

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

KENT FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Monday, 11 November 2019.

PRESENT: Mr A R Hills (Chairman), Mr A H T Bowles, Mr I S Chittenden, Mr K Pugh, Mr H Rayner, Mr P Vickery-Jones (Canterbury CC), Mr S McGregor (Sevenoaks DC), Mr H Rogers (Tonbridge and Malling BC), Mrs C Mackonochie, Mrs G Brown (KALC), Mr C Mackonochie (KALC) and Mr M Deadman (Kent Fire and Rescue)

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr M Tant (Flood and Water Manager), Mr T Harwood (Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager), Ms L Guthrie (KCC Manager, Kent Resilience Team), Miss L Butfoy (Resilience and Emergency Planning Project Officer) and Mr A Tait (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

12. Minutes of the meeting on 22 July 2019
(Item 3)

RESOLVED that subject to Mr McGregor being recorded as the representative of Sevenoaks DC rather than as a substitute, the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

13. Dates of future meetings
(Item 4)

The Committee noted the following future meeting dates:-

Monday, 9 March 2020;

Monday, 6 July 2020;

Monday, 23 November 2020; and

Monday, 8 March 2021. *This date was subsequently changed to **Monday, 15 March 2021***

14. Water Sustainability and Farmer Co-ordination - Presentation by Tom Ormesher, NFU Environment and Land Use Adviser
(Item 5)

(1) Mr Tom Ormesher from the NFU (SE England) gave a presentation. The accompanying slides are contained within the electronic papers on the KCC website.

(2) Mr Ormesher said that membership of the NFU in Kent was in the region of 1,500 out of some 46,000 in England and Wales. It was the biggest farming organisation in the UK. Mr Ormesher was also the NFU's representative on the Medway Flood Action Plan Group and the Kent Water Task Group. The scope of his presentation would encompass flooding, water quality and water resources, outlining how the NFU could help co-ordinate responses at a farmer level.

(3) Mr Ormesher said that he had just completed an 18-month Nuffield Farming Scholarship. This had included visits to the USA where he had interviewed some 200 people including farmers, farming organisations, and financial institutions. This experience would inform his presentation.

(4) Mr Ormesher set the scene by saying that Kent was an extremely important area for fruit and vegetable production and farming in general. Some 80% of apples and pears in the UK were produced in Kent together with two thirds of its berries. Kentish fruit and vegetables production was, therefore, the single most important contributor to the regional agricultural economy. The accompanying slide showed the highest value Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land within the South East Region, including the North Kent Coast and the most south westerly parts of the County, equating to some 15% of the national resource. Significantly, all these areas were within the Flood Plain.

(5) Mr Ormesher moved on to explain that farming policy would be changing over the next five to seven years. The UK would be removing itself from the EU Common Agricultural Policy's system of area-based support to one of "public money for public good" which was more environmentally focussed on clean air and clean water. There would be greater emphasis on whole farm plans and third-party audits and assessment. The Government would probably adopt a more arms-length approach. This would require a local co-ordinated framework for sustainable development which achieved the right balance between sustainable business and environmental delivery.

(6) Mr Ormesher then quoted from the 2018 *UK Committee on Climate Change's* report which stated that there needed to be a 700% increase in the volume of water for irrigation by the 2050s in order to maintain present day levels of potato production. The accompanying slide highlighted the problem by identifying the large number of areas in England and Wales where no water was available. This represented a great co-ordinating challenge. At a national level, farming used 1% of the total water resource. The irrigated area within the UK had contracted by 40% during the first decade of the 21st century.

(7) Mr Ormesher then said that water quality was also a significant issue. Progress was being made towards the goal of creating a healthy clean water environment. The agricultural industry had played an important role by achieving a 35% reduction in nitrate fertiliser since the 1980s together with a 20% reduction in manure due to more efficient livestock production, leading to a 34% improvement in the soil-to-nitrate balance since the 1990s. Further improvements were needed at an increased pace. This was also true in respect of flooding. An example of the increased danger had occurred in Spring 2018 in Buckinghamshire where a farmer had found his land completely flooded out following a short, sharp rainfall event. He had never experienced any such problem in over 40 years.

(8) Mr Ormesher then showed a circular flow chart which demonstrated the links between the qualities needed to develop co-ordination solutions. He stressed the key importance of engaging with farmers in a business-friendly manner in order to promote measures to mitigate flooding on or originating from their land.

(9) Mr Ormesher said that he had put together a comprehensive list of organisations involved in water resource management. At the top were the regulators such as the EA and the Rural Payments Agency (RPA). Next came outside bodies who undertook voluntary measures. These were Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF), the Catchment Partnerships, the Rivers Trust, the Wildlife Trust, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), and the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT). Below them came the producer organisations which were rarely farmer-led or commercially focussed.

