

## FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

MONDAY, 2 OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Jesse Grey (Chairman), Malcolm Beer, Richard Kellaway, Burfitt, Clasper, Martin Coker and Jim Cooke

Also in attendance: Denise Kinsella, Brianne Vally, Arthur Rabjohn

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Simon Lavin, Sue Fox

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lenton, Parish Councillors Larcombe and Williams and Cyril Mitkov, Thames Water.

### MINUTES

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the Part I minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2017 be approved.**

Brianne from the Environment Agency stated that the timeline for the RTS modelling work mentioned at the previous meeting was slightly misleading as the scheme had not gone through the planning stage at that point. She also wanted to highlight that the Draft EA Report on widbrook culvert had been discussed and the EA was carrying out modelling work in areas in Bisham.

### UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Brianne Vally stated the South East of the country had only received 76% of the usual volumes of rainfall in September 2017 following prolonged periods of dry weather. The EA were now preparing for a possible second dry winter.

Two flooding campaigns were underway to target younger people. The EA was being more reactive to encourage people to become better prepared for flooding events.

Thames modelling with draft final outputs were underway but, Brianne could not confirm the timescale for publication.

There was no update on the RTS but, Members could sign up to the RTS Newsletter for regular updates or announcements. Brianne added that the EA was working towards the next funding checkpoint.

Brianne confirmed the objective for the Flooding Campaign targeting younger people was to raise awareness of flooding, to encourage younger people to sign up to flood warnings. The target age group was 18-34 years of age, although the message was relevant for all ages. The Chairman stated it was to try and educate people to enable them to help themselves.

PCllr Clasper requested the outcome of the Autumn Treasury checkpoint but, Brianne was unable to provide an answer at that time.

## UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Denise Kinsella provided Members with the Thames Water update which included the following main points:

- The Bin It, Don't Block It campaign was continuing in November 2017 with the public being reminded that fatbergs block sewers.
- Thames Water were preparing for winter and the logistic centre was up and running should it be required.
- Thames Water were monitoring ground water levels and would continue to closely monitor them throughout the winter months.

## UPDATE FROM RBWM

Sue Fox, Senior Project Manager stated that a report regarding RTS Scheme funding was presented at Full Council where funding was sought for the Lower Thames Scheme from the Borough for £10m. Full Council approved funding over four years from the Capital Programme and that would form the contribution for costs of delivering the scheme. An agreement in principal was also in place for a RTS Levy and legislation needed to be enacted to allow the levy to be charged. The Borough would collect the charge on behalf of the EA. Sue Fox confirmed it would be a four year Capital Programme which would begin in 2021.

Cllr Beer stated he felt the levy was outrageous as residents paid their taxes so it was unfair to tax them further to pay for dealing with someone else's water issues. The Borough was having to look after water that came from elsewhere and it was a national issue. As a Flood Group, the Forum should be taking it up with MPs. The Flood Group were the experts on flood matters and should be taking that forward. Those uphill in Sunningdale did not get flooding but were having to contribute and so should other areas of the country. The Borough was paying for the discharge and management of water which was coming from elsewhere. The Chairman confirmed there were 12 partners to the scheme and some were paying more than others towards the scheme. It was not isolated just to the Borough. Sue Fox confirmed the levy was for the continuing maintenance of the scheme.

Sue Fox stated the EA continued to work on the modelling for Widbrook and would be sharing the draft report with the Council and Cookham parish Council. Once the data had been compiled, next steps would be confirmed.

- ❖ **Action** – Sue Fox, Senior Project Manager to confirm if the funding for the feasibility study of the Widbrook scheme was to be funded from S106 contributions or other funding available.

PCllr Clasper stated the future of operation of the RTS and control of the operation was not a new issue. The Jubilee River Scheme was not properly operated in 2003 or 2014 and there were correspondence on that with Ian Thompson. It was very important that the channels of the scheme be viewed together. The question was raised as there were lots of doubts about how all the channels would be operated. The Chairman said he did not want to go over old ground and if people felt it was not operated properly, they could raise that with the EA. Many reports had been produced on the issues and they always came back as operating well. The Borough also felt the operation was ok.

