood Action Groups aimed to engage with communities and increase awareness of flood risk.
- d) It was discussed that recent evidence indicated a proportion of residents remained unaware that they were at risk of flooding and that improving awareness was a key challenge, particularly in the context of strengthening community resilience to flooding.
- e) Highlighted the important role played by parish councils and Flood Action Groups in supporting local flood resilience. Concern was expressed that, despite often operating within the same communities, communication and coordination between these groups was not always as effective as it could be.
- f) Noted that Internal Drainage Boards also played an important role in local water management. The officer advised that there were five Internal Drainage Boards operating across Kent, working alongside other risk management authorities to support drainage and flood risk management activities.
- g) Advised that the National Flood Forum acted as the secretariat for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on flooding, meeting with Members of Parliament on a quarterly basis. Work undertaken at a local level was fed into these national discussions, alongside information received from central government.
- h) Mr Goff outlined a number of ongoing challenges associated with flood risk management, including development within floodplains, the impact of agricultural practices and surface water runoff, and collaborative work with the Environment Agency to address obstructions within river systems. It was noted that effective partnership working remained important in managing these issues and reducing flood

risk.

- i) Raised concerns on the resourcing pressures face both the Environment Agency and the County Council and how the Flood Action Groups could play a supportive role by assisting communities to engage with flood risk management and contributing local knowledge.
- j) Discussed the role of the forum in coordinating and collating information during flood events to support situational awareness and the local response. Members were advised that elected Members also played an important role in sharing information from affected communities and helping to ensure that local concerns were communicated to the relevant agencies.
- k) Highlighted the concerns that residents living in areas at risk of flooding could face difficulties obtaining mortgage terms beyond 25 years. Concern was expressed about the potential long-term implications for affected communities, including impacts on property values, investment and the sustainability of local areas.
- l) Closed out the discussion that managing flood risk remained a significant challenge requiring joint working between agencies and communities and that not all communities could be fully protected from flooding, and that there were instances nationally where relocation had been necessary due to unmanageable risk
- m) Emphasised the importance of improving public understanding of flood risk and increasing awareness of the limitations of flood defence infrastructure. It was recognised that every flood event presented different challenges and circumstances, and that while efforts were focused on protecting communities wherever practicable, equal importance needed to be placed on strengthening long-term resilience and adaptation for future generations.

2. In response to the presentation Members raised the following points:

- a) Members raised the discussion of dedicated flood wardens and suggested that the option be explored at greater depth. The concept had been proposed to the Environment agency.
- b) In response to questions regarding the role of the forum in relation to water quality issues, Mr Goff advised that the forum was not currently involved in the testing or monitoring of water quality. He explained that the forum's focus was on flood risk management and resilience, with responsibility for water quality monitoring resting with the relevant regulatory bodies and agencies.
- c) Members discussed the effectiveness of flood warnings issued by the Environment Agency and raised concerns that warnings were sometimes repeated without a clear explanation or issued late at night, which could cause confusion and disruption for residents. Members emphasised the importance of timely and clearly communicated warnings to support community preparedness and response during flood events.
- d) Mr Goff acknowledged the concerns raised and highlighted the challenges associated with increasing public awareness and understanding of flood risk. Members also discussed recent changes to the Environment Agency's flood risk maps and the difficulties some residents faced in obtaining affordable home

insurance in areas at risk of flooding. It was noted that clear communication and public engagement remained important in supporting community resilience and preparedness.

- e) Members were advised that there could be challenges in formally linking Flood Action Groups with parish or town councils, as doing so could alter the focus of the groups from community-led resilience and support activities towards broader governance and administrative matters. It was noted that maintaining the independent, resident-focused nature of Flood Action Groups was an important consideration when exploring opportunities for closer working arrangements.
- f) The committee thanked Mr Goff for his ongoing collaborative efforts with a number of Members present. Additional concerns were raised on skill retention and the how the issues faced could be communicated with newer generations.

RESOLVED to note the Kent Flood Action Group Forum - Update

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To: Kent Flood Risk & Water Management Committee – Wednesday
4th November 2026

From: Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and
Corporate Services

Subject: KCC severe weather response activity.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To update Kent Flood Risk & Water Management Committee on the severe weather alerts and warnings received from the Met Office and Environment Agency, and corresponding KCC response activity since the last meeting of the Committee on 4th November 2026.

Background

- 1.1 This report provides the latest update to the Committee on the water-related alerts received by Kent County Council and the corresponding incident response activity led by the Resilience & Emergency Planning Service through the role of the Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO). It outlines recent severe weather events, and the operational actions taken to mitigate associated risks.
- 1.2 The Environment Agency (EA) and Met Office send 24/7 regular alerts and warnings regarding severe weather to a list of recipients including the KCC Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO), KCC Highways Senior Duty Officer, and KCC's Contact Point. The DEPO is also alerted to site-specific severe weather impacts by the emergency services and other responding agencies, with reports from the public received by Contact Point. KCC further initiates reporting using the Severe Weather Impacts System (SWIMS) to capture multi-agency resources and costs arising from severe weather incidents.
- 1.3 Across the county, 85,500 residential and commercial addresses are in areas at risk from fluvial (river) or tidal (coastal) flooding. Where possible, flood vulnerable properties are offered a Flood Warning Service by the EA. An early warning of flood risk to communities (including areas outside of floodplains) is delivered by Flood Guidance Statements, Severe Weather Warnings and the activation of a multi-agency Severe Weather Advisory Group (SWAG) by the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF).

