

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Flood Risk Management Committee held in the Bewl Room, Sessions House, County Hall Maidstone on Friday, 28 January 2011.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Tant (Flood Risk Management Officer), Mr T Harwood (Senior Emergency Planning Officer) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

1. Minutes of the meeting on 25 October 2010

(Item 3)

RESOLVED that subject to the amendment of Minute 23 (11) to read "Internal Drainage Boards" the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2010 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

2. Local Multi-Agency Flood Plans - Oral update by Tony Harwood: Emergency Planning Officer

(Item 4)

(1) Mr Harwood tabled a matrix setting out current progress towards completion of the Local Multi-agency Flood Plans and related training and exercise events. Kent had chosen to produce these Plans on a District basis. The majority of Plans had been completed, but still required DEFRA checklist scoring. The Plans would then be signed off by the Kent Resilience Forum. Responsibility for this had been delegated by the Forum to Mr Harwood and his colleague from the Environment Agency, Emma Watts.

(2) Mr Harwood described the training as very interactive, designed to identify vulnerabilities and innovative ways of working. Training was seen as particularly important. The programmed training and exercise events had either taken place or were scheduled to be held within the first quarter of 2011.

(3) Mr Harwood confirmed that the guiding principles for the plans were informed by lessons identified by the 2000 Floods and the ensuing Select Committee report. Both he and Emma Watts had been invited to address the national DEFRA training on the subject, whilst Kent's planning approach was seen by DEFRA and the Environment Agency as Best Practice.

(4) Mr Harwood agreed with the Committee Members that work with the Environment Agency needed to be so close as to be seamless. Both KCC and the Environment were committed to and working towards this goal.

(5) In response to a question from Mr Vye, Mr Harwood said that unannounced, “no notice” exercises were regularly held. These involved many people at very local levels, including the community wardens.

(6) The Chairman noted that many parish councils and their clerks were gaining greater awareness of their responsibilities. His own Parish Council in Ashford had developed the capability of contacting half its residents by e.mail at very short notice in the event of an emergency.

(7) Mr Harwood agreed with the Chairman that parishes such as Staplehurst, Aylesford and Littlebourne were operating to a very high standard in this regard. It was essential to develop a common standard throughout the County and also to ensure that those Parishes that were in a position to act self-sufficiently did not forget that they were part of a much broader network. In February 2008 for example, a Parish Council had exercised exemplary speed in providing its residents with sandbags. Unfortunately, it had not alerted Kent Highways and Kent Fire and Rescue to the emergency.

(8) Mr Hibberd asked to what extent KASS were involved in the consultation process. Mr Harwood replied that his colleague, Uta Critchley, KASS Emergency Planning Officer, had led the effort to identify those who were most vulnerable. This information had been disseminated to a local level to inform “warning and informing” strategies.

(9) In discussion, the Committee asked whether each of its Members could be provided with the Local Flood Plan for their District. It also agreed to invite Norman Bateman from KHS to describe the work that was being undertaken to individually log all surface water flood instances.

(10) The Committee considered that it should update the Kent Association of Local Councils on its work. This would be achieved through the production of its report to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder, which could then be used as the basis for a general local press release.

(11) RESOLVED that Mr Harwood be thanked for his presentation and that:-

- (a) Mr Norman Bateman from KHS be invited to address the next meeting of the Committee to describe the work being undertaken to individually log all surface water flood instances in the County;
- (b) each Committee Members be provided with the Local Multi-agency Flood Plan for their District; and
- (c) the Committee’s annual report to the Cabinet Portfolio Holder form the basis of a press release and an information bulletin to the Kent Association of Local Councils.

3. Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Indicative Areas and data from the Environment Agency - Oral Update by Max Tant: Flood Risk management Officer

(Item 5)

(1) Mr Tant explained that the Environment Agency had undertaken modelling of surface water risks in England. This work had taken four years to complete, with the results being released in December 2010.

(2) Mr Tant then explained that 10 areas (including Chatham/Gillingham) had been identified as indicative areas of significant risk. No such areas had been identified within the administrative boundaries of Kent County Council as the risk was more widely spread.

(3) In response to a question, Mr Tant said that the way in which an area of significant risk was defined by the Government was by establishing areas where 200 people, two or more critical services or 20 or more businesses were at risk of flooding. Clusters of these areas were identified and the results were then ranked to determine the highest risk areas, up to the point where the risk diminished. A threshold of 30,000 people at risk was applied.

(4) Mr Tant commented that the fact that there were no indicative at risk areas in Kent had the advantage of enabling risks within the county to be dealt with following an appropriate timetable and level of response. This meant, for example that a problem could be addressed without recourse to developing maps and broad strategies.

