

Transitional Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (TSRFCC)

Minutes of the Transitional Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee held on 19 April 2011 at Guildbourne House, Worthing

Present: Dr Mike Bateman (Chairman) Mr Roland O'Brien
Mr Ivor Llewelyn Mr David Green
Cllr Colin Tandy Cllr Alan Rice
Cllr Roger Thomas Cllr Richard King
Cllr Richard King Dr Tom Crossett
Cllr Hugh Mason Mr Barry Luck
Cllr Mike Harrison

Officers: Howard Davidson, SE Director
Peter Quarmby, SE Flood and Coastal Risk Manager
Rosemary Redmond, SE Programme Manager
Dan Matthews, SE Technical Specialist, Coastal and Inland Overview Team
Andrew Gilham, Solent and South Downs Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager
Fiona Green, External Relations Officer (Minutes)

Guests: Nick Claxton, Flood Risk Management Senior Technical Officer - East Sussex County Council
Stephen Blyth, Senior Planner, Economy, Transport and Environment Department – Hampshire County Council
Graham Haycock, East Peckham Parish Council
David Murphy, SE Coastal and Inland Overview Manager
Sarah Tedder, SE Communications Officer (Committees)
Lou Stephenson, SE Communications Officer (Committees)

0497.0 Welcome and Introductions

0497.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was the first time the Committee had met since the Environment Agency reorganisation to merge the Thames and Southern Regions had been completed. Given the change in personnel, attendees introduced themselves. The Chairman requested a contact list of officers and members be prepared and distributed.

0497.2 The Chairman also pointed out the change in title of the Committee. Until the Committee had been given its full legislative powers (anticipated 1

July 2011) it would be known as the Transitional Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Committee.

Resolved:

- (a) To prepare a contact list of Officers and Members for the Committee.

0498.0 Declarations of Interest

0498.1 Cllr Roger Thomas declared he was the Chair of the LGA Coastal Issues Special Interest Group.

0499.0 Apologies for Absence

0499.1 Apologies were received from Mr Stephen Gilbert, Cllr Andrew Bowles, Cllr Pieter Montyn, Dr Ruth Kosmin, Cllr Tony Janio, Mr James Brathwaite, Lady Suzanne Warner OBE, Mrs Valerie Owen and Cllr Roger Elkins. Cllr Ray Bolton was also not present.

0500.0 Chairman's Briefing

0500.1 The Chairman explained that he had met political leaders within the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) to alert them to issues relating to future funding and the role of the RFCC. Most meetings had now taken place, with a meeting with Kent County Council scheduled in May. LLFAs were concerned about the reduction in funding and how the new proposed Payment for Outcomes mechanism would work in practice.

0501.0 Director's Report

0501.1 **Exercise Watermark** – Mr Davidson explained that Exercise Watermark took place between 7-10 March. Exercise Watermark was the UK's largest emergency exercise with over 11,000 people involved. Debriefs were now taking place with a Lessons Learnt Conference scheduled for 13 July 2011.

0501.2 **TE2100 Update** – Defra Minister approval for the business case had been received for the future management of the Thames Estuary. Treasury approval was now being sought. It was suggested that interested Members from the Southern, Thames and Anglian Committees be brought together to oversee the governance arrangements for the project. Cllr Tandy, lead on the Southern Committee, welcomed this suggestion.

0501.3 **Funding Update** – Mr Davidson reminded the Committee that the Environment Agency's capital budget had been reduced by 34% and its revenue by 29%. 2000 posts would be lost during the spending period. Mr Davidson was pleased to see the completion of the Thames/Southern merger which would save £6m per year operating costs.

Resolved:

- (a) To note the Director's Report.
- (b) To organise a meeting of interested Committee Members from Southern, Thames and Anglian Transitional Flood and Coastal Committees to oversee the TE2100 project.

0502.0 Minutes and Matters Arising

0502.1 The Chairman said these would be dealt with at the end of the meeting.

0503.0 0411/B1 Flood and Coastal Risk Management Business Plan 2011/2012

0503.1 Mrs Redmond outlined the priorities and basis of the budget allocation for 2011/12 – 2015/16. Mrs Redmond drew out the Environment Agency projects that would be ongoing and those with new starts in 2011/12. Key areas of the local authority and IDB Capital programmes of work were also highlighted.

0503.2 Members commented:

- that tables in the appendices should be printed in larger font.
- on the ordering of priorities used to allocate funding to capital schemes and the lack of erosion schemes within the programme. *Mr Quarmby explained that the list was based on Environment Agency's priorities. In future years, a different set of criteria would need to be developed and agreed as the new Payment for Outcomes methodology was introduced. The Chairman reminded the Committee that the priority list had been discussed by Members and agreed at a previous meeting.*

Resolved:

- (a) To approve the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Risk Management Business Plan, which comprises the:
 - i. Environment Agency Programme of Work for 2011/12
 - ii. Local Authority Capital Programme for 2011/12
- (b) To approve the publication of the capital maintenance, reconditioning and new defence elements of the Environment Agency's programme on the website.

0504.0 0411/B2 Local Levy Programme

0504.1 Mr Matthews gave an update on the progress of the 2010/11 Southern Region Local Levy Programme which saw an underspend of £699K. This combined with the £440K that was carried over in 2009/2010 provides £1.139m to be carried over into the 11/12 financial year from 2010/11.

0504.2 Mr Matthews went on to report on the progress of the 2011/12 levy programme. The Levy Sub-Group met on 9 February 2011 and based on their recommendations a programme was developed.