Kent water situation and weather statistics in Kent

2.1 Alerts

2.1.1 Flood alerts:

There were 2 flood alerts raised between April and September 2026. A table highlighting areas and number of alerts per area can be viewed in **Appendix 1**. A full list of flood alerts and warnings comparison to previous quarters and years can be found in **Appendix 2**. A visual representation of the flood zones and comparison to the same quarter last year can be found in **Appendix 4**.

2.1.2 Weather alerts:

Between April and September 2026 there were a total of seven weather alerts. The alerts were divided in the following categories:

- Heat warning – 3 alerts
- Thunderstorm warning – 2 alerts
- Wind warning – 2 alerts

2.1.3 Thames Barrier:

The Thames Barrier was closed on three different occasions for testing, and a further three times for operational reasons on:

- 7th April
- 6th May
- 4th June
- 6th July
- 3rd August
- 14^h September

More details on weather warnings, Thames Barrier closures, and comparison with previous quarters can be found in **Appendix 3**. A full comparison with graphs of the type of alerts received, and flood alert areas can be found in **Appendix 5**.

Recent Incident Response

3.1 Actions taken in response to incidents:

During the last two quarters, the DEPO was involved in the response to minor incidents, including:

- Monitoring the situation
- Liaising with other partner agencies
- Providing additional resources
- Activating SWAG meetings

3.2 Incidents of note:

- Between the 23rd May and 3rd June, water supply disruption affected or threatened areas across Kent including Whitstable, Herne Bay, Ashford, Maidstone, and surrounding villages.

- This disruption was attributed to low storage and very hot weather over the bank holiday weekend.
- On 26th May, the widespread disruption prompted the activation of Tactical and Strategic Coordinating Groups, led by Kent County Council.
- Several KCC services including Resilience and Emergency Planning, Education, Public Health, Social Care, Infrastructure, Communications, Trading Standards, and Highways were involved in the incident response.
- Between the 4th and 5th August several reservoirs and booster supplies were at risk because of high demand and low storage affecting Maidstone and Ashford:
 - This resulted in direct bottled water deliveries for 3,500 customers, with three bottled water stations and five community hubs established.
 - No multi-agency escalation was required as the water company managed the response well and implemented mitigation measures.
- Between 14th and 16th August, South East Water identified multiple actual and potential outages across Kent due to hot weather, low storage levels and smaller bursts.
 - Conditions escalated during the weekend, resulting in bottled water stations, rolling situation reports and regular communication with affected partners and KCC services.
 - No multi-agency escalation was required as the water company managed the response well and implemented mitigation measures.
- Additionally, during August KCC chaired a weekly operational information sharing meeting between the water companies and responding agencies, to improve situational awareness and preparedness for potential incidents.

Throughout all water supply incidents, KCC's Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO) and relevant services were fully engaged in the response. Command and control structures were established where appropriate to manage the response, ensuring that risks to vulnerable residents and critical services were identified, monitored, and managed effectively.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Members to make note of the warnings received since the last meeting of the Committee; contribute to further planning, and comply with response policy and practice through oversight and debate.

7. Contact Details

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Appendix 1: Flood Alerts and Warnings per Area