(10) Mr Ormesher said that his preferred alternative approach was based on the US *Third Party Programme*. This involved farmer-led commercial organisations. He had visited and studied a wine growers' association in California and the Farm Bureau of Ventura County where the farmers paid an acreage fee to the Bureau to undertake the administrative and compliance work such as monitoring of water quality and best practice measures. The benefit to the farmers was that they obtained this support at a far cheaper rate than if they were to undertake it independently.

(11) The *Watershed Agricultural Council* was a farmer-led executive body in New York State which had the responsibility of delivering clean water on behalf of New York City which funded this body to invest in farms through a series of whole-farm plans. This could include better cattle storage facilities or maize establishments. It represented a farmer-friendly approach which understood the needs of the business and secured public benefit and also enabled the farmers to access commercial opportunities.

(12) *Sustainable Sonoma* was supported by the Wine Growers Association and was working towards being the first 100% sustainable County in the USA. The resultant certification was beneficial to the individual farmers and would promote tourism in the County. Another example of the US Third Party Programme was the *Why Buy Pure Catskills* programme, which was run by the Wine Growers' Association and focussed on the marketing opportunities that sustainability provided.

(13) Mr Ormesher summed up the US Third Party Programme's model by saying that the farmer-led commercially minded organisations sat as an intermediary group between the Regulator and the Farmers. The Farmers worked to the aims of the partnership organisation that they fully trusted to have their best interests at heart, whilst the Regulator also trusted its aims and standards of water sustainability and water resource benefits. As a result, there only needed to be a minimum of direct contact between the Regulator and the Farmers.

(14) Mr Ormesher turned to the question of Farm Resilience. He gave the example of a rainwater harvesting system, developed by a Third Party Programme in a small dairy farm of 180 acres. It collected 6 months of rainwater for water use during the April to October Californian dry period. This meant that the Farm no longer needed to extract water from a stream which contained an endangered salmon population.

(15) Another example of successful Farm Resilience was an aquifer storage and recovery system in the Netherlands, developed by a co-operative organisation. It passed processed water from sugar beet (75% water) through a series of injection wells in a field during the autumn and winter months. The success of this operation could be seen during the drought of 2018 when the farm was able to continue extracting water whilst others were unable to do so.

(16) Mr Ormesher said that an excellent model for future Whole Farm Management Plans in the UK could be found in the Conservation Plan that many US farmers needed to produce. In essence, this was a portfolio of resource management on the farm which had to be provided in order to be eligible for farm loans, insurance and disaster relief. They also provided the public with reassurance that the farm was managing its risks appropriately.

(17) Mr Ormesher then gave three examples of Farmer Accreditation. Farmers had worked together to achieve a higher level than they could have done on their own. Citrus Growers in Spain had gone through a water stewardship certification process which had enabled them to gain a strong relationship with one of the greatest retailers in Germany. Dairy Farmers in New Zealand had developed their own milk processing assurance scheme which enabled them to access the highly lucrative Chinese market which it supplied with infant milk. *The States of Jersey* (Channel Islands) was a programme that required all farms to be *Linking Environment and Farming* (LEAF) Assured. This ensured that Jersey was able to demonstrate that its farms were amongst the most sustainable in the World.

(18) Mr Ormesher then described a project he had been working on. This was *A Vision for the Arun Valley* which had come about as a result of the Environment Agency's decision to withdraw from Flood Risk Management in that area. The Arun Valley was flood-prone and also had a number of statutory designations. It was a Special Protected Area which was of international importance, particularly for bird protection. A programme was being developed for all the key stakeholders to balance the needs of conservation, land management, people and property in an affordable manner. The project had identified priorities and was now developing a delivery organisation. This might be a community interest company or a company limited by guarantee that would provide a locally co-ordinated framework that the farmers could buy into. He concluded his presentation by saying that the idea of a co-ordinated framework at the core of farm resilience projects was not yet widely taken up in the UK but that he believed it would be of very great importance nationally and particularly productive in the County of Kent.

(19) Mr Vickery-Jones said that District Councils had an obligation to build housing and were often permitting development on high quality farmland. He asked whether this would increase the difficulty of developing agricultural water stability. Mr Ormesher replied that the First Reading of the Environment Bill had now successfully taken place. This Bill would lead to the preparation of local bio-diversity strategies. All planning applications would need to demonstrate bio-diversity net gain. Local Authorities would have conservation easement powers through Section 106 Agreements to secure conservation enhancement on farms. The NPPF sought to protect best quality agricultural land, but could not do so as much as was necessary. Thought needed to be given to how this protection could be enhanced.

