

FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

THURSDAY, 24 JANUARY 2019

PRESENT: Councillors John Lenton, Malcolm Beer, Burfitt, Clasper, Martin.Coker, Jim Cooke, Mike Williams and Cannon (Chairman)

Also in attendance: Alice Keeping (Thames Water), Matthew Peapell (Thames Water) and Scott Salmon (Environment Agency).

Officers: Wendy Binmore and Simon Lavin

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Richard Kellaway.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2018 be approved following the addition of Parish Councillors Ian Thompson and Ewan Larcombe to the attendance list.

ACTIONS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

The EA to return to the Flood Liaison Group with an update on the modelling work and TFB information as soon as possible.

Scott Salmon from the Environment Agency (EA) stated the Temporary Flood Barriers (TFB) required more work and he would provide a full update during the main item on the agenda.

Modelling Work – the link to the modelling work had been circulated to Members and Scott Salmon suggested leaving the modelling work as a standing item so it could be continually updated.

The EA to circulate a list of possible funding options for capital projects that the Council could apply for.

Scott Salmon explained that the contact for a list of external funding options was Sean Maskrey. It was Sean Maskrey's dedicated role to locate funding streams for Councils. Henry Clasper stated the action was to list specific funding options. Scott Salmon responded he would request list from Sean to be circulated prior to the next meeting.

Scott Salmon raised this action again with the chair later in the meeting and the action was cancelled with the Chairman directing action that parish council's should work with the Borough on local projects. The council would then work with the EA liaison, Shaun Maskrey as to funding options. Brian Vally could work with parish groups if required.

Brianne Vally from the EA to circulate the EA's Response to the Worsfold Review., and also for Brianne Vally to send the weblink to Members so they can provide feedback on the EAs asset management plan.

Scott Salmon confirmed the EAs response to the Worsfold Review had been circulated via the Flood Liaison Group's clerk and that the weblink had also been circulated. He added the Asset Management Plan was aiming to increase transparency and he requested to keep the Asset

Management Plan as a standing item so the EA could bring an update back to the Group if there were any developments.

Ian Thompson said he had three issues with the spreadsheet. Brianne Vally had responded to some of them but he requested a discussion on the points raised as some related to Thames Water and others related to the Borough. He had requested meetings with Sue Fox at the Borough and were looking forward to an early response. He stated his issues only related to Datchet. Scott Salmon responded that may not be something that the EA would add to the Asset Management Plan so they could be a standalone item.

Brianne Vally from the EA to bring an item to the next Flood Liaison Group on dredging of the Thames.

Scott Salmon explained Ewan Larcombe had concerns regarding bed levels of the Thames. Dredging did take place to maintain navigation rights to the Thames which was just to keep part of the waterways clear for navigation. Dredging had not been ruled out if it helped land drainage, but that was on a case by case basis; regular dredging was unlike to occur again. However, if Members had concerns they could report them; any concerns reported should be reported using the reporting system so that there was a record of it.

Councillor Lenton said he had been told that dredging had been abandoned as the Thames was self-scouring. Scott Salmon responded a report had been published after the last major flooding event that confirmed the Thames was self-scouring but, he was not saying it did not need dredging, he said the EA would dredge in certain locations on a case by case basis.

Ian Thompson stated he had read the Halcrow report that stated when there was a large flood event, the water in the Thames moved silt into other places which reduced navigation ability which was why local dig outs occurred. He said he had over 10 years of barometric surveys which showed silt volumes remained the same but, not in the same places. There needed to be consideration of how the situation moved forward. Scott Salmon confirmed he did not disagree with any of the viewpoints raised.

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Scott Salmon from the Environment Agency (EA) stated he had circulated the latest River Thames Scheme (RTS) update with the only change being the funding figure was up to £354m. There would be further meetings with Heathrow as there were two major projects on the horizon; one which involved continuing excavation works and the other was for preparations for construction. In terms of progressing the RTS, there were issues with funding and as it was a critical scheme, he urged all Members to support the scheme as much as possible. Scott Salmon stated the scheme was heading towards the pre-application stage with archaeological sites being recorded. Statutory planning consultations would begin at the end of 2020 at the earliest.