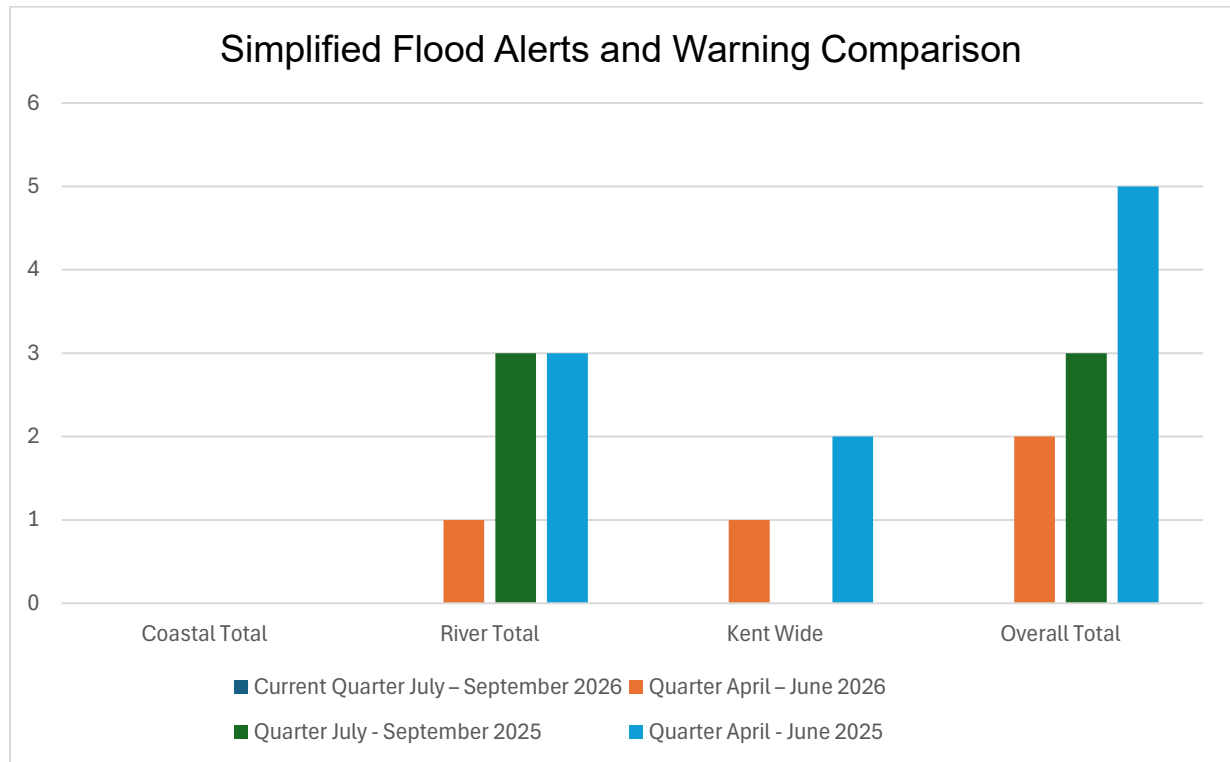
Warning area	Flood alerts & warnings Apr – Jun 2026	Flood alerts & warnings Jul - Sep 2026	Flood alerts & warnings Apr - Jun 2025	Flood alerts & warnings Jul - Sep 2025
RIVERS				
Upper River Stour	-	-	-	-
Lower River Stour	-	-	-	-
Tidal River Stour	-	-	-	-
River Darent	-	-	1	0
River Cray & Shuttle	1	-	1	2
River Rother	-	-	-	-
Tidal Rother	-	-	-	-
River Beult	-	-	-	-
River Teise and Lesser Teise	-	-	-	-
River Bourne	-	-	-	-
Rivers Eden and Eden Brook	-	-	-	-
Tidal Medway, Medway estuary	-	-	-	-
Lower River Medway	-	-	-	-
Upper River Medway	-	-	-	-
Middle River Medway	-	-	-	-
River Medway, Teise & Beult at Yalding	-	-	-	-
Little Venice Country Park and Marina	-	-	-	-
Tidal Thames (From Dartford Creek to Thames Barrier)	-	-	-	-
Rivers of the Isle of Sheppey	-	-	1	-
Pent Stream	-	-	-	1
Kent	1	-	2	0
TOTAL	2	0	5	3
COAST				
Isle of Sheppey and Coast from Kemsley to Seasalter	-	-	-	-
Coast from Ramsgate to Kingsdown	-	-	-	-

Warning area	Flood alerts & warnings	Flood alerts & warnings	Flood alerts & warnings	Flood alerts & warnings
	Apr – Jun 2026	Jul - Sep 2026	Apr - Jun 2025	Jul - Sep 2025
Coast from St Margaret's at Cliffe to Sandgate	-	-	-	-
Coast from Dartford to Allhallows	-	-	-	-
Coast from Whitstable to Margate	-	-	-	-
Coast from Sandgate to Dungeness	-	-	-	-
Coast from Fairlight to Dungeness (including tidal Rother)	-	-	-	-
Coast from Littlestone Golf Course to Dungeness	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	0	0	0	0

Appendix 2: Flood Alerts and Warnings Quarter comparison

Time period	Coastal alerts	Coastal warning	Total Coastal	River Alerts	River Warnings	River Total	Kent wide	Overall total
Jul – Sep 2026 (Current Quarter)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Apr – Jun 2026	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2
Jan – Mar 2026	4	-	4	64	5	67	-	71
Oct – Dec 2025	15	-	15	14	-	14	-	29
Jul – Sep 2025	-	-	-	3	-	3	-	3
Apr – Jun 2025	-	-	-	3	-	3	2	5
Jan – Mar 2025	11	1	12	32	5	37	3	52
Oct – Dec 2024	15	-	15	29	-	29	-	44
Jul – Sep 2024	1	-	1	14	3	17	-	18
Apr – Jun 2024	18	1	19	10	1	11	-	30
Jan – Mar 2024	5	-	5	84	5	89	-	94
Jan – Dec 2024	79	2	81	144	9	153	-	234
Jan – Dec 2023	39	-	39	74	2	76	-	115
Jan – Dec 2022	41	1	42	68	11	79	-	121

Graph Comparison of Flood Alerts and Warnings April – September 2025 & 2026



Appendix 3: Weather Warnings and Thames Barrier Closures

Weather Warnings - April to June 2026 and July to September 2026 comparison with equivalent quarter previous year.