Brianne Vally confirmed there had been no agreement on whether or not the Canal and River Trust would have a role in the RTS. There had been discussions but no decision had been made.

PCllr Clasper stated the Wraysbury Drain appeared to have run dry. The Chairman confirmed it dried up almost every summer. Simon Lavin, Project Centre confirmed there was a history of the drain drying out in recent years as very little water was coming through from streams.

Arthur Rabjohn gave a brief presentation on Flood resilience and explained that flood resilience was at the heart of emergency planning. A resilient community was a safe and vibrant community. The Council Plan was to support residents to get more involved and enable the volunteer sector to flourish so that they are at the forefront to be able to address needs of the community.

The resilient communities plan set out the aims and included a warning and information scheme which involved getting as many residents signed up as possible. Arthur's team had 15 years' experience in flooding which would help property owners prepare for flooding. Flooding volunteers would implement flood plans.

Arthur Rabjohn requested Members to read the documents on emergency planning when they were available and to work with him to ensure the plans were put into place. He added that there were several sites within the Borough that had been identified to receive temporary flood defences to help during times of flooding and military units had been trained to install and operate them. This would reduce the risk of flooding to properties but, owners still had to do some work to protect their properties. The temporary flood barriers would not stop ground water flooding.

Temporary flood defences would be deployed and distributed by articulated lorry to five locations in the borough and would also need a traffic management plan. The command centre was to be based at Tinkers Lane in Windsor but could also be set up in the Town Hall if required. There would also be working recovery groups to set up and get everything running following a flood event.

The Chairman stated the message was for home owners to take greater responsibility to secure their properties. He was pleased that five areas had been identified for temporary flood defences which would help protect the most vulnerable areas.

Arthur Rabjohn confirmed that the five areas were not chosen because they had been flooded before, they were identified by the EA as the most effective areas with the greatest positive impact. Flood warnings would trigger the use of the barriers and the Chairman stated there was usually a four day flood warning in the Borough due to the slow rising nature of the Thames. He added that some wards were way ahead with their flood plans and encouraged other wards to produce their plans so they were prepared. Dick Scarff confirmed the Parishes signed up for flood alerts so they could be ready.

Arthur Rabjohn stated he wanted to help wards recruit younger volunteers to train them as they moved into the area. He wanted the Flood Group to have volunteers in place to help set up and implement flood plans. The five areas for the temporary barriers were there and resourced for deployment and construction. Volunteers needed to liaise with the Borough and the EA to enable things such as traffic management plans.

Arthur Rabjohn confirmed that it was up to the emergency services to decide where the command post was located during a flooding event. The command centre would have a Council presence but it would be their command post structure the Council would work with.

PCllr Clasper stated although it was the owners responsibility to protect their properties, he did not feel the message was getting through to the owners. He had a meeting with PCllr Hewer and they discussed funding for resilience measures and various other funding for home owners to protect their homes. Arthur Rabjohn confirmed he was looking into all and any available funding for that area. Brianne Vally stated that as part of the RTS, there were linked projects regarding local resilience measures and a lot of areas were being looked at for property protection.

#### PARISH FLOOD GROUP UPDATE

Members noted that Arthur Rabjohn was looking into using a bus that was suitable in Bisham / Cookham during a flood event that would not exacerbate flooding for properties. Arthur Rabjohn confirmed that Duck Tours were on the radar should they ever be needed.

Simon Lavin, Flood Manager - Project Centre was still the point of contact regarding all things flooding. He confirmed his email address as [Simon.Lavin@projectcentre.co.uk](mailto:Simon.Lavin@projectcentre.co.uk)

#### ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEEETING.

Members had previously requested a central email address to contact the Council for flooding matters. The email address was confirmed as [highways@rbwm.gov.uk](mailto:highways@rbwm.gov.uk)

#### DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meeting dates were noted as followed:

- 18 January 2018
- 3 April 2018

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 7.30 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....