Councillor Beer stated funding was a problem. RBWM had committed to contributing but, a lot of local authorities had committed less money and there were county councils such as Surrey that had not committed any funding yet. The scheme should be nationally funded instead of leaving it all to river authorities. He felt the Borough was being charged for dealing with water that had come from other areas that were not being charged. Councillor Beer said he was watching what was happening at Heathrow and there was a proposal to bridge over the M25 instead of tunnelling underneath it which meant the water would need to be rerouted.

Councillor Beer asked as Heathrow were going through a Development Control Order, could the RTS also go through that process in order to speed up the development. Simon Lavin, Flood Risk Manager stated major construction rules would not apply but he did anticipate the RTS going to a public enquiry. Scott Salmon confirmed as the RTS went through planning, it would have to go through one hub at Surrey County Council. The process could be split

between a county council and a unitary authority but, his understanding was that the scheme would go to a hub with involvement from the Royal Borough so it had a single point of contact.

- ❖ **Action** – Brianne Vally to invite someone from the RTS scheme to attend the next Flood Group meeting to answer questions on how the RTS will pass through the planning phase

Harry Clasper asked if there was any prospect of a conclusion on land acquisitions. Scott Salmon confirmed the scheme would not pass through any planning process unless all of those issues were resolved. He also confirmed that £354m had already been raised towards the scheme. The Chairman said the new Leader of Surrey County Council had been in touch regarding the RTS and was looking into how much money they could commit to the scheme.

Councillor Beer stated he had received a surprise call before Christmas to meet EA representatives on a trip in an EA boat. He was concerned about the number of houseboats on the Thames and a monstrosity was beginning to appear at Old Windsor. People were very concerned about planning issues and he wanted feedback. The answer he received while on the boat was the main concern was for navigation and the EA were not concerned about planning as long as the houseboats did not obstruct the Thames Path. Councillor Beer said he then raised it with Borough Planning Officers and he hoped the issue would be raised within the Traveller Plan. Ian Thompson said he was a member of a river users group and that the problem of houseboats were correct as explained by Councillor Beer but, the situation had been made worse by Richmond and Twickenham councils as they had cleared their banks and moved them on to our area. The Chairman said there were approximately 8-10 boats in Datchet and there were similar numbers in Windsor and Wraybury. They would need to be addressed in the Traveller Plan. Harry Clasper stated any mooring had to have a licence from the EA. Martin Coker said it reminded him of the way people in mobile homes were treated years ago before legislation. The people in houseboats should have security of tenure and if the Borough moved them on, where would they go? The Chairman commented a lot of the houseboats lived there with residential moorings; it was the travelling ones that were causing a problem. Scott Salmon said if any of the boats were in breach of any law, they should be treated the same without fear or favour. The EA had a good enforcement team and they enforced licensing and registration on the Thames and would also interrogate any boat not complying. If a pontoon or pier was added, that should be flagged to the technical team as it could pose a flood risk and they do require permits. He reiterated that anything to be reported should be reported through the reporting system so it could be accurately logged and a case built. Scott Salmon added that sometimes people just wanted to fall below the radar and were entitled to live a lifestyle where they could move around unnoticed; however, if they were reported as acting unlawfully, the relevant agencies would address that.

Scott Salmon wanted to address concerns raised at the last meeting around the Temporary Flood Barriers (TFB) and where they would be sited, and if they could cause more flooding in Datchet. Tina Donaldson was keen to have a consultation on the alignment and there would be a meeting held on 25 January 2019. Tina Donaldson would arrange meetings at locations where there were concerns and would liaise with Borough colleagues. Scott Salmon stated the value of having TFB was that it put people on the ground in the early stages of a flood event and if there were people on the ground, they could be available for other flood risks; the military could potentially also be deployed.

Harry Clasper said at the last meeting, decisions on deployment of TFB would be made by the Local Resilience Forum, he asked where the Borough's Local Resilience Forum was. Carolyn Richardson confirmed it was a Thames Valley Resilience Forum which was a multiagency forum made up of operational resources looking at risks and planning. There was an adverse weather plan which included flooding events. When deciding to deploy TFB, a strategic coordinated group would assess the situation and make the decision.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Alice Keeping from Thames Water introduced herself to the Flood Liaison Group as she would be taking over from Cyril Mitkov. Alice explained she had been managing the Southern area and had a high level awareness of what had been going on in the area. Alice would be the Group's point of contact moving forward.