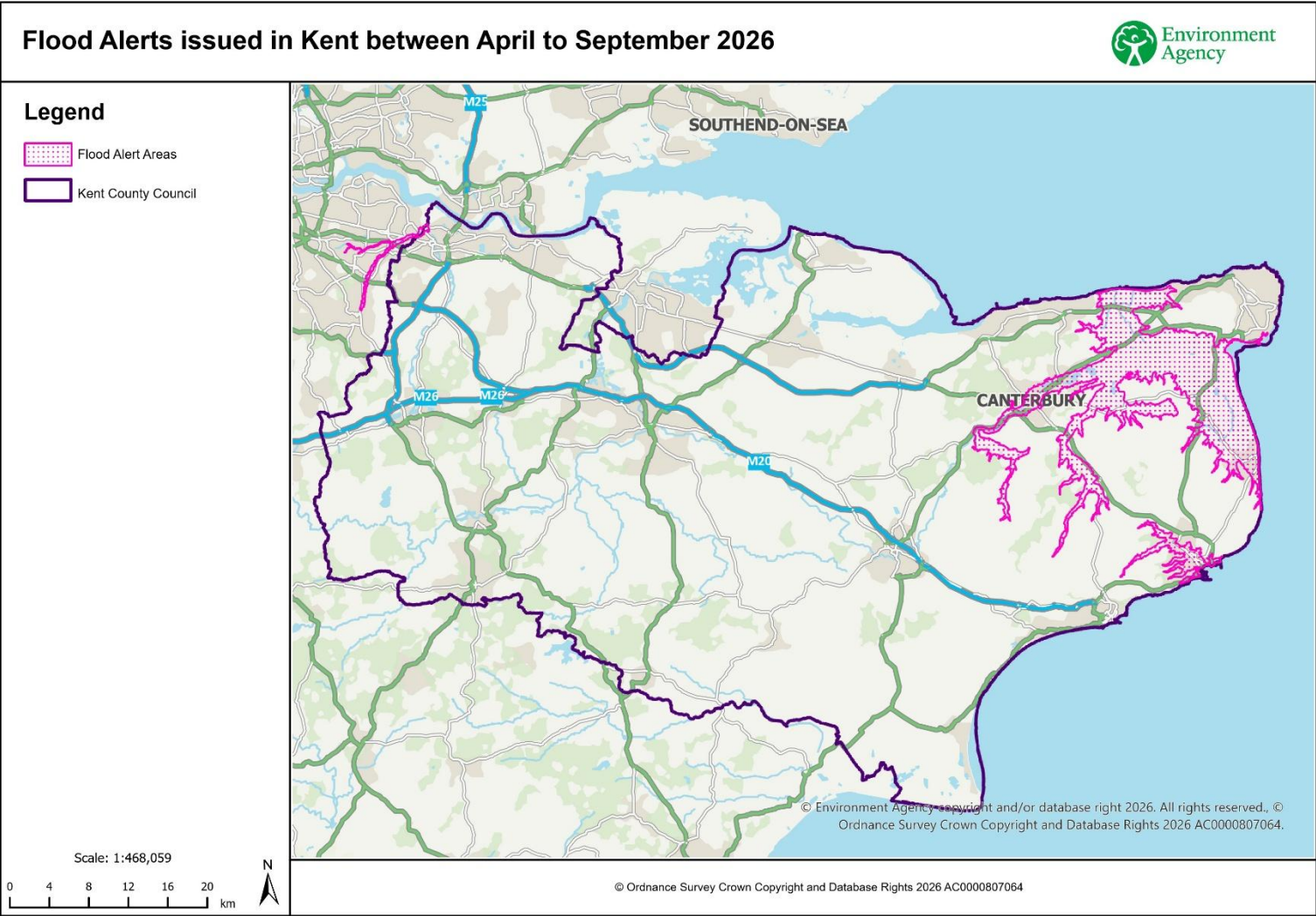
Weather	Apr – Jun 2026		Jul – Sep 2026		Apr – Jun 2025		Jul – Sept 2026	
	Warnings	Events	Warnings	Events	Warnings	Events	Warnings	Events
Thunderstorm	1	1	1	1	4	4	6	6
Rain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fog	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Ice	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wind	1	1	1	1	-	-	1	1
Snow	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cold-health	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heat-health	2	2	1	1	3	3	2	2

Thames Barrier Closures - April to June 2026 and July to September 2026 comparison with equivalent quarter previous year

	Apr – Jun 2026	Jul – Sep 2026	Apr - Jun 2025	Jul - Sep 2025
Operational closures	-	-	-	-
Test closures	3	3	3	3