(20) The Chairman noted the point made that Kentish Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land equated to some 15% of the national resource. He asked whether the views of the NFU and others responsible for its maintenance were fully taken on board when the Environment Agency was considering whether to develop sea defences in these areas. Mr Ormesher replied that there was a system of cost benefit analysis which took the value of farmland into consideration. The value attributed to farmland in these calculations was, however, lower than that for properties, which was the key factor. He added that sea defences had on many occasions been built out of bomb damage material from WW2. This ageing infrastructure was protecting very significant assets.

(21) Mr Bowles said that the sea wall between Faversham and Whitstable had been built following the flood event of 1953. It had provided adequate flood defence for many years thereafter. There had been a lot of under-erosion on the toe of that seawall as well as a great deal of sinkage with some sections being 18 inches higher than others. Yet there were no plans to modernise it despite the need to protect Grade 1 farmland, the England to France electricity exchange line, the main London to Margate railway line and the London to Thanet road communication network. It was not just people and houses that were at risk. The national infrastructure was at risk as well.

(22) RESOLVED that Mr Tom Ormesher be thanked for his presentation and that its content be noted.

15. Winter Preparedness - Presentation by Earl Bournier, Asset Manager, Drainage, Structures and Safety Barriers
(Item 6)

(1) Mr Earl Bournier (KCC Asset Manager, Drainage, Structures and Safety Barriers) gave a presentation. The accompanying slides are contained within the electronic papers on the KCC website.

(2) Mr Bournier opened his presentation by discussing the major impact of Climate Change. The Winters were likely to be 2C warmer, leading to an extra 14 inches of rain which increased the risk of flooding from storms, resulting in damage to properties, businesses and infrastructure, particularly in threatening coastal towns. Another impact of Climate Change was the variability of extreme events. The last two extreme rainfall events had not taken place in Winter but in May 2018 and June 2019. On both occasions, these events had occurred completely unexpectedly.

(3) Mr Bournier continued by saying that the Environment Agency had recorded the rainfall in Snodland in June 2019 as a 1 in 256-year flood event. Drainage systems were not designed to cope with this amount of rainfall which equated to nearly 2 months of rain in 1½ hours. The residents had not previously experienced any flooding for over 50 years.

(4) Mr Bournier then addressed the question of what KCC could do to help. It was able to help residents by assisting to clear water and protect property where practically possible as the event was happening, and also after the event as part of the clear up operation in ensuring that the highway drainage asset was cleansed. It could respond to questions and complaints from residents who wanted to know why

their houses were flooding. It investigated the drainage systems, carried out CCTV surveys, undertook root cutting, jetted the systems, cleansed the soakaways and did flood testing. It kept the highway users safe.

(5) Mr Bourner then provided figures to demonstrate reactive cleansing carried out since April 2019. KCC had undertaken 4267 cleansing jobs following customer enquiries, dealt with 337 emergencies, carried out 353 CCTV surveys, cleansed 69 soakaways (at a cost of £5 – 6K each) and undertaken 321 repairs and 111 schemes.

(6) Mr Bourner said that KCC had changed its approach to cleansing. It now carried out pre-inspections of over 90,000 gullies on main roads in order to establish if cleansing was required. Known flooding hot spots were cleansed twice a year on some 300 roads. This often involved simply clearing away leaves.

(7) KCC had increased its budget for capital works from £3m to £5m per year to update, replace or install new drainage systems. The number of highways engineers had doubled and KCC could roll over its capital monies into the next financial year, enabling it to design very complicated drainage systems one year and install it the next. KCC spent £2.5m per year on drainage cleansing.

(8) Another important part of KCC's work was supporting multi-agency Flood Forums. These were attended by KCC Flood and Water Management Team, Highways, the Environment Agency and water companies. They took place in communities which had been affected by flooding and played a crucial part in supporting as well as re-assuring the residents.

(9) Mr Bourner showed the Committee a pre-inspection on scheduled cleansing in order to demonstrate that extra gullies in some of the County's Districts amounted to over 30% of the original total. In Dover, this percentage figure was 49%. The additional money provided would enable KCC to clear all the gullies that required cleansing or un-jamming. This also involved more efficient cleansing methods consisting of jetting the lines and outlets.

(10) Mr Bourner moved on to discuss ways in which KCC sought to educate residents. This was important because certain areas of the County were low-lying and prone to flooding due to the topography of the land. Houses built at the bottom of valleys would find that surface water reached the low points. Many properties had created large driveways with no drainage facilities, taking away the grass which acted as natural soakage areas. The water generally ran onto the highway.

(11) Mr Bourner said that KCC Highways received over 7,000 enquiries per year relating to flooding either on the highway or impacting private property. Some of these could be very emotional. For example, enquiries were made by families that had still not been able to return to their properties after the flooding event of June 2019.