Matthew Peapell from Thames Water stated Thames Water still had a six month sewer programme in place and they had found an isolated blockage recently. Conversations had taken place about recycling the Bin it Don't Block it campaign. A query had been raised regarding if any additional works on the structural performance of the sewer was required, Matthew had had a look at sewer cleaning but, no dig down was required. If there were any outstanding actions, he would take those forward.

Matthew Peapell confirmed the area of sewer clearing CCTV footage he wanted to view was a small area in the Westwood and Whyteladies Lane area. Thames Water had committed two areas for six monthly maintenance programmes which were on the High Street and Whyteladies Lane.

Martin Coker stated the Lightmans Lane Pumping Station got flooded and the electrics were not safe. He asked for the electrics to be raised higher. Matthew Peapell responded the issue of raising the electrics had been raised several times; he said Cyril Mitkov had been liaising with the business side of Thames Water to see what could be done and he understood it was decided Thames Water would not move the electrics. Simon Lavin, Flood Risk Manager said he the Group felt the panel should be moved above the floodline; doing that would not keep the station running during a flood but, it would stop the electrics being destroyed so when the flood water went away, the station could start running again. Matthew Peapell responded he would look into the reasons as to why the panel could not be moved and if he could get a more robust view on that so the item could be closed.

Ian Thompson said there was sewage in Datchet left during the 2014 flooding event. There was a main pumping station in Datchet which was served by a pumping system, however, the system was overwhelmed and the station continued pumping but could not get the quantity of sewage away from the main station so the sewage was pumped back into flood water. Ian Thompson asked if the area flooded again, was there a shut off to prevent the sewage from entering the flood water. He added the other issue was with Datchet Common Brook; a survey was carried out of the ditch as Datchet Common Brook fed into the ditch during flooding but it needed to be controlled, Ian Thompson asked who the contact at Thames Water was to take that forward. Matthew Peapell confirmed he could take that forward and look into that.

Councillor Beer asked when Thames Water were going to enlarge the sewage capacity in Old Windsor. Alice Keeping responded that she was completing the handover from Cyril Mitkov in the week commencing 28 January 2019 so she would ask Cyril about that then. The Flood Risk Manager asked the Thames Water representatives to bring an update to the next Flood Liaison Group meeting.

- ❖ **Action** – Alice Keeping and Matthew Peapell to bring an update on enlarging the sewage capacity at Old Windsor to the next Flood Liaison Group meeting.

UPDATE FROM RBWM

Simon Lavin, Flood Risk Manager stated he had met with representatives from Volkers regarding the Datchet Barrel and the works were discussed. The Parish Council were to be approached to look at locations and a jetting machine would be placed on grass islands to keep the machines off the road to reduce the impact to traffic. The CCTV work should follow that, although it was up to the contractor how they proceeded with the works. The Flood Risk Manager confirmed he had seen the CCTV footage and there were some bricks missing from the barrel but, he was not concerned. Ian Thompson said when he saw the barrel, there were a pile of bricks down there.

The Flood Risk Manager stated he had met with representatives from Volkens about the Wraysbury Drain Weir and they were going to attend site on the week commencing 28 January 2019. The main issue was access so they may need to put panels down to get plant on site. Volkens were looking at using concrete to stem flows but they would assess the site to see what would be the best method before any decisions were made. The works should be completed by the end of February 2019 and if they could carry out a permanent repair while they are on site, they will do which should stop the flow around the back of the weir.

The Flood Risk Manager stated the Flood Risk Management Strategy consultation had been delayed and he needed to have a discussion with the commissioning team before the consultation could go ahead. The consultation would focus on how minor planning applications were viewed.

Martin Coker said he was due to have a meeting with Volker Highways as they had promised bi-annual cleaning of the gullies in Lower Road, Cookham Dean. The Flood Risk Manager confirmed the bi-annual gully cleaning had been added to their cleaning schedule.

Councillor Beer asked if the Flood Liaison Group could get an early view of the draft Drainage Strategy. The Flood Risk Manager stated it was in view of the existing strategy which was already on the Council's website; there had been a formal consultation three or four years ago. Councillor Beer stated the draft Flood Risk Management Strategy should go before the Flood Liaison Group before it went out to consultation.