Appendix 4: Visual Representation of flooding areas across Kent

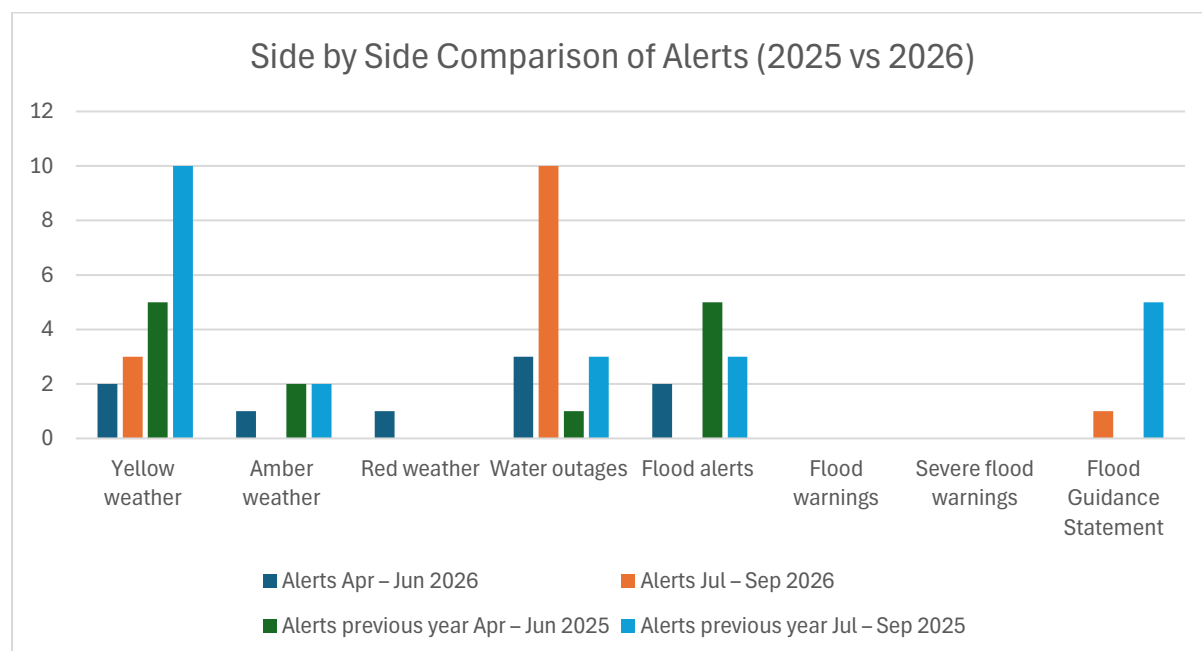
(April - September 2026) visual map display of alerts and warnings



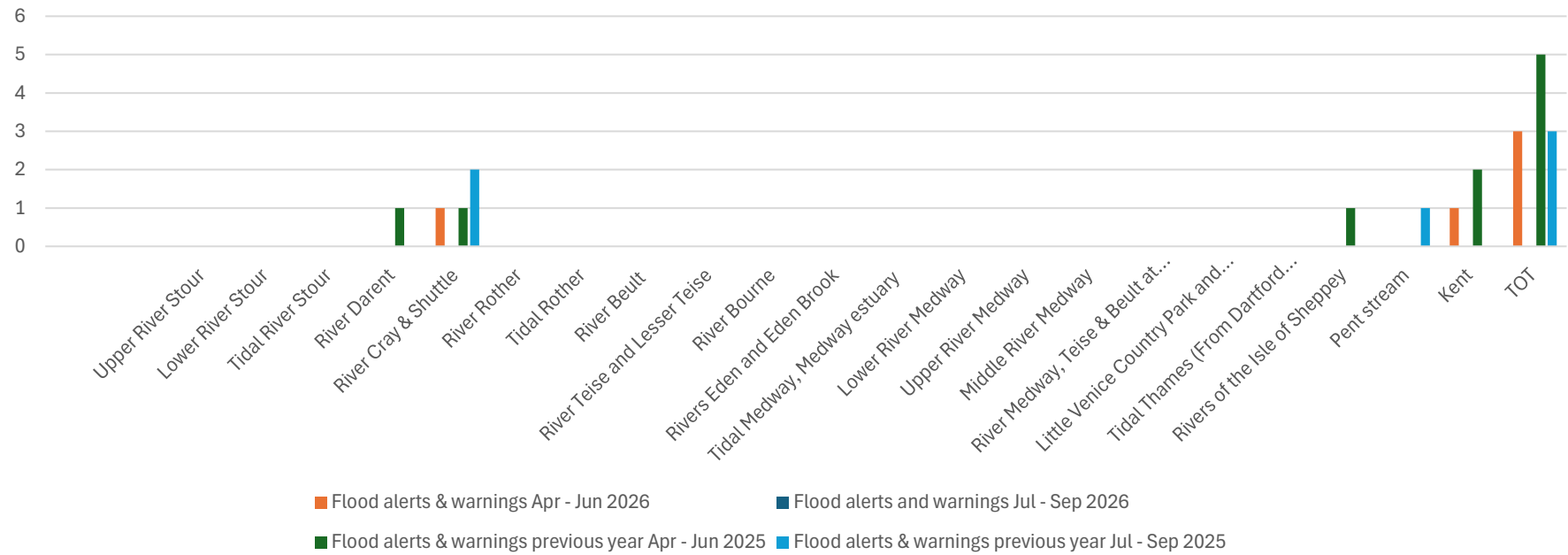
Appendix 5: Type and number of alerts received between the current quarters (April to June 2026 and July to September 2026), and previous year equivalent quarters.