(5) Kent's Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment had to be submitted to the Minister by 22 June 2011. Following representations made by the Cabinet Portfolio Holder, Mr Chard, the Minister had agreed that local scrutiny could continue up to 16 August 2011. This meant that the draft now needed to be ready by May rather than February.

(6) RESOLVED that Mr Tant be thanked for his presentation.

4. Defra funding for Lead Local Flood Authorities - Oral Update by Max Tant *(Item 6)*

(1) Mr Tant reported on the Area-based grant from DEFRA. This was based on the total risk rather than Indicative Risk Areas and had been calculated as a proportion of the total number of homes at risk in England.

(2) The national grant was £21 million in 2011/12 and £36 million in each year from 2012/13 to 2015/16. Kent's proportion was £260k in 2011/12 and £750k in each of the next three years.

(3) Within the KCC budget book, there was a specific flooding heading within the Environment, Highways and Waste budget, whilst the share available to Emergency Planning was subsumed within its entire budget.

(4) The Committee also considered the question of the separate SUDS fee which would be provided to the County Council as the SUDS Approval Board. It noted that the definition of a reasonable charge for this work would be made by the Minister.

(5) The Chairman asked for a discussion on SUDS approval to be arranged involving himself, the Flood Risk Management Officer and the Head of Planning Applications Group.

(6) The Committee asked for inclusion within the Minutes of the table set out below, showing that Kent had the highest surface water flood risk to properties of any Local Flood Risk Authority as well as the highest weighted score. The weighted total was calculated by adding 70% of the Surface Water score to 30% of the Flood Zone score.

LFRA	Surface Water	Flood Zone	Weighted Total
Kent	70,074	72,758	70,879
Hertfordshire	56,669	19,326	45,466
Hampshire	53,880	27,861	46,074
Essex	51,614	50,312	51,223
Surrey	49,405	53,333	50,583

(7) RESOLVED that Mr Tant be thanked for his presentation and that a meeting be arranged involving the Chairman, the Flood Risk Management Officer and the Head of Planning Applications Group to discuss the SUDS approval process.

5. Response to proposals for wider Member engagement on the Flood Risk Management Committee from the Kent and Medway Chief Executives - Oral Update by Max Tant

(Item 7)

(1) Mr Tant informed the Committee of a request from the Kent Flood Partnership for wider engagement of its members in the work of the Committee. The Partnership had suggested that each of the Partnership's District Authorities should nominate one of its Members to receive the Committee papers and that one Member should be nominated to represent the Partnership's interests on the Committee. The Partnership had suggested that Mr Bowles would be ideally placed to undertake that role.

(2) In discussion, the Committee agreed to invite Mr Bowles to carry out the responsibility suggested (either in person or by delegating it to another Member of Swale Borough Council). It also agreed that once all the Local Multi-Agency Flood Plans had been completed, a seminar would be arranged for all Members of the County Council, which each of the individual District Authority representatives would be invited to attend. Consideration would also be given to inviting representation from the Kent Association of Local Councils.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Mr A H T Bowles be invited to take up a place on the Committee as a representative of the partner District Councils (either in person or by delegating this responsibility to another Member of Swale Borough Council);
- (b) a seminar be arranged for all Members of the Council once all the local Multi-Agency Flood Plans have been completed and that the nominated

representative from each of the District Authorities be invited to attend;
and

- (c) consideration be given to inviting representation on the Committee from the Kent Association of Local Councils.

6. Flood and Water Management Act 2010 guidance consultation

(Item 8)

(1) Mr Tant informed the Committee of four consultation documents produced by DEFRA and the Environment Agency. These included the draft Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) National Strategy produced by the Environment Agency. This document had been released for consultation. The Cabinet Portfolio Holder would provide the County Council's response, a copy of which would be circulated to all Members of the Committee.

(2) Mr Tant said that the main areas of concern at this stage were that the draft Strategy did not even mention the Water Companies and that it did not simplify the process for the agencies or indeed the public. There were also weaknesses in the way in which the draft Strategy tackled Emergency Planning.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a copy of the Cabinet Portfolio Holder's response on behalf of the County Council be provided to all Members of the Committee.

7. Local Government Information Unit Scrutiny Flood Toolkit

(Item 9)

(1) Mr Tant introduced the report, explaining that the LGIU's Scrutiny flood toolkit had the status of advice and guidance rather than statute. He did not consider that there was any need to amend the Committee's Terms of Reference as a consequence.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8. Future meetings

(Item 11)

(1) The Committee agreed that its next meeting would be held on Monday, 23 May 2011 at 10.00am.

(2) The Committee would visit the Contact and Control Centre at Police HQ during the afternoon of Monday, 21 February 2011.

(3) The Committee would also visit Police HQ and the Environment Agency's HQ at Addington in connection with Exercise Watermark on Thursday, 10 March 2011.