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FLOOD LIAISON GROUP

TUESDAY, 3 JULY 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Jesse Grey (Chairman), John Lenton, Malcolm Beer, Richard Kellaway, Martin Coker and Mike Williams

Also in attendance: Cyril Mitkov, Dick Scarff, Margaret Lenton, and Ian Thompson

Officers: Wendy Binmore, Carolyn Richardson and Sue Fox

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillor Harry Clasper, Simon Lavin and Brianne Vally.

MINUTES

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 April 2017 be approved.

UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

There was no representative available from the Environment Agency (EA) to provide an update but, Brianne Vally had sent an update via email which Sue Fox, Principal Commissioning Officer (Highways & Transport) read out:

Lower Thames Modelling

The Lower River Thames model (Hambledon to Teddington), had been reviewed and approved. The Flood Zone 3 Section of the Flood Map for Planning (Rivers and Sea) had been updated using the data on their external website on 30 April 2018. It was now the best available data they had for fluvial flood risk in the area. The EA had engaged with the Royal Borough during the review of the modelled extents. The EA were continuing to work with the Royal borough to ensure both strategic planning decisions and advice provided by the EA in response to planning application was using the most up to date information.

Cookham Society and Maidenhead Waterways

A workshop was planned to take place on 23 April 2018 and was postponed due to operational requirements for Operation Lyceum. The EA were having an internal meeting on 6 July 2018 about resourcing and how the EA could best meet the needs of both the Cookham Society and Maidenhead Waterways.

Catchment Situation Report

River flows had continued to decrease over recent weeks to below normal conditions, in response to drier weather conditions. Due to the continuing warm and dry weather, the soil moisture deficits had increased, as the soil had dried, and were now above the end of June 2018 long term average.

Out of the 15 observed groundwater indicator sites, there were no sites at exceptionally low levels, no sites at notably low levels, no sites at below normal levels, 11 sites at normal levels, three sites at above normal level, one site at notably high and no sites at exceptionally high levels for the time of year. Groundwater levels rose at one of the indicator sites over the last week, and fell at 14 indicator sites.

For more detail on rainfall, river flows and groundwater levels Members could consult the EA's water situation report at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-situation-local-area-reports>

The Chairman stated the modelling had been sent to a number of Councillors on 4 May 2018 and that was the best available data the EA had. The EA were engaged with the borough and continued to work with the borough on planning applications as the EA were statutory consultees on planning matters.

Dick Scarff asked if the Parishes could have paper copies of flood maps circulated to them. The Principal Commissioning Officer (Highways & Transport) said she would ask the EA to provide paper maps to the Parishes.

- ❖ **Action** – The Principal Commissioning Officer (Highways & Transport) to request large paper flood maps from the EA.

The Principal Commissioning Officer (Highways & Transport) stated she had asked the EA for a new date for the works in Cookham which had been postponed. Dick Scarff stated there was an informal get together with partners with Maidenhead Waterways pushing ahead for a Rivers Management Plan. Martin Coker stated there would also be a draft plan circulated for consultation in the near future. Dick Scarff stated Maidenhead Waterways had received money from Thames Water and they seemed to be spending it on improving streams but, for improvements had to go through the EA for approval so he was concerned. However, he said he would take that up with the EA.

Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton stated there were issues in Wraysbury with the flow of a river as there was a tree in the middle of it the EA were going to remove the tree but they then said they couldn't due to the costs. The tree had a direct effect on flows with silt build-up. Councillor Lenton added the situation had been ongoing for some time and it was causing concern to residents.

Carolyn Richardson, Emergency Planning Manager stated she had been dealing with the EA in Hurley regarding the Bisham Ditch. The ditch was located by a main river and had a lot of clear water in it. It was currently two to three feet deep in the woods but, it was getting closer towards the houses, although not currently at imminent risk of flooding. The water company (SEW) had stopped abstracting water from the area which meant water levels continued to rise. There was no risk of flooding but, it should be highlighted to the EA.

Councillor Lenton stated there had not been an update on temporary flood defences. Councillor Grey responded areas had been identified and when they were needed, they would be deployed. Parish Councillor Lenton stated parishes needed to know as they had their flood plan but they did not know how the temporary flood defences fit into their plans. The Emergency Planning Manager confirmed a meeting with the EA

had been arranged and she would ask about the temporary barriers and their locations.

UPDATE FROM THAMES WATER

Cyril Mitkov, Thames Water, stated in May 2018, rainfall was 109% of 134 year historical monthly average and there had been a lot of rainfall earlier in the year which had helped with ground water levels which were above average for the time of year. However, June and July 2018 were below average precipitation forecast with the area only having 6% of 134 year monthly average rainfall.

Martin Coker stated at the previous meeting that he had asked about foul sewer problems in Cookham. Cyril Mitkov stated he did not have an update on that yet but would look into the repairs needed and when they would be carried out when he was next in the office. Martin Coker responded stated he needed to know if Thames Water could do something about it so the issues don't keep occurring or get worse. The Chairman stated all improvements with new pumping stations would not be able to be tested until heavier rainfall.

- ❖ **Action** – Cyril Mitkov to provide an update on whether repairs were needed to remedy the foul sewer problems raised by Martin Coker.

