

To: Kent Flood Risk Management Committee – 20th July 2015

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

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 10th March 2015. Members are requested to note this report.

1. Background

1.1 KCC Resilience and Emergencies Unit and Contact Point receive Environment Agency Flood Alerts and Warnings and Met Office Severe Weather Alerts and Warnings by e-mail and fax on a 24 hour basis. Potential impacts upon communities, infra-structure and the wider environment are then assessed and a response mobilised as required.

1.2 Some 70,000 properties in Kent are located within areas identified as potentially 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 vulnerable to surface and 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 Kent Resilience Forum Severe Weather Advisory Group.

1.3 More precisely geographically focused Flood Warning Service zones were introduced by the Environment Agency on 29th October 2014. This change was informed by lessons learned from the flooding events experienced during winter 2013/14, and has undoubtedly enhanced the effectiveness of this service.

2. Latest situation

2.1 Autumn, winter and spring 2014/15 did not bring the intensity of severe weather events experienced in 2013/14. However, statistically this period was, as forecast, slightly wetter and warmer than average, and thus continues the recent climatic trend.

2.2 Since 10th March 2015 a total of 5 Environment Agency flood alerts were issued¹. These were all coastal alerts, issued for the spring tides on Saturday 21st March.

¹ please see appendix 1

2.3 Further, 3 yellow Severe Weather Alerts have been issued for heavy rain and the risk of surface water flooding, and 2 Yellow Alerts and 1 Warning for high winds and gales since the last meeting².

2.4 The Thames Barrier was closed on 3 occasions, for both test (2) and operational (1) reasons.

3. Next Steps

3.1 September 2015 will experience the maximum tidal range in the natural 19 year astronomical tide cycle. The main risk from tidal flooding is between November and March, however, vigilance will need to be maintained throughout this year and KCC, the Environment Agency and other partners are currently working to enhance resilience to tidal surge risk. Indeed, a multi-agency workshop took place at Defra's Nobel House offices, Westminster on 19th June, with a focus upon the role of the local highway network for evacuation and shelter in the event of coastal flooding affecting the Romney Marsh area.

3.2 Members will continue to be regularly updated on flood alerts and response in Kent.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That Members:

- Note the level of alerts received since the last meeting of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee; 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 and Warnings issued since 10th March 2015

Flood Zone	Date issued	Status
Coast from Pegwell Bay to Deal including the Tidal Stour	21 st March 2015	Alert
Coast from Dartford to Allhallows	21 st March 2015	Alert
Tidal Medway, Medway Estuary and Isle of Grain	21 st March 2015	Alert
Isle of Sheppey and Coast from Kemsley to Seasalter	21 st March 2015	Alert
Coast from Whitstable to Margate	21 st March 2015	Alert

Appendix 2: Met Office Severe Weather Flood Alerts and Warnings issued since 10th March 2015

Met Office Alerts and Warnings	Date issued	Status
Yellow Warning of Wind for London and South East England	4 th May 2015	Warning
Yellow Alert of Wind for London and South East England	29 th May 2015	Alert
Yellow Alert of Wind for London and South East England	31 st May 2015	Alert
Yellow Alert of Rain for London and South East England	3 rd June 2015	Alert
Yellow Alert of Rain for London and South East England	10 th June 2015	Alert
Yellow Alert of Rain for London and South East England	2 nd July 2015	Alert