

To: Kent Flood Risk Management Committee – 17th November 2014

From: Michael Harrison, Chairman of Kent Flood Risk Management Committee

Subject: Christmas / New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods – Progress Report.

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To update Kent Flood Risk Management Committee on progress against the 7th July Christmas / New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods Report to Cabinet

1. Background

1.1 The severe weather events that the County experienced from October 2013 to February 2014 were unprecedented, and impacted many communities, individual residents and business across Kent:

- The East Coast tidal surge on 5th & 6th December was equal to a 1 in 200 year tidal event and the biggest tidal event to impact Kent since the devastating floods of 1953;
- This was also the wettest winter in over 250 years, with 120mm of rainfall falling between 19th to 25th December onto already saturated ground;
- On Christmas Eve, the highest ever peak flows were recorded upstream of the Leigh Flood Storage Area;
- 929 residential and commercial properties were flooded across Kent, compared to approximately 1000 properties flooded in the 2000 floods;
- Additionally, high winds caused extensive damage and disruption with, tragically, the loss of one life on October 23rd (the St Jude Storm) and 28,500 people without power on Christmas Eve.

1.2 These extreme weather events stretched all public services, emergency responders, utilities and the transport network. The main risk and impact was to life and property, but events also significantly impacted on the environment, particularly the farming community.

1.3 After such events KCC, along with its statutory and voluntary partners, has a duty to examine and assess its plans and procedures to identify lessons to be learnt. To this end Cabinet requested a detailed paper, which was tabled on 7th July 2014. All 17 of its recommendations were formally approved by Cabinet. This paper was reported to Kent Flood Risk Management Committee on 21st July 2014.

2. Next Steps

2.1 A Cross-Directorate Steering Group (chaired by Paul Crick, Director of Environment, Planning & Enforcement) has been established to take forward the 17 recommendations outlined in the 7th July report to Cabinet.

2.2 A report was presented to Cabinet on 13th October providing an update on progress against these actions in preparation for Winter 2014-15. This report is attached at Appendix 1.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Members:

- Note the contents of the Progress Report (Appendix 1); and
- Consider progress against the targets set in the original report.

Michael Harrison, Chairman of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee

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Background documents: Report to Cabinet on the Christmas / New Year 2013/14 Storms and Floods (7th July 2014)