

# 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 on Tuesday, 16 July 2024.

PRESENT: Mr A R Hills (Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr D Crow-Brown, Mr P Cole, Mr M A J Hood and Ms L Wright

### UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

**1. Apologies**  
*(Item 1)*

Apologies were received from Mrs McArthur for whom Ms L Wright was present.

Ms Dawkins was in attendance virtually.

**2. Declarations of Interest**  
*(Item 2)*

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the meeting on 14 March 2024**  
*(Item 3)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2024 were an accurate record and that they be signed by the Chair.

**4. Southern Water - Clean Rivers and Seas Taskforce - update on pilot schemes**  
*(Item 4)*

*Jon Yates (Head of Delivery for Clean Rivers Taskforce, Southern Water) was in attendance for this item*

1) Mr Yates presented to the committee. The contents of his presentation included:

- An overview of Combined Sewer Overflows
- Rivers and Seas Watch
- Optimisation at Whitstable and Deal; surface water connections at Whitstable; Sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) schemes in Whitstable, Deal and Margate; and, planters and water butts.

2) Further to questions from Members, it was noted that:

- The team working in Kent had been expanded and they were keen to expand joint working.
- Southern Water advised that they did social media apps to educate and engage with younger people. However, it was unclear what their reach was and whether communication via social media was constructive. Communication was important moving forward in engaging with customers.
- Southern Water wanted to work with schools and link their education programme with national curriculum. Southern Water had worked in 13 schools in Margate on 'SuDs for schools'.
- Maintenance costs were being considered with alternate delivery such as SuDs, and were not putting pressure on KCC's budgets.
- It was felt that it was useful to have local people working in catchments who understood the problems in their areas.

3) RESOLVED to note the content of the presentation.

**5. Southern Gas Network- risk of flooding to gas network**  
(Item 5)

*Helen Peile, Stakeholder and Community Manager, SGN, was in attendance for this item*

Ms Peile presented on what happens when water enters the gas network. The contents of her presentation included:

- What happens when there is water ingress.
- Communication with affected customers and incident support.
- How SGN finds and removed water from gas network.

Further to questions from Members, it was noted that:

- Water ingress was discovered when there was interruption to the supply.
- Risks were being mitigated because SGN were 23 years into a 30 year programme to replace the older pipes. There were still a lot of cast iron and metal pipes and replacing these was a problem for the road network.
- It was felt that climate change did affect the condition of metal pipes but risk would decrease with time as the replacements were made.

3) RESOLVED to note the content of the presentation.

**6. Water Management Solutions for Romney Marsh Area**  
(Item 6)

*Neil Clarke, Flood Risk Project Manager was in attendance for this item*

1) Mr Hills outlined the report.

2) Further to questions from Members, it was noted that:

- It was important to consider what was best practice nationally when looking at what was happening in the South East.
- Direct discharge to ground water was not allowed. A minimum of 1 metre of clear ground between the point of infiltration to ground water, if it was clean run off. Distance for removing pollution was bigger.
- There had been flooding as the dyke system had not been sufficient to manage heavy rainfall.
- There were some issues with salinity in the dyke system and it was complicated keeping the balance.

3) The Committee endorsed the report as the basis for a lobbying document to the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee for investment funding in Romney Marsh.

**7. Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings and KCC severe weather response activity**  
(Item 7)

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

1) Mr Jeffery updated Members regarding changes to the Resilience and Emergency Planning Service and outlined the report.

2) Further to questions from Members, it was noted that:

- In April, Storm Kathleen caused a tidal surge in the North Sea which in turn caused increased operation of the Thames Barrier.

Thanks were given to Tony Harwood, Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager, who had retired from Kent County Council.

3) RESOLVED to note the report.