

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Flood Risk Management Committee held in the Swale 3, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 28 May 2010.

PRESENT: Mr R E King (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr M J Harrison, Mrs P A V Stockell and Mr M J Vye

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Cloake (Head of Emergency Planning), Mrs E Milne (Team Leader Natural Environment & Coast), Mr M Tant (Flood Risk Management Officer), Mr T Harwood (Senior Emergency Planning Officer) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Ms P Warren, Mr S Bone-Knell, Mr A Stallard and Mr M Douch (Environment Agency).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

11. Minutes of the meeting on 9 March 2010

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

12. Roles and responsibilities of Kent Police in flood risk management - Oral presentation by Philippa Warren of Kent Police

(Item 4)

(1) Ms Warren from Kent Police (Emergency Planning) began her presentation by describing the role of Police Emergency Planning. The Police had the role of Category 1 Responder under the Civil Contingency Act to assess risks and to produce and maintain plans. These plans could be generic or specific and the Police had to determine both the necessity and level of them. The plans were multi-agency in relation to, for example, reservoirs, COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) sites and airports. The plans were tested through training and exercising. The Police were also represented on the pre-event Severe Weather Advisory Group.

(2) Ms Warren then described the roles and responsibilities of the Police when an event occurred. These included co-ordinating the activities of the emergency services, saving and protection of life, assisting with evacuation (although there were no powers to remove people from their homes), investigation, protecting and preserving the scene, and traffic management. If terrorism was suspected to be the cause of the emergency, the Police would assume overall control of the incident.

(3) Ms Warren turned to the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG), which was chaired by the Police and had responsibility for overall multi-agency management of the emergency and also established the policy and strategic framework within which the tactical level would work. Its meetings were held in the Fire HQ Communications

Centre. Responsibility was handed over to the Local Authority once the Recovery Phase began.

(4) Ms Warren set out the criteria for handover of responsibility to the Local Authority. This occurred when the emergency was contained with no risk of resurgence; when the SGC was no longer required to co-ordinate and facilitate the activities of the emergency services; when public safety measures were in place and working effectively; and when the Local Authority was able and agreed to take over the co-ordinating role; and when other supporting organisations were also functioning effectively with adequate resources.

(5) During discussion of this item, the Committee agreed that it would be useful if it could observe exercises as they took place.

(6) RESOLVED that Ms Warren be thanked for her presentation.

13. Roles and responsibilities of Kent Fire and Rescue Service in flood risk management - Oral presentation by Sean Bone-Knell - Assistant Director Operational Services, Kent Fire and Rescue Service

(Item 5)

(1) Mr Bone-Knell (Assistant Director Operational Services – Kent Fire and Rescue Service) said that KFRS was an active participant in the Kent Resilience Forum, whose Executive Group was chaired by Steve Demetriou (KFRS Director Operational Services). In addition, KFRS was represented on the Severe Weather Sub Group, which carried out multi-agency planning and exercising at both a local and County level. Other flood related work carried out by Service included the development of schools' education packages in partnership with the Environment Agency. The Service had also been represented on the Kent Resilience Forum's Pitt Review Task and Finish Group.

(2) Mr Bone-Knell went on to describe the roles of KFRS at the pre-planning stage. KFRS was a statutory consultee on matters of building control. This was a developing role and the Service aimed to become involved at an earlier stage in the planning process. KFRS represented the South East Region on the National Practitioners Forum for water-related incidents. It also chaired the South East Region Task and Finish group for water-related incidents.

(3) Mr Bone-Knell then set out the national context. He quoted from the Communities and Local Government report "Facing the Challenge" which said "a statutory duty does not, in itself, ensure interoperability and commonality of equipment, training and competence. He also quoted from the Pitt Review which had suggested that if the FRS were given a statutory duty it could "facilitate and indeed direct the development of standards and accreditation and could advise on suitable capabilities with authority." There was, however, no statutory duty placed on the FRS to become involved in flooding and water safety. The Government had developed the "Flood Rescue National Enhancement Project" (a national asset register). This had been successful in Cumbria when a number of agencies had come together.

(4) Although there was currently no legal requirement for FRAs to make provision for flooding events, Mr Bone-Knell explained that under the Civil Contingencies Act, there was a requirement to assess risk and take action. There was also an

expectation within the community that the FRS would become involved. Within Kent, this expectation was reinforced by the findings of KCC's Select Committee findings.

(5) Mr Bone-Knell briefly set out the lessons learned from the flooding in 2004 in Hereford and Worcestershire. All that County's operational resources had needed to be deployed and support was provided by 9 other FRSs. The National Flood Support Team was established to support and co-ordinate specialist resources, including 11 specialist boat teams at the incident's peak.

(6) Mr Bone-Knell then described the 5 Levels set out in the National Safe Working Guidance. These were

Level 1 Water Awareness (general water safety awareness training and basic land based rescue techniques)

Level 2 Water First Responder (To work safely near and in water using land based and wading techniques)

Level 3 Water Rescue Technician (specialist rescue operation)

Level 4 Water Rescue Rescue Boat Operator

Level 5 Water Rescue Incident Management (Water related incident command).

