

From: Mike Hill, Cabinet Member for Community Services
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To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 5 December 2014

Subject: Christmas/New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods – Progress Report

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Divisions: All

Summary: This report provides the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee with an update on progress being made to deliver the 17 recommendations in the Christmas/New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods – Lessons Learnt report that was endorsed by Cabinet on 7 July 2014; a further update was reported to Cabinet on 13 October.

Recommendation: The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to note the progress being made against the 17 lessons learnt recommendations.

1. Introduction

1.1 Following the severe weather experienced over Christmas and New Year 2013-14, and based on a wide range of public consultations and internal and external debriefs, a comprehensive lessons learnt report was presented to, and approved by, Cabinet on 7 July 2014 and again on 13 October.

1.2 The report included 17 recommendations, and this report provides the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee with an update on progress made to date against these recommendations.

1.3 It also provides an update on recent developments relating to the implementation of sustainable urban drainage policy and practice.

2. Progress Report

2.1 Significant progress has been made by KCC and our multi-agency partners in implementing all of the recommendations in the 'lessons learnt' report. A detailed summary against each of these is provided at **Annex 1**. Key highlights can be summarised as follows:

2.2 Management action: A series of internal and partnership debriefs have been carried out and management structures established to deliver the recommendations identified in these reports. Within KCC, a cross-directorate Corporate Resilience Steering Group has been established, with Director-level representation. Similarly, the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) has established a multi-agency Pan-Kent Flood Group, chaired by the Environment Agency. Terms of reference for both groups have been agreed, action plans drawn-up and are being implemented. Internal and external governance/reporting lines have been established to ensure appropriate

member and senior officer oversight. Additionally, the multi-agency Strategic Recovery Coordination Group, chaired by the Director of Environment, Planning and Enforcement, was reconvened on 23 September, to review lessons learnt, current progress and preparations for winter 2014-15. Furthermore, the KRF used its annual seminar at the East Malling Conference Centre on 14 November to provide a further health check on partners' preparations to all agencies engaged with civil protection, including appropriate elected members.

2.3 Plans: Comprehensive reviews of existing single and multi-agency emergency plans have been carried out, including generic plans and those specific for dealing with flooding and severe weather. The KCC Major Emergency and Flood Response Plans have been reviewed and re-published and the suite of multi-agency flood plans will be re-published in the coming months. Additional new plans have also been drawn-up as a result of lessons learnt e.g. KCC Highways, Transportation & Waste have developed new Severe Weather plans and a specific flood plan has been developed for Little Venice Caravan Park, which flooded several times over Christmas/New Year.

2.4 Training & exercising: Since January 2014, 76 multi-agency training sessions and exercises have been/will be run in Kent, to familiarise many hundreds of staff from across the KRF partnership in a variety of emergency response roles (from senior officers to front-line staff) and scenarios. The Environment Agency, with support from the Kent Resilience Team, has also trained over 140 flood wardens across the county. Internally within KCC a fundamental review of key emergency response roles has been undertaken and training needs identified. The cross-directorate Corporate Resilience Steering Group have identified staff to be trained and a series of training & exercise sessions (supported by e-learning and briefings) are now in place. This includes Gold (strategic) level training for Corporate Directors (to include the development of an on-call rota) and Silver (tactical) training for Heads of Service and senior managers (40 delegates identified with 20 in the initial tranche of training). An initial emergency planning awareness training pilot ran in September, with 37 managers participating from across KCC and this has now been developed into an e-learning module which will be rolled out shortly. Additionally, all KCC Community Wardens are now trained as Incident Liaison Officers with 12 vans and 2 4x4 vehicles equipped with emergency response equipment for deployment to affected communities in the event of an emergency. Eighty-five KCC officers have also signed up to further refresher training in preparation for winter and there are a further 53 officers in KCC who have been put forward for incident liaison officer training and these will be incorporated into the Kent Resilience Team annual training programme.

2.5 Community engagement: A long-standing programme of multi-agency work to develop community-level emergency plans and flood plans has continued apace, with many local plans now in place or under development in key communities at risk of flooding. This approach has been complemented by a range of other activities to encourage greater awareness and preparedness for flooding and other emergencies, including a series of 'flood fairs' held across the county and the establishment of Multi-Agency Flood Alleviation Technical Working Groups to understand and tackle complex flood risk issues. 42 volunteers from Yalding, East Peckham, Tonbridge & Hildenborough have also been trained and equipped and further sessions are planned for other parts of the county. Additionally, 15,000 copies of a newly-published booklet '*What should I do in an emergency?*' have been distributed through

a variety channels and access points. A wider awareness campaign is on-going, linked to the national 'Get Ready for Winter' campaign.

2.6 Financial investment & flood risk management: £8.6m central government grant received by KCC in tranche 1 of the 'Severe Weather Recovery Scheme' to help repair damaged highways infrastructure. A further £499,000 has been received in tranche 2. KCC Highways & Transportation is investing an additional £3m to enable the delivery of 120 drainage improvement schemes in 2014/15. KCC is working with the EA, to identify strategic schemes in Kent that require partnership funding. River Medway and Beult Flood Defence Schemes are being taken through to feasibility stage, with KCC investment of £205,000 and Maidstone Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council providing £100,000 in partnership funding each. KCC are also supporting Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in applying for round 2 of the Local Growth Fund for the Leigh and East Peckham schemes.

3. Recommendation

The Environment and Transportation Cabinet Committee is asked to note the progress being made against the 17 lessons learnt recommendations.

4. Background Documents

Christmas/New Year 2013-14 Storms & Floods - Final Report (7 July 2014)

Report <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s47250/Item%20%20-%20Flooding.pdf>

Appendix <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s47251/Item%20%20-%20Appendix.pdf>

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