Alert type	Apr – Jun 2026	Jul – Sep 2026	Received from	Apr – Jun 2025	Jul – Sep 2025
WEATHER					
Yellow weather	2	3	Met Office	5	10
Amber weather	1	-		2	2
Red weather	1	-		-	-
FLOODING					
Water outages	3	10	Water companies	1	3
Flood alerts	2	-	Environment Agency	5	3
Flood warnings	-	-		-	-
Severe flood warnings	-	-		-	-
Flood Guidance Statement	-	1	Flood Forecasting Centre	-	5

Graph comparison of alerts received



Fluvial Flood Alerts (2025 vs 2026)



From: Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health

To: Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee – 4 November 2026

Subject: Water Borne Pollution

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Summary

This briefing paper provides a short report on the impacts and risk of water-borne pollution .

Kent's extensive coastline, rivers, groundwater and bathing waters benefit residents and visitors, but water-borne pollution can present public health risks through microbiological, chemical and emerging contaminants.

Although water companies, regulators and district and borough councils lead on water quality, Kent County Council (KCC) has important roles in public health protection, health intelligence, emergency preparedness, flood risk management and partnership working.

This report outlines:

- The main types and sources of waterborne pollution affecting Kent, including microbiological, chemical and emerging contaminants.
- The potential physical and mental health impacts on residents, visitors and communities.
- Who is most likely to be exposed or experience more severe impacts, and how water pollution can widen health inequalities.
- Current and emerging risks, including changing climate, population growth, increased recreational water use and infrastructure pressures.
- The responsibilities of relevant organisations and the role and actions of KCC Public Health in reducing risk and protecting health.

Recommendation(s)

The Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the content of this report.

1. Background

- 1.1** Water is central to Kent's environment, economy and quality of life. The county's coastline, rivers, groundwater, bathing waters and private water supplies support drinking water, recreation, tourism, agriculture and wildlife. Pollution can affect these uses and create risks to health.
 - 1.2** Public concern has increased because of sewage discharges, bathing-water classifications, agricultural pollution and the effects of climate change on drainage and wastewater infrastructure. The Environment Agency monitors designated bathing waters and publishes annual classifications of Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor.
 - 1.3** Managing these risks requires coordinated action across drinking water, wastewater, environmental regulation, local government and health protection. Roles vary according to the pollution source and the type of water affected.
 - 1.4** KCC Public Health does not sample water or enforce water-quality standards, but assesses and communicates health risks, monitors emerging threats and inequalities, and identifies populations at greater risk. It also supports emergency preparedness and multi-agency incident coordination, and reviews incidents to strengthen longer-term prevention.
-

2. The main types and sources of waterborne pollution affecting Kent

There are 3 main types of water borne pollution: microbiological contamination, chemical pollutants and emerging contaminants.

2.1 Microbiological Contamination

The most common microbiological contamination is gastrointestinal infection after exposure to contaminated recreational water.

Key microbes include bacteria (*E. coli*, *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*), viruses (norovirus, hepatitis A and enteroviruses), and parasites (*Cryptosporidium* and *Giardia*).

Main sources include sewage discharges, faulty drainage, septic tanks, livestock manure, agricultural run-off, animal faeces and contaminated floodwater.

Microbe	Main health issues	People at greater risk
<i>E. coli</i>	Diarrhoea, abdominal cramps and vomiting; some strains can cause bloody diarrhoea, kidney damage and haemolytic uraemic syndrome.	Young children, older adults and immunocompromised people.
Campylobacter	Diarrhoea, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and vomiting; rare complications include reactive arthritis and Guillain–Barré syndrome.	Young children, older adults and immunocompromised people.
Salmonella	Diarrhoea, fever, stomach cramps, nausea and vomiting; infection can occasionally spread to the bloodstream.	Infants, older adults and immunocompromised people.
Norovirus	Sudden vomiting and diarrhoea, abdominal cramps and dehydration; outbreaks can spread rapidly.	Young children, older adults and people in care or institutional settings.
Hepatitis A virus	Fever, fatigue, nausea, abdominal discomfort and jaundice caused by inflammation of the liver; illness may be prolonged.	Older adults and people with existing liver disease.
Enteroviruses	Often mild or symptomless, but may cause fever, respiratory or gastrointestinal illness, rash and, rarely, meningitis or neurological disease.	Infants, young children and immunocompromised people.
Cryptosporidium	Prolonged watery diarrhoea, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting and dehydration; illness can be severe or persistent.	Young children and immunocompromised people.
Giardia	Prolonged diarrhoea, abdominal cramps, bloating, nausea, fatigue and weight loss; malabsorption may occur.	Young children and immunocompromised people.