(7) Mr Bone-Knell then described KFRS' Phase 1 Response which was aligned to the Road Traffic Collision Strategy. He explained that in areas such as Romney Marsh, every road accident had water safety implications. It was therefore necessary to address the water-related risks associated with some road traffic collisions. KFRS also had to ensure that a 15 minute response standard could be achieved. It had to provide a cadre of some 165 accredited personnel on duty at any time to respond to major flooding events and provide 132 sets of Personal Protective Equipment on front line appliances with a non mobile reserve.

(8) For Phase 2 Responses, KFRS provided 4 inland craft a reasonable attendance standard in support of Level 2 Responders, a limited capacity to allow for crew rotation and the necessary resilience to support an initial intervention for major flooding events ahead of national support arrangements.

(9) Mr Bone-Knell showed the Committee Members the original and new locations of KFRS' flooding resources before identifying the key issues facing the Service. These were that it had no statutory duty to make arrangements for water rescue; that there was a lack of clarity about co-ordination of the overall rescue effort; and hosting and safety related issues concerning resources provided by other agencies. KFRS also needed engagement at pre-planning stages.

(10) Mr Bone-Knell concluded the presentation by saying that KFRS was making a significant investment in training and equipping its operational staff. Effective implementation of the operational strategy would ensure that the service would be able to safeguard its staff, satisfy the requirements of water-related incidents, and fulfil the expectations of local communities by providing a credible intervention in major flooding events ahead of national support arrangements.

(11) In response to a question from Mr Brazier, Mr Bone-Knell said that the FRS was awaiting further guidance on recoupmnt. This would need to take into account that in an event such as had occurred in Hereford and Worcestershire, the 11 additional FRS teams had needed to be housed and fed.

(12) RESOLVED to note that the Kent Fire and Rescue Service has received national recognition and awards for its role in the County's Flood Risk Planning and to thank Mr Bone-Knell for his presentation.

14. Kent Resilience Forum - Oral presentation by David Cloake (Head of Emergency Planning)

(Item 6)

(1) Mr Cloake began his presentation by saying that the Kent Resilience Forum was chaired by Kent Police. The multi-agency funded Business Management Support Unit (BMSU) co-ordinated all its activities.

(2) Resilience Forums had been established in 2005 in response to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. They were based on each Police area. They were, however, statutory processes rather than legal entities.

(3) The Kent Resilience Forum had a range of duties relating to the development of the Community Risk register, planning for emergencies, planning for business continuity management, the preparation of multi-agency plans, training and exercising, warning and informing the public.

(4) Mr Cloake set out a list of the KRF partners. The Category 1 Responders were Kent Police, Kent and Medway Fire and Rescue, KCC, the District Councils, Environment Agency, Health Protection Agency, NHS and Transport Police. The KRF was chaired at a strategic level by the Chief Constable and met twice yearly. All Category 1 responders had a statutory responsibility to engage actively in its work. Category 2 responders (utility companies, transport organisations, the military) had a right to attend KRF meetings. The KRF was serviced by the BMSU.

(5) Mr Cloake went on to describe the KRF structure chart, focusing on the Executive Group which was chaired by Steve Demetriou from KMFRS. This Group discharged strategic requirements and oversaw the work of the Workstreams. These were dedicated groups working on Risk, Public Warning and Information, Training and Exercise, Business Continuity, Severe Weather, Health and Emergency Planning. Meanwhile, the "Pitt 10" Group looked more widely at all aspects of severe weather. All the agencies involved shared a collective will to work closely together.

(6) Mr Cloake then described the Kent Community Risk Register in greater detail. He said that it been created as a public document to provide assurance for local people that the necessary measures and plans were in place to deal with a variety of emergencies (such as flooding, pandemics, heat waves, fuel shortages). It was a key tool in the development of the KRF Strategic Business Plan.

(7) Mr Cloake concluded his presentation by outlining the processes of the KRF. He summarised them by saying that they represented "good bureaucracy". KRF was one of the very best Resilience Forums in the Country as was its Flood Risk planning.

(8) In response to a question from Mr Vye, Mr Douch from the Environment Agency said that the philosophy of Emergency Planning was to produce both generic and specific plans. In the area of flooding, this entailed multi-agency flood risk planning at District level. This enabled a broad portfolio of generic capability together with specific capabilities. The Risk Register would only identify the credible risks (where the likelihood of an event occurring was balanced by its potential impact. A key indicator of a plan's effectiveness was its "extendability". This meant that a Plan would need to be the basis for a response on a much greater scale than had been anticipated.

(9) Mr Douch also said that it was clearly evident that KRF was well focussed on a multi-agency level. All agencies were expected to share costs from their revenue budgets. This contributed to broad ownership of all flooding-related issues across the County.

(10) The Committee considered that it would be essential for its Members to attend a KRF seminar when flooding was the main item on the agenda.

(11) RESOLVED that the report be noted and that Mr Cloake be thanked for his presentation.

15. Future meetings

(Item 7)

(1) Both KMFRS and Kent Police offered the Committee the opportunity to observe their work and resources. It was agreed to attempt to set up such an event in late August.

(2) The next meeting of the Committee would be held on Thursday, 29 July at 2pm. The agenda was expected to consist of a presentation by the Environment Agency giving a strategic overview of Regional Flood Defence Committees and by Southern Water on Flood Risk and Water Resource Management.

(3) There would be a further Committee meeting on a date to be confirmed in October.