(12) Mr Bourner then informed the Committee of the number of drainage assets in Kent. There were 250,000 roadside drains, 250 ponds and lagoons, 15 pumping stations and 8,500 soakaways. The tasks for KCC Highways were to maintain road safety and minimise nuisance; prevent damage to the structural integrity of the highway and maximise its lifespan; and to minimise the impact of highway water on

the surrounding environment. The time taken to respond to enquiries about these assets had reduced over the past year from 3 months to 28 days.

(13) Several factors were taken into consideration when KCC Highways decided how it was going to prioritise its work. It had legal obligations in respect of disruption to the highway network, it had to fulfil KCC's obligations in respect of road safety and internal property flooding. It also had to consider how much work was needed; whether the existing asset worked and whether it was future-proofed.

(14) There were significant factors affecting drainage maintenance. The infrastructure was damaged and ageing. Some of it was between 30 and 40 years old. There was limited capacity to add drainage systems. There was a reliance on third party infrastructure. Water from KCC's systems drained into Southern Water systems leading to complicated discussions over responsibility for repairs. It was important that farmers cleared their ditches in order to reduce the land drainage damage that KCC had to respond to in order to sustain its network. Utility companies were modernising their own infrastructure, which often led to water drainage systems being involuntarily damaged. Road sweeping by the District Councils was insufficient and affected the gullies, which only needed a few uncleared leaves to become blocked.

(15) Mr Bourner concluded his presentation by summarising the outcomes that KCC Highways wanted to achieve. These were: fewer incidents of highway flooding; increased customer satisfaction and confidence; a robust defence against increased claims for damage and personal injury; roads and footways that were protected from the adverse effects of standing water; reduced disruption from carriageway flooding; and greater resilience against increasingly frequent intense rainfall events.

(16) Mr Pugh said that in Eastchurch on the Isle of Sheppey for example, KCC Highways had often been called out to clear the gullies due to flooding in the High Street following a downpour. KCC Highways would check them and say that *their* systems were working properly, and that the problem originated with those owned by Southern Water. This did not help the residents as flooding was still taking place on a frequent basis. People were having to move out of their properties, and when they put their claims into KCC it took a very long time to receive a reply. The main cause of the problem was that the gullies were undersized and old, needing replacement. He asked when and how this was likely to happen. Mr Bourner replied that there was one particular property whose problems had taken 3 years to solve. KCC Highways and Southern Water were due to carry out the repairs, which would also solve the problems that had caused Eastchurch High Street to flood.

(17) Mr Bowles referred to the significant flooding event of May 2018 in Swale East. He said that he was pleased with progress in some areas but not in others. He would use the slides provided to inform the Parish Councils in his constituency and would also meet Mr Bourner at a later stage in order to discuss his remaining concerns in detail. He considered that whilst a great deal of work was being undertaken, there was a need for better communication to ensure that people fully understood the problems that were causing delays.

(18) Mr Rogers said that even though gullies were being cleared more speedily than before, this work was undermined where he lived as soon as the hedge cutting season began, often resulting in the gullies becoming blocked again. He asked whether there was any requirement on the farming community to sweep the roads

after they had cut the hedges. Mr Bourner said that most of the hedges were private. KCC could only control what happened to those hedges that were its own property. There was no need for a TRO for hedge cutting to take place. The only action open to the public was to report the detritus to their District Council, who would then be able to arrange for it to be cleared away. Individual landowners had the cost of clearance charged to them if it could be proved that they were responsible.

(19) Mrs Brown suggested that parishes could recruit “gully wardens” who would be able to clear minor obstructions such as leaves more quickly and only ask for KCC’s assistance if the gully continued to be blocked. This would enable KCC to concentrate on major tasks.

(20) Ms Guthrie said that the Kent Resilience Team was seeking to broaden the Flood Warden role into that of a Community Emergency Warden. The intention was to ensure that the Flood Wardens did not reduce in number due to extended periods of inactivity. They would instead, become the “eyes and ears” within the community, reacting to relatively minor events such as Mrs Brown had described and taking pressure off KCC Highways.

(21) Mr Bourner replied to questions from Mr Rayner by saying that an electronic map detailing all the gullies in Kent was in production and would be broken up into Districts and giving cleansing dates. This map would be made available on the KCC website after the Swale Inspection had taken place towards the end of the current financial year. Hotspots were identified on plans which showed how many enquiries had been received together with any significant details. Multi Agency meetings were taking place. They involved KCC and Southern Water amongst other partners, aiming to bring about closer working.

(22) Mr Rayner then asked what amelioration was available when water flooded onto the roads. Mr Tant replied that this was a matter for his Team and that it depended on the nature of the land. Kent had a varied geography. If the land was permeable, the aim would be to make water go into the ground. When the land was impermeable, different solutions were sought. Often, the land in question would have a historic issue, in which case, an attempt might be made to identify previous solutions. It was proving increasingly difficult to identify easy solutions in the light of the increasing number of storm and flooding events.

