

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 9 November 2022.

PRESENT: Mr A R Hills (Chairman), Mr P Cole, Ms J Meade, Ms M McArthur, Mr M J Sole and Ms L Wright

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M Dendor, Cllr M Forest (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Property and Recreation, Ashford Borough Council), Cllr M Round (Lead Member for Environmental Services, Maidstone Borough Council), Mrs G Brown (KALC) and Mr J Williamson (River Stour Internal Drainage Board)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Tant (Flood and Water Manager), Mr T Harwood (Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager) and Mr M Dentten (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

18. Declarations of Interest

(Item 3)

No declarations were received.

19. Minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022

(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee held on 5 July 2022 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

20. Storm Overflows, Pollution and Pathfinder Projects - Presentation by Southern Water

(Item 5)

Sally Dodman-Edwards (Pathfinder Delivery Lead, Southern Water) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mrs Dodman-Edwards gave a presentation. The contents of the presentation included: an overview of the Storm Overflow Task Force; Deal, Swale and Margate Pathfinder projects; 'Slow the flow' passive water butts installation trials; household and non-household sustainable drainage systems; connectivity surveys; sewer level monitors; rain gauges; and flow monitoring.
2. Following a question from a Member on the release mechanisms in place for smart water butts, Mrs Dodman Edwards explained that automatic slow

release systems, drip features as well as altered down pipes and outflows were measures which slowed the flow and prevented rain water backup.

3. A Member asked how the three pathfinder scheme areas were chosen and what other areas could do to be involved in future schemes. Mrs Dodman-Edwards confirmed that the three areas had been chosen based on modelling, which indicated that they were susceptible to flooding overflows. She added that Southern Water had collaborated with KCC to choose the sites.
4. A Member asked that an indication of the timeline for planning future pathfinder projects, be shared at a future meeting of the Committee.
5. Mrs Dodman-Edwards confirmed, in response to a question from a Member, that local businesses, stakeholders, schools and the NHS had been engaged and provided with educational materials on how to reduce rain flow into combined sewers and manage runoff from flat rooves.
6. A Member asked whether there was a risk that future development would nullify the improvements made by the schemes mentioned in the presentation. Mr Tant reassured Members that KCC ordinarily objected to significant developments which planned to connect to combined sewers. He noted that heightened flood risk in urban areas was primarily created by increased density, insufficient runoffs and the replacement of green space with hard surfaces, which when coupled with climate change had increased risk. He added that KCC were working with Southern Water on scaling up the pathfinder projects and initiatives with similar goals.
7. Mr Tant confirmed, after a question from a Member, that, whilst Thames Water did not have any similar schemes in Kent, they offered customers discounts on water butts.
8. A Member asked whether any roadside rain gardens had been installed in the county. Mr Tant confirmed that roadside rain gardens had been installed by the Flood and Water Management team, he gave installations on Dolphins Road, Folkestone as an example. He noted that rain gardens reduced on street parking.
9. The Chairman thanked Ms Dodman-Edwards for her presentation, answers to the Committee's questions and commitment to update Members.

RESOLVED to note the content of the presentation.

21. Highways Drainage Systems - Presentation by KCC Highways (Item 6)

Earl Bourner (Drainage Asset Manager, KCC) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Bourner gave a presentation to the Committee. His presentation included: an overview of KCC's drainage responsibilities as a Highway Authority, including the responsibility to mitigate flood risk to the public highway; Highway drainage assets and functions; main issues with drainage and flooding over previous three months; risk based approach for gully

management and cleansing, which included over 12,500 drains cleansed per month and emergency responses; impact of water runoff from private land; new asset management software; recent highways drainage schemes, including drainage upgrades; and future challenges.

2. A Member asked for an update on the development of the fault reporting tool. Mr Bourner confirmed that the tool was operational and that intelligence had been input into the system.
3. Mr Bourner explained, following a question from a Member, that a proactive approach to drainage clearance had been adopted to maximise service effectiveness and utilised data to prioritise drains with the highest associated risk.
4. Mr Bourner confirmed, in response to a question from a guest, that KCC had a five-year programme of drainage works, which utilised external consultants for surveying and design to supplement internal expertise.
5. A Member asked how contractor works were assessed in order to ensure that gullies were installed to a good standard and not blocked by asphalt. Mr Bourner explained that whilst the Highways Drainage team did not directly monitor works, works were inspected, gullies were completed after general resurfacing work and the team oversaw maintenance.
6. A Member asked whether there was an emergency drainage blockage line. Mr Bourner provided Members with the contact number and agreed to explore how best it could be publicised on KCC's public website.
7. Mr Bourner clarified, following a question from a Member, that new developments were required to have a higher sewer capacity and enhanced highway drainage systems, which were designed to withstand a 1 in 100 year flood in addition to a 30% increase in capacity for climate change.
8. The Chairman thanked Mr Bourner for his presentation and answers to the Committee's questions.

