

From: Susan Carey, Cabinet Member for Environment
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Committee - 15 September 2020

Subject: Kent flood defence infrastructure

Non-Key decision

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: All Divisions

Summary: The Environment Agency (EA) will attend the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee to present a summary of the flooding over winter 2019-20, to provide an update on the delivery of the Leigh Flood Storage Area scheme and to provide an overview of the future pipeline of flood defence investment in Kent.

Recommendation:

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and presentation from the Environment Agency.

1. Background

1.1 At the March 2020 meeting of the Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee, an update was provided on Resilience and Emergency Planning. In response to queries relating to flood defence infrastructure, the Corporate Director (Growth, Environment and Transport) informed Members that the matter fell within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Environment, and agreed for a paper on flood defence infrastructure to be presented at a future meeting of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.

2. Introduction

2.1 In December 2019 and February 2020, Kent was impacted by storms including Ciara and Dennis which caused some flooding in parts of the county. A summary of these events is provided below:

December Flooding (19th – 22nd December) - Significant surface water, highway and fluvial flood impacts were felt across the County resulting in

property flooding across parts of the Low Weald and in North West Kent. The Environment Agency reported 65 properties flooded as a result of fluvial or surface water flows throughout this period. Around 150 homes in Little Venice, Yalding were evacuated on Saturday 21st due to rising levels on the River Medway.

Storm Ciara (8th – 9th February) – High winds of up to 73mph (recorded at Langdon Bay, Dover) followed by heavy rainfall impacted Kent through this weekend. Fluvial flooding affected parts of West Kent, resulting in fluvial and surface water flood damage to approximately 68 properties. Damage to coastal defences also occurred in the Lydd area, triggering significant recovery activity by the EA.

Storm Dennis (15th – 16th February) – Less than a week after Ciara, Storm Dennis struck the UK on 15th February bringing further strong winds (67 mph recorded at Manston) and heavy rainfall (53.3mm recorded at Eden Vale) exacerbating storm and flooding impacts and limiting recovery from Ciara. Around 150 mobile homes at Little Venice, Yalding were pre-emptively evacuated in response to Flood Warnings. A further four properties were affected by flooding in West Kent and approximately 1,000 properties were left without power. Seawater ingress impacts were recorded near Lydd.

- 2.2 The Environment Agency (EA) will attend the Cabinet Committee meeting to present an overview of its response to the flooding.
- 2.3 The EA will also provide an update on the delivery of the Leigh Flood Storage Area scheme and take the opportunity to provide Members with an overview of the future pipeline of flood defence schemes which it is planning to deliver in the next investment round (2021-27).
- 2.4 The flood risk management work of the EA is overseen by Regional Flood and Coastal Committees (RFCCs). The role of RFCCs is to review and approve the programme of work of the regional EA teams. Kent is a member of the Southern RFCC and we are represented by three members:
 - Tony Hills
 - Andrew Bowles
 - Liz Hurst

There are ten members on the Southern RFCC from the other county and unitary authorities in the Region, eight independent members, a member from Southern Water and a Chair, Dr Martin Hurst.

3 Flooding in Kent

- 3.1 The EA's summary of the winter 2019-20 response can be found at Appendix 1.

4 Leigh Flood Storage Area

- 4.1 After the flooding in 2013/14 on the River Medway, Kent County Council (KCC) supported the EA to investigate options to reduce the flood risk. Following a study of options to manage the risks in the area, a scheme to increase the size of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and provide an embankment to protect Hildenborough was proposed.

4.2 The scheme costs approximately £15.5m. KCC has agreed to contribute £2.5m to the delivery of this scheme. This contribution is reflected in the 2020-21 to 2022-23 Capital Investment Plans for the Growth, Environment and Transport Directorate, as set out in the Budget Book 2020-21 approved by County Council on 13 February 2020.

4.3 The EA has provided an update on the progress of the Leigh and Hildenborough Scheme and this can be found at Appendix 2.

5 Flood defence investment

5.1 An overview of the EA's future pipeline of flood defence schemes for delivery in the next investment round (2021-27) can be found at Appendix 3.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report and presentation from the Environment Agency.

7. Contact details

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