(23) Mr Mackonochie noted the discussion about broadening the role of Flood Wardens. He said that the Borough Council supported his Parish and its community with litter picking on highways but would only do so if the speed limit was lower than 30 mph. Mr Bourner replied that no one would be expected to pick leaves off the gullies on A Roads. It was simply too dangerous. The aim was to encourage Wardens to undertake such tasks on residential roads only.

(24) Mr Vickery-Jones referred to new roadworks funded by a developer which were being undertaken in William Street in Herne Bay. Local people had written to KCC on many occasions to complain about the flooding but were not getting any response. He asked who they should talk to. Mr Bourner replied that they should log the enquiry in order to have a reference number that they could refer to. This would lead to the problem being assigned to one of the Engineers in his team who would carry out investigations after establishing contact with the local residents. He offered

to look into this particular matter if Mr Vickery-Jones would like to write to him in greater detail.

(25) RESOLVED that Mr Earl Bourner be thanked for his detailed update report and that its contents be noted.

16. Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans - Presentation by Max Tant
(Item 7)

(1) Mr Tant gave a presentation. The accompanying slides are contained within the electronic papers on the KCC website.

(2) Mr Tant said that the water companies were now required under their latest business plan to prepare Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans during their next Asset Management cycles. “Drainage” referred to the system of pipes and drainage stations that drained water in a sewage undertaker’s area of control. “Wastewater” referred to the plant and process that happened at the Wastewater Treatment Work up to the point where the wastewater was discharged into the environment.

(3) Mr Tant continued that all planning for drainage and wastewater, including replacement and upgrade of pipes, pumping station overhauls, and refurbishment of Wastewater Treatment Works was made on a 5-year statutory business planning cycle. These Plans were submitted for approval to OFWAT and the EA. There were, however, many challenges. The long-term capacity for new development needed to be understood and catered for, the implications of Climate Change needed to be assessed, together with discharges into the natural environment. Furthermore, due to their 5-year nature, these Plans did not provide certainty to Local Authorities when they planned for housing and industrial development.

(4) The water industry had an obligation to produce 25-year plans for water resources, but no corresponding duty for drainage and wastewater. The Government, National Infrastructure Commission and Environment Agency had all strongly urged the water industry to provide more long-term plans. In response, the water industry had brought together many organisations with responsibilities for different aspects of drainage and flooding in order to produce a new framework for long term drainage and wastewater planning. This Framework had been published in Summer 2019 and had now been built into the business plans of every water company in England and Wales. It was expected that this process would become statutory in the future.

(5) Mr Tant then said that Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans were undertaken over three levels. Level 3 was the most local, considering the catchment of Wastewater Treatment Works, including the network areas that supplied it. This could also include surface water. Level 2 involved the aggregation of Level 3 units into a larger unit such as a river basin. Level 1 was for the whole of the water company’s sewerage area. Dividing the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans into these three levels enabled different authorities to engage with the water companies at whichever level was the most appropriate.

(6) Mr Tant went on to describe the Drainage and Waste Management Plan process, which all of the Level 3 catchments were part of. This process was divided into four tiers, the first of which was risk-based screening in terms of 23 published set criteria, all of which had to be met. The second tier was the baseline risk assessment and vulnerability assessment which involved a more comprehensive investigation of the issues, usually involving some form of modelling. The next tiers were problem characterisation and options development.

(7) Mr Tant said that the intention was for the water companies to develop their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans collaboratively with partners on various areas such as flooding, planning and water quality. This process would give other organisations the opportunity to work with the water companies to ensure that their needs were incorporated into drainage and wastewater management planning. A wide range of organisations would benefit from this approach. These included the Lead Local Flood Authorities, Planning Authorities, Highways Authorities, Environmental NGOs, Catchment Improvement Groups, Rivers Trusts, Local Wildlife Trusts and the Environment Agency.

(8) Mr Tant moved on to consideration of the ways in which the process could benefit other stakeholders. It would enable effective planning and support for economic growth and resilient communities and for protection and enhancement of the environment. It would facilitate better partnership working and the collaborative creation of solutions; it would provide multiple benefits to achieving best value to the economy, society and the environment over the long term; and it would provide a long term and robust idea of what the wastewater and drainage structure was going to be.

(9) Mr Tant then informed the Committee that Southern Water the primary sewage undertaker in Kent was planning to undertake Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans on river basins in their Level 2 areas (The Medway, North Kent, the Stour and the Rother) starting in April 2020 and completing them in 2022. Flood Risk Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans were being developed at the same time.

(10) Mr Tant concluded by saying that the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans would examine total lifetime costs of infrastructure investments rather than concentrating purely on the capital expenditure costs.