Reference: UK Health Security Agency (2020), *Gastrointestinal infections: guidance for public health management*, GOV.UK.

2.2 Chemical Pollutants

Chemical pollutants can enter surface water, groundwater and coastal waters from industrial processes, wastewater, agriculture, transport, contaminated land and consumer products.

Health risk depends on the substance, concentration, route and duration of exposure; regulated public drinking-water supplies are routinely monitored and treated to protect public health.

Pollutant	Main sources and pathways into water	Main potential health impacts
Pesticides and herbicides	Agricultural run-off and spray drift; amenity use on roads, railways and public land; accidental spills; and leaching	Impacts depend on the product. High exposure may cause acute poisoning, skin or eye irritation and neurological symptoms; long-term exposure to

	into groundwater.	some substances has been associated with neurological, reproductive, endocrine or cancer effects.
Nitrates and nitrites	Fertilisers, livestock manure, septic tanks, sewage and agricultural run-off or leaching to groundwater.	High nitrate exposure can reduce the blood's oxygen-carrying capacity in infants, causing methaemoglobinaemia ('blue baby syndrome'). Infants fed formula made with contaminated private-water supplies are at greatest risk.
Heavy metals and metalloids (including lead, arsenic, mercury and cadmium)	Natural geology; mining and industry; contaminated land; landfill leachate; urban run-off; and corrosion of plumbing or historic lead pipes.	Potential effects include impaired brain and nervous-system development, kidney and liver damage, cardiovascular effects and cancer. Fetuses and young children are especially vulnerable to lead and mercury.
Hydrocarbons and PAHs	Fuel and oil spills, road run-off, shipping and marinas, industrial activity, fires, contaminated land and atmospheric deposition.	Short-term exposure may irritate the skin, eyes and airways or cause nausea and neurological symptoms. Some polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons are genotoxic and carcinogenic with long-term exposure.
Persistent organic pollutants (for example PCBs, dioxins and some flame retardants)	Historic industrial use, combustion and waste burning, contaminated sediments and land, atmospheric deposition and remobilisation during flooding or dredging.	Many persist and bioaccumulate through the food chain. Long-term exposure may affect the immune, reproductive, developmental and nervous systems, and some are carcinogenic.
Harmful algal and cyanobacterial blooms and associated toxins	Naturally occurring algae and cyanobacteria can multiply rapidly where water is warm, slow-moving and enriched with nutrients, particularly nitrogen and phosphorus from agricultural run-off, sewage and wastewater. Blooms may form in lakes, reservoirs, rivers and coastal waters, with climate change potentially increasing favourable conditions.	Some blooms produce toxins or cause irritation. Exposure through swallowing water, skin contact or inhaling spray may cause gastrointestinal illness, skin and eye irritation, respiratory symptoms and, rarely, liver or neurological effects. Children, dogs and people undertaking recreational water activities may be at greater risk of exposure.

References: [Drinking Water Inspectorate, *Drinking water standards and regulations*, UK Health Security Agency, *Chemical hazards compendium*.](#)

2.3 Emerging Contaminants

- 2.3.1** Emerging contaminants are substances or biological hazards that are newly recognised, increasingly detected, or not yet routinely monitored or regulated. Their health significance varies and, for many, evidence on long-term, low-level and combined exposure remains uncertain.
- 2.3.2** Key emerging contaminants include PFAS or “forever chemicals” which are highly persistent and can accumulate in people and wildlife with varied health impacts and microplastics (and nano plastics) where health impacts from water exposure remain limited.
- 2.3.3** UKHSA have contributed to the governments [PFAS Plan](#) and have reviewed evidence, provided public health guidance and are developing a pilot human biomonitoring programme.
- 2.3.4** UKHSAs work on microplastics is currently more research led because the human health evidence remains uncertain.
- 2.3.5** The following emerging contaminants require a precautionary and proportionate approach rather than implying that every detection presents an immediate risk to health.

Emerging contaminant	Main sources and pathways into water	Main potential health impacts
PFAS (“forever chemicals”)	Industrial and consumer products, firefighting foams, contaminated land, landfill leachate, wastewater and surface run-off. They are highly persistent and some accumulate in people and wildlife.	Some PFAS have been associated with immune, liver, developmental and reproductive effects, and increased risk of some cancers. Risk depends on the specific compound, dose and duration of exposure.
Microplastics and nanoplastics	Breakdown of plastic waste, synthetic fibres, tyre and road wear, paints, wastewater and urban run-off.	Evidence on health effects from water exposure remains limited. Research is examining possible inflammatory, cellular and chemical-carrier effects, particularly for the smallest particles.
Endocrine-disrupting chemicals	Some bisphenols, phthalates, pesticides and other industrial or consumer chemicals entering water through wastewater, agricultural run-off, landfill leachate and contaminated land.	May interfere with hormone signalling. Depending on the substance and exposure, potential concerns include reproductive, developmental, metabolic and thyroid effects.
Pharmaceuticals and personal-care products	Human and animal excretion, medicine disposal, healthcare, livestock farming,	Concentrations in drinking water are generally low and direct health risks are considered low, but long-term exposure, mixture effects and

