

To: Kent Flood Risk Management Committee – 14th November 2016

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 flood response activity since the last meeting of the Committee on 18th July 2016. 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 on a 24 hour basis. Potential impacts upon communities, infrastructure 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 from fluvial (river) 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 mobilisation of Kent Resilience Forum Severe Weather Advisory Group (SWAG).

2. Latest situation

2.1 Kent received just 50% of the long term average rainfall for October. This marked the fourth consecutive drier than average month. Indeed, the period since July has seen the driest four months since records began for north Kent, including the Isle of Sheppey. Despite this paucity of rain, most river flows remain within their normal ranges, with the exception being those rivers and streams draining clay catchments, such as the River Beult and its tributaries, which are flowing at below their normal expected levels. The warm and dry weather experienced since July has resulted in above average soil moisture deficits, and groundwater levels continue to recede in most aquifers. Kent's primary aquifers do not present an immediate cause for concern. However, the effects of recent below average rainfall are more notable in some of our local aquifer resources, such as the Denge Gravels on the Romney Marsh. Reservoir levels continue to fall across the county, but remain largely within expected ranges.

2.2 Since the last meeting of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee on the 18th July 2016, a total of 4 flood alerts (3 fluvial and 1 coastal) have been issued by

the Environment Agency¹. This contrasts with 20 flood alerts (9 fluvial and 11 coastal) for the corresponding period in 2015.

2.3 A total of 11 yellow Met Office Severe Weather Alerts and Warnings have also been issued since the last meeting (5 for rain, 4 for fog and 2 for high winds)². This exceeds the 7 yellow alerts and warnings issued during the same period last year.

2.4 The Thames Barrier has been closed on 3 occasions for test purposes since the last meeting of the Committee in July.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Despite the prevailing dry conditions, the autumn and winter period brings an increased risk of storms and resultant surface water, fluvial and tidal flooding for Kent, underlining the need for continued vigilance by Kent County Council, district councils, the wider resilience community and local residents.

3.2 Members will continue to be regularly updated on flood alerts, severe weather warnings, operational response and significant flood events across Kent.

4. Recommendations

4.1 That Members:

- Note the level of alerts and warnings received since the last meeting of the Committee; and
- Contribute any additional matters arising from debate by the Committee.

Tony Harwood, Resilience and Emergencies Manager, Growth Environment and Transport tel. 03000 413 386 e-mail tony.harwood@kent.gov.uk

Background documents: None

Appendix 1: Environment Agency Flood Alerts issued since 18th July 2016

Flood Zone	Date issued	Status
River Darent Catchment	15/09/2016	Alert
Shuttle and Cray Catchments	15/09/2016	Alert
Rivers on the Isle of Sheppey	15/09/2016	Alert
Coast from Pegwell Bay to Deal including Tidal Stour	19/10/2016	Alert

Appendix 2: Met Office Severe Weather Warnings issued since 18th July 2016

Met Office Alerts and Warnings	Date issued	Status
Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England	20/07/2016	Warning
Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England	22/07/2016	Warning
Yellow Alert for Wind for London & South East England	17/08/2016	Alert
Yellow Alert for Wind for London & South East England	18/08/2016	Alert
Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England	03/09/2016	Warning
Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England	15/09/2016	Warning
Yellow Warning of Rain for London & South East England	30/09/2016	Warning
Yellow Warning of Fog for London & South East England	25/10/2016	Warning
Yellow Warning of Fog for London & South East England	26/10/2016	Warning
Amber Warning of Fog for London & South East England	29/10/2016	Warning
Yellow Warning of Fog for London & South East England	31/10/2016	Warning

¹ please see appendix 1

² please see appendix 2