RESOLVED to note the content of the presentation.

22. Sea Defence and Low Carbon Solutions - Presentation by the Environment Agency
(Item 7)

Sam Gawad (Project Executive, Environment Agency) was in attendance for this item.

1. Mr Gawad gave a presentation to the Committee. The contents of the presentation included: a background on the environmental history of Romney Marsh; the Environment Agency's Folkestone to Cliff End Strategy, which sought to protect 14,500 homes, 700 businesses and nationally important critical infrastructure from the risk of flooding; Lydd Ranges Flood Alleviation Scheme, across a 4.6 miles (7.4km) frontage, which comprised a groyne field, Green Wall and Sewer Outfall; net zero by 2030, which required a 6750ton

CO2 reduction from the Scheme; and a targeted approach to carbon reduction, including the use of low carbon concrete, with it noted that the Lydd Ranges Scheme had achieved a 45% carbon reduction from the benchmark scheme, with hydrotreated vegetable oil used in dredgers and production of low carbon concrete plant located in Kent.

2. Mr Gawad showed the Committee a video on the Lydd Ranges Flood Alleviation Scheme, which can be accessed at: www.vimeo.com/592156207/5b32a36ae2.
3. The Chairman emphasised the importance of innovative approaches to carbon reduction in sea defences.
4. A Member asked for an explanation of the criteria which determined which sections of the coast were protected by flood defences. The Chairman explained that Shoreline Management Plans determined how areas were protected, with it noted that existing plans were being refreshed. He emphasised that further effort was required to spread awareness of the Plans as well as their implications on coastal communities. He assured Members that the Committee would receive a presentation on Shoreline Management Plans at a future meeting.
5. Following a question from a Member on the Lydd Ranges Flood Alleviation Scheme, Mr Gawad confirmed that the Scheme had a lifespan of 25 years, with no drop in performance expected over that time. He added that the Environment Agency had legally committed to maintain the scheme for its lifespan and that a specific type of shingle had to be used to meet regulations.
6. The Chairman thanked Mr Gawad for his presentation and answers to the Committee's questions.

RESOLVED to note the content of the presentation.

23. Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings and KCC severe weather response activity

(Item 8)

1. The Committee were provided with a report which detailed on the current water situation, weather statistics, Environment Agency and Met Office Warnings, and flood response activity since the last meeting on 5 July.
2. Mr Harwood updated the Committee on the alerts, warnings and weather response activity since publication of the report. He confirmed that 14 additional flood alerts and 4 weather warnings had been issued since 1 November. He addressed KCC's response to severe weather events since the previous meeting, which included the county's first red warning for heat. It was noted that the summer had been unusually dry, with wildfires, slow aquifer recharge, lower river levels and fish kills experienced across Kent. He noted that the hot summer was expected to have a long-term impact on ecology. The impact of heavy autumn rain on infrastructure and the exacerbation of issues due to losses of urban drainage, runoffs and dropped curbs were addressed.

He confirmed that KCC had carried out Exercise Manu, with partners, which tested the county's response to severe flooding.

3. In response to a question from a guest, Mr Harwood confirmed that Resilience and Emergency Planning had been involved in the strategic discussion on community resilience, as part of formation of the emergency planning template which had been made available to Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). He added that the service's input had focused on ensuring that agency preventive measures and spatial policies factored in community resilience and emergency planning, with communities at the most risk prioritised. It was noted that the document would evolve, as it remained in the development stage. He assured the Committee that whilst resources were under pressure, different ways of working and better partner working would make the county more resilient.

RESOLVED to note the warnings received since the last meeting of the Committee and contribute to planning and response policy and practice through oversight and debate.

24. Other items which the Chairman decides are Urgent
(Item 9)

No urgent items were received.

The Chairman thanked the district and borough Environment Cabinet and Lead Members present for their attendance and welcomed their continued engagement with the Committee.