(11) Mr Bowles said that he was impressed by the amount of officer time and effort that was going into the production of Plans and Strategies. He added that there was a risk that there would be insufficient resources left over to actually put them into practice.

(12) Mr Chittenden said that most of the problems arose in villages such as Staplehurst, Headcorn and Marden in situations where water did not simply drain away. He asked whether the Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans would deal with how sewage was to be removed or simply be limited to issues of water quality. Mr Tant replied that the Plans would look at everything to do with the drainage and wastewater system from the point where the rain was collected until it was discharged into the environment. They would look at capacity, flood history, potential new development, population growth, climate change, pollution incidents, and combined sewer overflows. If any of these issues was identified as a problem,

the catchment would be looked at in greater detail. The water companies were regulated industries who had to get agreement from OFWAT for their general strategy. This could include being asked to cut back on projects in order to reduce costs. Negotiations between OFWAT and the water companies could take lengthy periods. The latest round of negotiations had been particularly long. The Plans would have the benefit of informing the business planning process, which would provide more evidence as to what projects would be undertaken. In addition, OFWAT had now broadened the range of outcomes that drainage should achieve. Historically, the water companies had been asked to concentrate purely on internal flooding to properties. This had now been increased to incorporate external flooding and extreme flooding events.

(13) Mr Chittenden then asked whether OFWAT would enforce against targets. Mr Tant replied that OFWAT was very strict on business plans. Southern Water had made several submissions and OFWAT had ordered their revision. It was unclear at present how Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans were going to be regulated. The process was being scrutinised by the Government, OFWAT, the Environment Agency and the National Infrastructure Commission who would make it very clear if they were not satisfied.

(14) RESOLVED that the report be noted and that an update on progress be submitted to the Committee in 2020.

17. Kent Emergency Planning - Presentation by Tony Harwood and Lisa Guthrie
(Item 8)

(1) Mr Tony Harwood (KCC Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager) and Ms Lisa Guthrie (KCC Kent Resilience Team Manager) gave a joint presentation. The accompanying slides are contained within the electronic papers on the KCC website.

(2) Mr Harwood began his part of the presentation by saying that his role within Emergency Planning related to ensuring the County Council's legal and regulatory compliance with emergency planning and response duties and optimising the resilience of KCC services. The Strategic HQ Emergency Planning Team that he managed was small but dedicated. It planned for and responded to a wide range of threats and incidents.

(3) Mr Harwood explained that the overarching legislation to which his Team worked was the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which placed a duty on the Local Authority and other partners to put in place appropriate Emergency Plans and to undertake business continuity planning for both the Authority itself as well as supporting the resilience of the private and voluntary sectors. This legislation included warning and informing the general public. A significant element of the Team's role involved day-to-day activities in response to emergencies.

(4) Mr Harwood then showed a slide showing a breakdown of the type of calls registered on the Duty Emergency Planning Officer logging system. This showed that the largest portion of calls received related to coastal and fluvial flooding events. It also showed a whole range of responses to events such as electricity outages,

pollution incidents and road traffic incidents. Some 215 Alerts had been received since 1 April 2019. This equated to roughly 1 alert each day.

(5) Kent's emergency planning profile was partly dictated by the County's geographical location. Kent could be described as a "Front Line County" strongly influenced by its proximity to continental Europe as exemplified by its vulnerability to major events such as those experienced during the 2nd World War, the Herald of Free Enterprise tragedy and latterly EU withdrawal planning. The Herald of Free Enterprise had capsized in Belgian waters in March 1987, but its impact on the County's communities, particularly in East Kent had been of such magnitude that an IT tracking database had needed to be built up from scratch and a dedicated KCC established in order to respond to the event in all its traumatic complexity.

(6) Mr Harwood said that effective planning for emergencies was crucial. These plans were living documents, needing to be refined and updated in the light of a rapidly changing world and experience. Some 14 KCC emergency plans were currently in operation. Most of these were generic, whilst others (such as the plans for major accident hazards, gas pipelines, major industrial sites and for radiation incidents) were specific and highly detailed. The generic emergency plans contained a command and control model which could be implemented no matter what the nature of the event that was being responded to.

(7) Mr Harwood continued by saying that business continuity planning was another essential aspect of his team's work. Business continuity plans played a vital role in ensuring that businesses and services were able to continue to operate in the event of disruption. Failure to plan effectively would have a significant detrimental impact on the community. KCC operated 172 service specific business continuity plans. All of them were kept fully up to date by using a model template and monitoring system that was refined whenever circumstances changed.

(8) Mr Harwood then said that KCC's own command and control model operated along similar lines to that of key partners and the Kent Resilience Forum, ensuring that the Authority's own ability to respond was uncompromised and could dovetail with partners. One of the roles of KCC's command and control system was to prevent the County Council from straying beyond those areas of response that were its responsibility.