UPDATE FROM RBWM

Carolyn Richardson, Joint Emergency Planning Manager gave Members of the Forum a brief update on the following areas:

EA Temporary Flood Defence situation. There were currently five being looked at across the Borough flood risk areas. They were being reviewed and remodelled again by the EA to confirm the areas at risk, the benefits and any knock on impacts downstream. The EA were leading on the project so more details may be available at the next meeting. It should also be noted that there was no guarantee that all, if any, of the communities would get the defences since the equipment were national assets so may not be available if they were already deployed elsewhere in the Thames Valley area, or indeed in the UK.

- ❖ **Action** – EA Temporary Flood Defences update to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Bisham: As indicated at the meeting Carolyn Richardson had been working with the EA and South East Water (SEW) in relation to some unusual water levels in the Bisham Brook, Hurley. The brook was a Main River and therefore the lead for flood alleviation is the EA. It had been established however, that SEW had stopped pumping water from that area, and as a result ground water levels rose, this may not however have been an issue but a culvert is also blocked which has meant the water was building up. SEW have restarted pumping on notification of the issue until such time as the culvert is cleared. This was a riparian owner responsibility and is being taken up by the EA.

Sue Fox, Principal Commissioning Officer gave a short update on the flood and drainage capital programme. The programme for 2018 was progressing and some work was commissioned in Datchet. The Landscape Architect had been in touch

regarding the recreation ground ditch to provide advice on stopping further erosion and to stabilise banks.

Martin Coker stated the gully in Lower Road needed clearing as it was blocked with debris. Dick Scarff commented that it needed regular clearance. The Principal Commissioning Officer confirmed a number of gullies had been reported, and cleared and that a site visit can be arranged with the Volker drainage engineer. Dick Scarff responded the gullies needed routine preventative clearance. Councillor Kellaway said he had been on a site visit and wished to be included in the outcome to ensure everyone was aware of the progress.

Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton requested an update about the Wraysbury Drain. She added £25k was left and she had asked if the Parish Council could put that towards sluice gates. The Principal Commissioning Officer responded that the council would use Land Drainage legislation to gain access to the sluice on private land.

Councillor Beer said there was an understanding that gullies were to be cleared twice a year in areas affected by leaf-fall. The Chairman asked if the clearance would be extended to Old Windsor as well as other areas. Carolyn Richardson, Emergency Planning Manager explained to Members that she would become more engaged with Members to get a feel for the issues. She had a meeting scheduled with parishes to get to know and understand areas at risk of flooding. She would be looking at flood plans and community plans.

PARISH FLOOD GROUP UPDATE

Martin Coker stated he had no update for the Forum but, he wanted to invite all Members to a training and exercise event for flooding for volunteers that would have representatives from fire and rescue, police and Borough officers present. The training event was to take place on 23 August 2018 at the Chartered Institute of Marketing in Cookham.

Ian Thompson asked if the funding issues had been sorted for the River Thames Scheme and what the timescales for construction were. The Chairman confirmed he would email all Members the information on the current position. The Chairman stated he would also include information on insurance views on the River Thames Scheme.

- ❖ **Action** – The Chairman to email all Members of the Flood Liaison Group the information on the current position of funding for the River Thames Scheme and include the information on insurance views.

Ian Thompson stated the Borough had experienced very dry weather which reduced the ability of rainfall to soak away and increased a risk of surface water flooding. That had happened in 2007 so he wanted to make Members aware of the risks. Carolyn Richardson, Emergency Planning Manager stated she had been involved in 2007 and the Borough was currently at risk of flash flooding and therefore, the Parishes needed to make sure blockages were reported to the Borough or relevant landowners so they could be cleared.

Councillor Beer stated Burfield Ditch took water from the Crown Estate and then it went into the river through a gap in houses. He wanted to know what the EA were doing about clearing the rivers to prevent water levels rising and presenting a risk to the houses. Parish Councillor Margaret Lenton wanted to know what would happen to

the watercourses once the third runway was built. Ian Thompson responded stating Heathrow would have lakes which would pump down watercourses into the Thames. However, he was not sure how it would affect the River Thames Scheme. If there was a flooding situation, it could cause a problem so the Forum needed to know Heathrow's position on that.

- ❖ **Action** – The EA to provide feedback on how the expansion at Heathrow would affect the River Thames Scheme, should there be a flooding event.

ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

No one from the Environment Agency (EA) was available to attend the Flood Liaison Group meeting but, Richard Neil Hancock from the EA had sent an update via email which included a summary of actions from the minutes of the previous meeting. The Forum noted the following key points:

Temporary work undertaken on the weir near Colne Way, Hythe End

There had been no applications received or approved, for carrying out works to the weir on the Colne Brook between Ferry Lane and Colne Way, Hythe End. The local Asset Inspector was not aware of any works having been scheduled around the time in question and has not been able to determine what works were carried out. If there were any more details that Councillor Lenton was aware of that could be passed on, the local Asset Performance team might be able to investigate further.

River Thames Scheme Funding Action

The Chairman explained to the Forum that Full Council had passed a Motion which urged the Secretary of State to step in regarding the funding for the RTS. The Chairman stated he was also on the funding groups with other councils and twice there had been meetings scheduled with Phillip Hammond and twice they had been cancelled.

Results of the Charging Consultation

The results of the charging consultation were published online and the EA had provided the weblink:

<https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/engagement/environmentagency-charging-proposals-fromapril2018/>

LIDAR update

The update of LIDAR and flood mapping was to be presented at the next Flood Liaison Group meeting in October 2018.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Members noted the dates of the future meetings.

The meeting, which began at 6.00 pm, finished at 6.50 pm

CHAIRMAN.....

DATE.....