

**From:** Paul Crick, Director of Environment, Planning & Enforcement  
**To:** **Cabinet – 13th October**  
**Decision No:** N/A  
**Subject:** Christmas / New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods – Progress Report  
**Classification:** Unrestricted  
**Past Pathway of Paper:** N/A  
**Future Pathway of Paper:**  
 Growth, Economic Development & Communities Cabinet Committee – 2<sup>nd</sup> December  
 Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 5<sup>th</sup> December  
 Kent Flood Risk Management Committee – 17<sup>th</sup> November  
**Electoral Division:** N/A

**Summary:** This report provides Cabinet with an update on progress being made to deliver the 17 recommendations in the Christmas / New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods – Lessons Learnt report that was endorsed by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014. It also provides an update on new developments relating to the implementation of sustainable drainage.

**Recommendations:** Cabinet is asked to note the progress being made against the 17 lessons learnt recommendations and the update on sustainable drainage.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the severe weather experienced over Christmas and New Year 2013-14, and based on a wide range of public consultations and internal and external debriefs, a comprehensive lessons learnt report was presented to, and approved, by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014.
- 1.2 The report included 17 recommendations, and this report provides Cabinet with an update on progress made to date against these recommendations.
- 1.3 It also provides an update on recent developments relating to the implementation of sustainable urban drainage policy and practice.

## 2. Progress Report

- 2.1 Significant progress has been made by KCC and our multi-agency partners in implementing all of the recommendations in the 'lessons learnt' report. A detailed summary against each of these is provided at **Annex 1**. Key highlights can be summarised as follows:
- 2.2 Management action: A series of internal and partnership debriefs have been carried out and management structures established to deliver the recommendations identified in these reports. Within KCC, a cross-directorate Corporate Resilience Steering Group has been established, with Director-level representation. Similarly, the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) has established a multi-agency Pan-Kent Flood Group, chaired by the Environment Agency. Terms of reference for both groups have been agreed, action plans drawn-up and internal and external governance / reporting lines established to ensure appropriate member and senior officer

oversight. Additionally, the multi-agency Strategic Recovery Coordination Group, chaired by the Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement, was reconvened on 23<sup>rd</sup> September, to review lessons learnt, current progress and preparations for winter 2014-15. Furthermore, the KRF will use its annual seminar at the East Malling Conference Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> November to provide a further health check on partners' preparations.

- 2.3 Plans: Comprehensive reviews of existing single and multi-agency emergency plans have been undertaken, including generic plans and those specific for dealing with flooding and severe weather. The KCC Major Emergency and Flood Response Plans have been reviewed and re-published and the suite of multi-agency flood plans will be re-published in the coming months. Additional new plans have also been drawn-up as a result of lessons learnt e.g. KCC Highways, Transportation & Waste have developed new Severe Weather plans and a flood plan has been developed for Little Venice Caravan Park, which flooded several times over Christmas / New Year.
- 2.4 Training & exercising: Since January 2014, 76 multi-agency training sessions and exercises have been / will be run in Kent, to familiarise many hundreds of staff from across the KRF partnership in a variety of emergency response roles (from senior officers to front-line staff) and scenarios. Internally within KCC a fundamental review of key emergency response roles has been undertaken and training needs identified. The cross-directorate Corporate Resilience Steering Group will assist in the identification of staff to be trained and a series of training & exercising sessions (supported by e-learning and briefings) will be held. An initial emergency planning awareness training pilot ran in September, with 37 managers participating from across KCC. Additionally, all Community Wardens are now trained as Incident Liaison Officers, with 12 vans and 2 4x4 vehicles equipped with emergency response equipment for deployment to affected communities in the event of an emergency.
- 2.5 Community engagement: A long-standing programme of multi-agency work to develop community-level emergency plans and flood plans has continued apace, with many local plans now in place or under development in key communities at risk of flooding. This approach has been complemented by a range of other activities to encourage greater awareness and preparedness for flooding and other emergencies, including a series of 'flood fairs' held across the county and the establishment of Multi-Agency Flood Alleviation Technical Working Groups to understand and tackle complex flood risk issues. 42 volunteers from Yalding, East Peckham, Tonbridge & Hildenborough have also been trained and equipped and further sessions are planned for other parts of the county. Additionally, 15,000 copies of a newly-published booklet '*What should I do in an emergency?*' have been distributed through a variety channels and access points. A wider awareness campaign will be undertaken in the coming months, linked to the national 'Get Ready for Winter' campaign.
- 2.6 Financial investment & flood risk management: £8.6m central government grant received by KCC in tranche 1 of the 'Severe Weather Recovery Scheme' to help repair damaged highways infrastructure. A further £499,000 has been received in tranche 2. We are still awaiting a final settlement figure from DCLG for a claim submitted under the Bellwin Scheme of emergency financial assistance. KCC Highways & Transportation is investing an additional £3m to enable the delivery of 120 drainage improvement schemes in 2014/15. KCC is working with the EA, to identify strategic schemes in Kent that require partnership funding. River Medway and Beult Flood Defence Schemes are being taken through to feasibility stage, with KCC investment of £255,000. Other partnership contributions are currently being sought.

### 3. Sustainable Drainage update

- 3.1 The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 contains provisions for an approval and adoption regime for drainage in new developments. This regime would make the KCC an approving body with a duty to approve the technical details of new drainage in accordance with a set of National Standards, and adopt any approved drainage that serves more than one property. The National Standards promote sustainable drainage. Defra have been working on measures to deliver this part of the act and KCC had been expecting to become the approving body in the next 6-12 months.
- 3.2 Defra has found it difficult to deliver this provision to the satisfaction of all stakeholders. As a consequence they are considering an alternative approach and are currently consulting on revising planning guidance to promote sustainable urban drainage in new developments with no proposals to alter the regime for maintenance. KCC is responding to this consultation. Our primary concerns are that this option may not provide sufficient incentive to increase the uptake of sustainable urban drainage and it does not provide a reliable means to ensure long-term maintenance. We will keep Cabinet informed of developments in this area.

### 4. Recommendations

**Recommendations:** Cabinet is asked to note the progress being made against the 17 lessons learnt recommendations and the update on sustainable drainage.

### 5. Background Documents

*Christmas / New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods - Final Report (7<sup>th</sup> July 2014)*

Report: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s47250/Item%204%20-%20Flooding.pdf>

Appendix: <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s47251/Item%204%20-%20Appendix.pdf>

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