

From: **Katie Stewart , Director of Environment Planning and Enforcement**
John Lynch, Head of Democratic Services

To: **Kent Flood Risk Management Committee – 17 July 2017**

Subject: **introduction to the work of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: This report provides the Committee with an introduction to its work, with particular reference to the period between March 2016 and March 2017. It sets out possible topics for future consideration and invites the Committee to consider how it wishes to carry out its functions.

Recommendation(s): The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Kent Flood Risk Management Committee's terms of Reference are set out in the **Appendix to Item 1**. Its membership consists of 7 Members of the County Council (6 Conservative and 1 Liberal Democrat).
- 1.2 There is also a standing invitation to each of the District Councils, the Internal Drainage Boards in Kent, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and KALC to send representatives to the meetings. All these representatives are treated as though they are full Committee Members except for the formal items of business.
- 1.3 Officer support to the Committee is provided by Tony Harwood (Principal Resilience Officer) and Max Tant (Flood Risk Manager). Senior Officers from the Environment Agency and Kent Fire and Rescue also report and contribute to the meetings.
- 1.4 The Committee is a part of the County Council's Scrutiny suite and reports annually to the Scrutiny Committee.

2. The work of the Committee in 2016/17

- 2.1 In 2016/17, the Committee continued to monitor responses to Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings and KCC flood response activities, receiving a standing report at each meeting throughout the year. In complete contrast to previous years, conditions were prevalingly dry. Nevertheless, damaging surface water flooding events were experienced in June 2016, which underlined the unpredictability of our weather, and the need for continued vigilance on local flood risk by Kent County Council, district councils, the wider resilience community, residents and businesses. The dry weather brought water resource planning into focus, including the need for effective emergency planning contingencies for drought and wildfire.
- 2.2 All the presentations set out are covered in detail in the Minutes which can be found, together with the accompanying slides in the "Committees and Meetings" section of the County Council's website.

3. Committee meeting of 18 July 2016.

- 3.1 The Committee received a presentation from Katie Moreton (KCC Highways and Waste) on drainage issues during the financial year 2015/16. This pointed out the significant reduction in reported incidents due to the long period of dry weather, as well as setting out the changed approach which had been adopted on April 2014.
- 3.7 The Committee also received a report from Max Tant on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. This topic is the subject of a report to today's Committee meeting.

4. Committee meeting on 14 November 2016

- 4.1 The Committee received a detailed presentation from Rachel Kairis of the Environment Agency on *Exercise Certus* which had been a part of its winter readiness campaign. This was a national exercise which had involved 70 players from the South East Area out of over 1,000 nationally. It had tested a number of new procedures within the *Winter Ready* plan.
- 4.2 Rachel Kairis also informed the Committee of other developments including the Environment Agency's investment in £12.5m of kit such as temporary defence barriers, pumps, instant command units, and sandbagging machines. All of this equipment was stored securely in various depots across the country. The closest depot to Kent was in Rye.
- 4.3 The Committee also received a report from Paul Flaherty (Kent Fire and Rescue) on the structure of the Kent Resilience Forum and its annual seminar.
- 4.4 Max Tant gave presentations on *Flood Re* (affordable flood insurance) and *Riparian rights and responsibilities*. Both of these topics had been identified by the Committee and the accompanying presentational materials were made more widely available after the meeting.

5. Committee meeting on 6 March 2017.

- 5.1 Professor Alastair Driver FCIEEM, the Director of England and Wales Rewilding Britain gave a presentation on Rewilding and Natural Flood Management. Professor Driver's opinions are highly valued, and there was considerable public interest in what he had to say.
- 5.2 A presentation on Thames Estuary Asset Management was given by Victor Freeney (TEAM 2100) and Rebecca Murphy (Environment Agency).
- 5.3 Fiona Gaffney (KCC Head of Resilience and Emergency Planning) gave a report on the debrief of *Exercise Surge* which was the major exercise of 2016, involving county-wide flooding and evacuations. A significant aspect of this event had been the table top Recovery exercise.

6 Future activities

- Sustainable drainage systems / SuDS
- The role and structure of the Environment Agency*
- The role of Internal Drainage Boards*
- Coastal erosion risk and management*
- Flood defence funding
- Environment Agency de-maining project Kent pilot
- Environment Agency's new framework / Project Delivery Units

*these topics will require a speaker to be invited to the committee and will depend on their availability.

7. Recommendation

7.1 The Committee is invited to note the content of this report and to identify those topics it wishes to consider in future meetings.

Max Tant
Flood Risk Manager
03000 413466
max.tant@kent.gov.uk

Tony Harwood
Principal Resilience Officer
03000 413386
tony.harwood@kent.gov.uk

Andrew Tait
Democratic Services Officer
03000 416749
andrew.tait@kent.gov.uk

Background papers
None