	aquaculture, wastewater and products washed into drains.	impacts from biologically active substances remain under study.
Antimicrobial-resistant organisms, resistance genes and antimicrobial residues	Sewage and wastewater, healthcare facilities, livestock farming, aquaculture, manure and slurry, and medicine manufacture or disposal.	Water may help resistant organisms and genes circulate between people, animals and the environment. Population-level risks from environmental exposure remain under assessment, but resistant infections are harder to treat and may cause longer illness and more complex care.
Newly identified metabolites and transformation products	Pesticide metabolites, industrial chemicals and products formed as substances break down in the environment or during water treatment.	Health effects may not yet be fully characterised. Some breakdown products may persist, remain biologically active or differ in toxicity from the original substance.

References: [Confronting antimicrobial resistance 2024 to 2029 - GOV.UK PFAS Plan: building a safer future together](#) - [GOV.UK Microplastics in drinking-water Wastewater and Environmental Surveillance: summary for antimicrobial resistance](#) [World Health Organization and United Nations Environment Programme \(2013\)](#), *State of the Science of Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals 2012: Summary for Decision-Makers*. WHO/UNEP.

3. Who is most likely to be exposed or experience more severe impacts, and how water-borne pollution can widen health inequalities

- 3.1** People more likely to be exposed include recreational water users, residents of flood-prone, coastal or riverside communities, households using private water supplies, and people working with water, wastewater, agriculture or contaminated land.
 - 3.2** Infants and young children, pregnant women, older people, and people with weakened immune systems, liver or kidney disease, or other long-term conditions may experience more severe effects. Gastrointestinal illness and dehydration can be more serious in these groups, while some chemicals may affect foetal and child development.
 - 3.3** Water pollution and repeated flooding can also affect mental wellbeing, trust in responsible organisations, participation in swimming, angling and other blue-space activities, and local tourism, businesses and community identity.
 - 3.4** Health inequalities may widen where communities experience poorer environmental conditions, repeated disruption, fewer resources to avoid exposure or recover, or barriers to information and healthcare. Advice should therefore be accessible to people with disabilities, communication needs, limited digital access or limited English, and shared through trusted channels.
-

4. Current and emerging risks

- 4.1** Climate change may increase water-pollution risks through heavier rainfall, surface and coastal flooding, and more frequent storm-overflow operation, placing additional pressure on ageing drainage and wastewater infrastructure.
 - 4.2** Population growth and new development may increase demand on sewerage, drainage and wastewater systems, particularly where infrastructure capacity is already constrained.
 - 4.3** Growing participation in sea swimming, paddleboarding, kayaking and wild swimming may increase the number of people exposed to polluted recreational water.
 - 4.4** Continued investment, monitoring and scrutiny are needed to improve water-company performance and strengthen the resilience of sewerage, drainage and wastewater infrastructure.
-

5. Current KCC Action

- 5.1** KCC Public Health assesses and communicates health risks, emerging threats and inequalities, and identifies populations at greater risk. It works through Kent and Medway health-protection arrangements, multi-agency incident management and local resilience structures to support emergency preparedness and coordinated responses, and reviews incidents and surveillance findings to strengthen prevention, risk reduction and future preparedness.
- 5.2** KCC reduces risk through its flood risk management and climate adaptation functions, including local flood strategies, sustainable drainage and surface-water planning, and work to strengthen resilience to flooding and extreme weather.
- 5.3** KCC provides evidence-based incident messages, raises awareness and promotes safer recreational water use, working with the Environment Agency, UKHSA, water companies, district and borough councils, NHS partners and local communities.

6. Future Opportunities

- 6.1** Potential areas for further development include improving surveillance and intelligence, strengthening public health input into water management, and providing clearer information to support safer recreational water use.

- 6.2 Improve monitoring of health impacts linked to recreational water use and use environmental intelligence to identify emerging risks.
- 6.3 Strengthen public health input into water-management planning and continue scrutiny of Kent's water-quality trends.
- 6.4 Improve public communication on bathing-water quality and safer recreation.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Water-borne pollution presents a continuing and evolving risk to health in Kent, particularly for people and communities with greater exposure or vulnerability. Effective prevention and response depend on coordinated action across regulators, water companies, local authorities, health partners and communities. KCC will continue to contribute through public health intelligence, emergency preparedness, flood risk management, clear communication and partnership working, while strengthening surveillance and planning for emerging risks.

Recommendation(s)

The Kent Flood Risk and Water Management Committee asked to **NOTE** and **COMMENT** on the content of this report.

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