

To: Kent Flood Risk Management Committee – 9th March 2022

From: Ben Watts, General Counsel
Simon Jones, Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement
Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

Subject: Update on Little Venice Country Park and Marina

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: To update the Committee on Little Venice Country Park and Marina

1. Background

- 1.1 The issue of Little Venice was raised during the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee meeting on 9 March 2020.
- 1.2 A Virtual site visit was held on 23 September 2020. Notes of this visit were included within the report to the November 2020 meeting of the Committee **(Appendix 1)**.
- 1.3 The Committee received an update report on 8 July 2021 where it was agreed that a further update would be considered in November or March.
- 1.4 A meeting was held on 6 December 2021. It was attended by the officers who serve this Committee (Tony Harwood, Max Tant and Andrew Tait), the Site Owner, the Site Manager as well as representatives from Maidstone BC, Yalding PC, Collier Street PC, the Environment Agency, Kent Resilience Forum and Kent Fire and Rescue. The notes of this meeting are contained at **Appendix 2**.

2. The meeting on 6 December 2021.

- 2.1 The meeting on 6 December considered the site's resilience and emergency plan as well as broader issues relating to flooding in the Parishes of Yalding and Collier Street.
- 2.2 All parties agreed that very good progress had been made in terms of achieving enhanced preparedness to warn, inform and evacuate residents of Little Venice. It was particularly important to note that the Environment Agency has worked together with the site owner and that they considered the Evacuation Plan to be fit for purpose.

- 2.3 The meeting identified four issues that needed to be either improved or monitored. These were:-
- (a) Early Notification
 - (b) Communication
 - (c) Resilience of the Utility Networks
 - (d) Enforcement of Road Closures.
- 2.4 The identified issues relate mainly to Yalding and Collier Street themselves but, by implication, are matters which also impact on the Little Venice site.
- 2.5 The risk arising from flooding at the Little Venice site cannot be eliminated, but some of the impacts are capable of being mitigated through sound planning, improved notification, good communication and proactive testing.
- 2.6 The Committee has expressed its concern over the safety of the most vulnerable residents, accompanied by the hope that a wider re-organisation of the site layout can take place. This is not in the gift of any of the agencies to insist upon, due to the nature of the historic planning permission and the rights and wishes of the residents themselves. Nevertheless, the potential to reconsider the layout of the site has been discussed with the local planning authority and would be a significant feature in the consideration of any future planning application.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 The Committee is invited to note the progress made together with any matters arising from the discussion with the site landowner.

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