

To: Kent Flood Risk Management Committee – 21 July 2014

From: Michael Hill, Cabinet Member, Customer and Communities

Subject: Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings and KCC flood response activity since last meeting.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To update Kent Flood Risk Management Committee on Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings and KCC flood response activity since the last meeting of the Committee on 11th March 2014. Members are requested to note this report.

1. Background

1.1 KCC Resilience and Emergencies Unit and the Call Centre receive Environment Agency Flood Alerts and Warnings and Met Office Severe Weather Alerts and Warnings by e-mail and fax on a 24 hour 7 days a week basis. Impacts upon communities, infra-structure and the wider environment are assessed and a response mobilised as required.

1.2 Some 70,000 properties in Kent are located within areas at risk of fluvial or tidal flooding. Where practically possible, these properties are offered a Flood Warning Service by the Environment Agency. However, other parts of the county are also potentially vulnerable to surface or ground water flooding. Early warning of flood risk to communities (including areas outside of floodplains) is delivered through Flood Guidance Statements, Severe Weather Warnings and Severe Weather Advisory Group.

2. Latest situation

2.1 As we moved into spring and summer flood response activity across Kent reduced significantly over that experienced in the preceding autumn and winter months. Indeed, KCC has undertaken a cross-directorate debrief exercise to learn lessons from the response to this period of intense storms and flooding. The report to Cabinet on the 7th July included recommendations arising from this process and is featured elsewhere on this agenda.

2.2 Since 11th March 2014 just 1 Environment Agency flood alert and no warnings have been issued. However, 2 yellow Met Office Severe Weather Alerts and 5 yellow Severe Weather Warnings have been issued for heavy rain and the risk of surface water flooding¹. The most significant of these precipitation events struck Kent on the afternoon of 1st May, and resulted in a number of surface water flooding and subsidence events in the Maidstone area.

2.3 The Thames Barrier was closed on 2 occasions for test purposes.

¹ please see appendix 1

2.4 A total of 4 flooding related incidents were reported to the 24/7 KCC Emergency Planning Duty Officer over the same period, encompassing surface and ground water flooding, subsidence and sewage pollution.

2.5 The long term trend, for the 2002 – 2014 calendar year, covering Environment Agency and Met Office alerts and warnings and miscellaneous emergency incident reports made to KCC is set out at appendix 2². The graph clearly identifies the significant spike in severe weather and wider emergency response activity experienced over the autumn and winter of 2013/14.

3. Next Steps

3.1 KCC is implementing recommendations arising from the autumn and winter storms debrief. KCC and our partners are determined to enter the next autumn and winter period better prepared and more resilient to severe weather events.

3.2 KCC must of course remain vigilant in relation to the risk of flooding arising from summer storms and other severe weather events.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That Members:

- Note the level of alerts received since the last meeting of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee and the longer term trend; and
- Contribute any additional matters arising from debate by the Committee.

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Background documents: None

² please see appendix 2

Appendix 1

Environment Agency Flood Alerts, Met Office Severe Weather Alerts and Warnings (issued between 11th March – 11th July 2014)

403	Wednesday	30/04/2014		TH	Yellow Alert of Rain for London & South East England from 1200 Thu 01 May to 2000 Thu 01 May
404	Wednesday	21/05/2014		TH	Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England from 1800 Wed 21 May to 2355 Wed 21 May
405	Wednesday	21/05/2014		TH	Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England from 0005 Thu 22 May to 2100 Thu 22 May
406	Tuesday	03/06/2013		TH	Yellow Alert of Rain for London & South East England from 0015 Sat 07 Jun to 2345 Sat 07 Jun
407	Thursday	26/06/2014		TH	Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England from 0400 Fri 27 Jun to 2100 Sat 28 Jun
415	Tuesday	08/07/2014		TH	Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England valid from 1030 Tue 08 Jul to 1900 Tue 08 Jul
417	Wednesday	09/07/2014		TH	Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England valid from 0600 Thu 10 Jul to 0900 Fri 11 Jul
	Thursday	10/07/14		TH	Flood alert for the Shuttle and Cray catchments issued at 15:24

KCC Resilience and Emergencies Incident Alerts 2002-2014