(9) Mr Harwood said that the County Emergency Centre was available 24 hours each day. It operated a weekly command rota.

(10) All levels of response had to be considered. The strategic policy making role was covered by the Duty Director. Whenever an event occurred, the Duty Emergency Planning Officer would establish contact with the Duty Director in order that strategic oversight was in place and that elected Members were informed as appropriate. On-call Tactical Managers (drawn from KCC's middle management) fulfilled a generic role, utilising their specialist competencies. The operational level was fulfilled by the on-call Emergency Response Team, consisting of administrators, IT specialists and operational responders. The Emergency Response Teams also participated in regular exercises and training events.

(11) Mr Harwood concluded by explaining the role of the on-call Recovery Director whose role in County-wide or multi-District events was to lead multi-agency work to

help communities, families and individuals re-establish their lives in the aftermath of an emergency.

(12) Ms Guthrie's part of the presentation concentrated on the Kent Resilience Team, which KCC was fully committed to. It had been set up in 2014 and consisted of Emergency Planning Officers from KCC, Kent Fire and Rescue and Kent Police. Its Interim Head was Mr Matthew Deadman from Kent Fire and Rescue as Ms Fiona Gaffney had been seconded to fill the Full Time Kent Brexit Co-ordinator role until the end of January 2020. There were three managers, one from each of the three main partners. Membership of the Team also included some multi-agency funded posts.

(13) The decision to form the Kent Resilience Team had been taken in 2014 in order to extend the work of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme (JESIP) in the co-ordination of planning, training and response. The Kent Resilience Team was able to pool agencies together and co-locate them, bringing about better co-ordination and communication and thereby facilitate improved response activity.

(14) Ms Guthrie said that the Kent Resilience Team was based at Kent Fire and rescue HQ at The Godlands in Tovil. It had several levels of governance, including a Governance Board, a Steering Group, an Executive Board and a Delivery Board. KCC's representatives on these Boards were Mr P M Hill (Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services), Mr Mike Overbeke (Head of Public Protection), Mrs Barbara Cooper (Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport), Ms Fiona Gaffney and Ms Lisa Guthrie respectively.

(15) Ms Guthrie said that her Section within the Kent Resilience Team consisted of KCC Resilience Officers who were funded through a Service Delivery Agreement between KCC and 9 of the Districts. They worked closely with these Districts, carrying out their risk assessments, preparing their emergency plans and providing training.

(16) The resilience officers also organised local exercises, an example of which was a flooding scenario named *Operation Saracen* which had taken place in Aylesford during June. It had involved Flood Wardens and Local Councillors and had highlighted both the risk of flooding to the Village and the importance of its Flood Wardens.

(17) The Kent Resilience Team was also working through the Local Flood Plan templates with the District Authorities in the light of recent national changes produced by DEFRA. They were also working with the Parish Councils on their own local Emergency and Flood Plans.

(18) Ms Guthrie said that her role also involved linking with the quarterly meetings of the Local Authority Emergency Planning Group which consisted of the local District emergency planning officers. This facilitated the key factor of uniformity of approach whilst also enabling the officers to become familiar with one another. She added that the importance of being able to ask "how are you?" instead of "who are you?" should not be underestimated.

(19) The Kent Resilience Team also linked to the *South East Seven*, who were the other Local Resilience Forums in the South East area. The value of this was to be measured through the development of relationships and the sharing of best practice. In practical terms, it also facilitated mutual aid and cross-border working with other counties such as West Sussex as well as Medway.

(20) The Kent Resilience Team also delivered a training programme to all Category 1 and 2 Responders. The latter included the Kent Voluntary Sector. Ms Guthrie said that the Kent Resilience Team worked closely with the Kent Voluntary Sector Emergency Group, which included organisations such as South East 4x4, the Salvation Army and the British Red Cross.

(21) Ms Guthrie said that all KCC resilience officers (whether part of the Kent Resilience Team or KCC itself) were Duty Emergency Officers who were on-call at all times. Their task was to receive the Alert and share the information both within KCC and externally. They acted as the first port of call for Blue Light emergencies, passing the data on to the appropriate authority and co-ordinating the response. They acted as advisers to the KCC Duty and Recovery Directors, represented KCC within multi-agency command and control structures, supported welfare centre operations and the Local Authority Co-ordinating Group Operations and Emergency Centres.

(22) Ms Guthrie then explained that each District Council had its own Emergency Centre. These were set up to be identical to the County Emergency Centre and each other. This meant that any Officer from any Authority would be familiar immediately with the surroundings.