Scott Salmon from the EA stated the Borough and Parish Councils would need to approach Sean Maskrey with a list of potential capital projects and then he would seek the appropriate funding. He added a meeting should be organised to discuss projects and then the Borough would approach Sean. The Flood Risk Manager stated the Council's commissioning team would discuss potential capital projects with the Lead Member and then put those projects forward for a capital bid. The Chairman stated the Parish Councils would like to put forward a list of projects too. Scott Salmon explained that was part of Brianne Vally's role and that local, ongoing issues could be proposed to Brianne. Scott Salmon then confirmed the cattlepass was not recognised as a flood asset and the bund at Eton End School had been reinstated. Scott Salmon confirmed that Sean Maskrey would only liaise with the Borough and would not be able to receive request directly from Parish Councils. If the Parishes wanted to get their projects onto a potential funding list, they would need to go through their Ward Councillors. Harry Clasper asked if the Borough did not agree with the Parish Council, there was no way of getting the projects requested done. The Chairman responded telling them to approach Ward Councillors who would approach the commissioning team. Harry Clasper said there were issues in Datchet that were of such importance that there should be a much more formalised way of getting projects on the list. There were a handful of projects in Datchet where the Parish Council had no way of knowing when or if they would receive any funding. The Chairman responded that elected representatives were the right way in and if the Parish Council used that route, then the Flood Liaison Group would be the forum where general feedback would be provided.

- ❖ **Action** – The Flood Risk Manager to identify potential capital schemes that should be moved forward and then Liaise with Sean Maskrey for match appropriate funding to the schemes.

PARISH FLOOD GROUP UPDATE

Harry Clasper confirmed he was the nominal Chairman of the Parish Flood Group. It was set up before the Borough's Flood Liaison Group existed. At the time of setting the Group up, the composition of the Borough's Flood Group did not allow Parish Council representation so the Parish Flood Group was formed to allow the Parishes to have a voice. The Parish Flood Group had not met for some time but, it met when large issues came up. The Flood Risk Manager stated the general set up of the two groups was set out in the Flood Risk Management Strategy. Harry Clasper commented that over the years the relationship between

the Parishes and the agencies had improved enormously and it was a positive development over the years.

Councillor Beer said he asked the Borough to have a flood forum years ago due to there being a lot of floods. The Leader said he could not have a meeting and that any flooding issues could be dealt with by officers directly; therefore, the Parishes set up their own flood group and it was an immediate success, it ran for two years and then the Borough wanted to cooperate with the Parish Flood Group. It was chaired by Ewan Larcombe at the time.

Carolyn Richardson, Joint Emergency Planning Manager stated her role covered three local authorities and her team had visited Cookham and Datchet over the summer and they wanted to visit Old Windsor and Wraysbury to conduct a walkabout and see what the problems were. The Joint Emergency Planning Manager wanted to carry out an annual teleconference with all flood wardens or, organise a get together for all flood wardens so that during a flooding event, everyone knew what they needed to do and everyone knew what everyone's roles were. The Joint Emergency Planning Manager added she was still working on a flood plan with the EA and that would be sent out for feedback in due course.

Scott Salmon stated there was an open consultation from Defra on the improvement of management of water in the environment and there was a link on the Defra webpage where Members could provide their personal views. Defra were encouraging views from local flood groups. Scott Salmon said he would get the link circulated to Members so they could provide feedback to Defra.

Martin Coker stated his Parish had flood hubs and provided training. He suggested other council's set up flood hubs as they were brilliant.

Ian Thompson stated flood maps were not accurate. The flood maps for Datchet did not tie up with the LIDOR maps. LIDOR maps covered a rise in areas that were not flooded so those areas struggled to obtain insurance. The EA needed to change their mapping to illustrate what happened in 2014 and actual levels experienced instead of using LIDOR. Martin Coker suggested the EA use Police surveys carried out from the air during the 2014 flooding event. Scott Salmon stated the LIDOR mapping was a combination of all major flooding events, included 1947.

- ❖ **Action** – The Chairman to add a report on the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to the agenda for the next meeting.
- ❖ **Action** – The Clerk of the Flood Liaison Group to email the contact details of the Flood Liaison Group's Members to the Flood Risk Manager and the Joint Emergency Planning Manager
- ❖ **Action** – The Joint Emergency Planning Manager to email Members an invitation to attend a teleconference of flood wardens.
- ❖ **Action** – Scott Salmon from the EA to circulate the link to the Improvement of Management of Water in the Environment consultation.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....