(23) Duty Officers could also be Chairs of the Severe Weather Advisory Groups (SWAGs). These would often be set up in advance if Warnings were received from the Met Office or the EA. SWAGs would commence the strategic planning for the coming event by considering its likely impact and the resources available for the response. Depending on the circumstances, the SWAGs could then become a more formal Tactical Co-ordination Group led by a Silver Commander.

(24) Ms Guthrie then said that her section within the Kent Resilience Team worked closely with the KCC Resilience Team. Their Business Plans were linked, and they provided planning, training and exercising whilst also reviewing plans for lessons to be learned following major national and local events or following changes in national statutory guidance.

(25) Ms Guthrie went on to say that the Kent Resilience Team set up task and finish groups to address policy and practice matters. She explained that flooding had an impact or influence on many of the risks that were planned for. She gave examples such as pandemics, loss of utilities and structural collapse.

(26) Ms Guthrie turned to the issue of winter preparations. The Kent Resilience Team undertook an annual review of the resources available in the Districts and the Voluntary Sector including 4 x 4s, bedding and blanket stocks. They also organised Winter Preparedness Workshops involving the EA, the Met Office, KCC Highways, KCC Social Care, the NHS and the Voluntary Sector to focus on roles and expectations.

(27) Ms Guthrie continued by setting out priorities for future Winter Preparedness work. There would be a strong focus on community resilience. *The What If?* Community Resilience Programme in West Sussex was an example of best practice in this area in that it involved contributions at every level of the community, engaging with people from a very early age. The role of flood wardens would be expanded. National guidance had been developed since the Grenfell Tower disaster and would inform the process of recruiting spontaneous volunteers. Reservoir planning was being developed with the Districts, particularly with Ashford BC.

(28) Ms Guthrie concluded by saying that although the Kent Resilience Team was multi-agency in composition, KCC's priorities were very well represented and progressed within the Kent Resilience Team.

(29) Mr Rayner asked about arrangements with Medway Council in respect of the wreck of the SS Montgomery which had sunk off the coast of Sheerness in 1944 and was full of high explosives and ammunition. He asked the same question in respect of the potential risk of an explosion at the Gas Import Terminal on the Isle of Grain.

(30) Ms Guthrie confirmed that Kent and Medway worked closely together. She explained that the Isle of Grain Terminal was the responsibility of Medway Council under the *Control of Major Accident Hazards* (COMAH) Regulations. A specific evacuation plan had been developed for the Isle of Grain in the event of an explosion or other emergency.

(31) Mr Deadman informed the Committee that the SS Montgomery was a hazard which came under the jurisdiction of the *Receiver of Wreck*. She was currently reviewing the risk posed by the SS Montgomery. Once this review had been completed, the Kent Resilience Team would carry out its own review of its ability to respond if an event affecting the County were to occur.

(32) Mr Vickery-Jones said that Canterbury CC had received an application for the construction of a Hydrogen Production Plant in Herne Bay. He asked whether the Kent Resilience Team's role was to give an opinion on the safety before, during or after the planning process. Mr Harwood replied that the KCC Resilience and Emergency Planning Team had the role of commenting on spatial plans and large applications, which included the application described. KCC Emergency Planning received a regular list of District and County planning applications and it was an onerous but necessary task to identify those which required them to comment as appropriate. It was far preferable to ensure that risks to safety were identified early during the planning process rather than at a later stage.

(33) RESOLVED that Mr Tony Harwood and Ms Lisa Guthrie be thanked for their presentations and that their content be noted.

18. Environment Agency and Met Office Alerts and Warnings and KCC severe weather response activity since the last meeting
(Item 9)

(1) Mr Harwood introduced the report. He informed the Committee that since publication of the papers there had been an additional 5 flood alerts issued by the Environment Agency, giving a total of 47 flood alerts and 5 warnings (9 fluvial and 43 coastal) since the last meeting (paragraph 2.4). The overall figure of 52 alerts and warnings contrasted dramatically with the figure of 4 alerts for the same period in 2018.

(2) Mr Harwood also updated the number of Met Office severe weather warnings in paragraph 2.5 to 24 (16 for rain and 4 for thunderstorms).

(3) Mr Harwood then corrected the dates in paragraph 2.8 of the report by saying that the Environment Agency's Incident Room had operated from Sunday, 29 September through to Wednesday, 2 October.

(4) Mr Harwood said that an extremely intense rainfall event had taken place, on Friday, 8 November in the Folkestone area leading to property flooding. The response to this event had involved unblocking gullies and intervening to support vulnerable residents. The recovery and de-brief phases were now in operation.

(5) The relatively dry summer of 2019 had been followed by a damp October and early November. It was still unclear whether groundwater and river recharge measures would need to be taken, as further intense rainfall was still needed in order to improve the water resource position.

(6) RESOLVED that the warnings received since the last meeting of the Committee be noted.