0504.3 Cllr King, Chairman of the Levy Sub-Group recommended approval of the programme to the Committee. He was, however, concerned about the uncertainty of funding for future years and raising expectations that might not be met if funding was not made available.

0504.4 Members commented:

- on the £30K allocated in 2012/2013 for a survey on the River Shuttle and sought clarification on what work would be undertaken as it was the length between Danser Lake and the River Shuttle that caused problems when the dam overflowed. *Mr Gilham confirmed that the area team would build on the work of the recent local authority survey and develop a way forward.*
- that the visit to Gorrell Stream promised by officers at the Levy Sub-Group meeting had not taken place. Cllr Harrison was disappointed that the Gorrell Stream scheme was not a higher priority given the number of properties affected. *Mr Gilham was sorry the visit had not taken place and would follow it up with the Area team.*
- that there needed to more transparency on why schemes were where they were in the programme. More detail was required.
- that delivery of the programme might not be achievable given approval was only being sought now. It was proposed that a much longer term programme should be approved. *The Chairman reminded the Committee that in previous year's a five year programme had been approved but due to the proposed change in how projects would be funded, it was not possible to look further than a year with any certainty.*
- that levy funding should deliver schemes that benefit communities and should be publicised more widely.
- on the progress to alleviate sewerage flooding at Milford-on-Sea. *Mr Luck explained that OFWAT had approved the scheme which would be completed in March 2013.*

0504.5 The Chairman reminded the Committee that the method of funding would change in future years when the Payment for Outcomes methodology was introduced. The Chairman cited the Little Mill Scheme as an example of how it might work in the future. Levy funding would be used to develop a scheme for Little Mill but future year's funding would be dependent on external contributions being sought.

Resolved:

- (a) To note the progress of the 2010/11 local levy programme.
- (b) To approve the programme for 2011/12 and note the schemes put forward for potential funding in future years.

- (c) To approve the publication of the Local Levy Programme on the Environment Agency website.
- (d) To arrange for officers to visit Gorrell Stream with Cllr Harrison.

0505.0 0411/B3 RFCC Proposed policy to develop Medium Term Plan and use of Local Levy

0505.1 Mr Matthews reminded the Committee of the Payment for Outcomes proposal to fund all capital maintenance and defence projects seeking funds from 2012. Officers were beginning to look at how the broader range of risks would be prioritised in the future and how levy funding could be utilised. Mr Matthews sought feedback on the questions set out in the paper to enable a set of principles to be drawn up for approval at the July Committee.

0505.2 The Chairman added that the Committee's response to the Payment for Outcome consultation was submitted and Defra's response was anticipated in the next couple of months.

0505.3 Members:

- were concerned about the format of the paper particularly as it was in the public domain. The public might not realise that it was 'work in progress'.
- sought clarification on what was meant by 'OM2 households built before January 2009 moved from one category of flood risk to a lower category'. *Mr Gilham confirmed that the intention was that no national funding would be forthcoming to protect houses built in the floodplain after January 2009.*
- requested that the paragraph suggesting that 'surplus FDGIA could be used to provide the required external contribution allowing a part funded project to commence' should be re-worded as it was ambiguous.
- requested a copy of the Environment Agency's response to Defra's Consultation on Payment for Outcomes. *Mr Quarmby was unclear whether a response was in the public domain but would find out.*
- requested clarification on the mechanism in place to decide whether a project would go ahead or not. *Mr Quarmby confirmed that the ultimate decision would rest with the RFCC. The Chairman reiterated the importance of having a robust decision making process and criteria so the RFCC could make consistent decisions year on year.*
- suggested that the Environment Agency did not have the correct skillset to sell schemes to potential third party contributors. It was then questioned whether it was the Environment Agency's role to seek third party contributions. *Mr Quarmby had some examples where community funding for schemes had been secured but the more urban the scheme the bigger the challenge. Mr Quarmby believed the future focus for contributions would be on business and industry.*

- suggested that levy could be used to lever in contributions. It could also be used to pay someone ie 'a trust' to seek third party contributions.
- commented that the Environment Agency would need to be able to justify why a scheme would cost a certain amount as any third party contributor would wish to be reassured that they were getting value for money.
- suggested that levy money could be used to do a scoping study of how each scheme would be delivered. *Mr Claxton added that the flood risk assessments that were required to be completed by each LLFA would build on the scoping study idea.*
- were concerned about the importance of and reliance on levy money. It was a small budget which local authorities were unlikely to increase given financial constraints.

0505.4 The Chairman thanked Members for their input. Mr Matthews would use the comments to draft up a policy for discussion at the next meeting.

Resolved:

- (a) To note Members feedback on the guidance for programme development and prepare a revised version for approval at the July Committee meeting.
- (b) To find out whether the Environment Agency made a response to the Payment for Outcomes consultation and if so, whether Members could receive a copy.

0506.0 0411/B4 Composition of Regional Flood and Coastal Committees

0506.1 The Chairman reminded the Committee that they had discussed the proposed composition of the Southern RFCC at the January meeting. Comments from that meeting had been returned to the national project team. Unfortunately, the proposal to have a dedicated seat for a representative from the Coastal Groups was declined as it was felt the Environment Agency Board would not wish to reserve a seat for a specific group. Particularly, because if coastal groups were changed, further Ministerial approval would be required. Despite this, the Chairman reassured the Committee that coastal interests would be represented at the RFCC by filling one of the Environment Agency appointed seats with a coastal representative or by inviting coastal group chairs to attend meetings as advisors.

0506.2 Members commented:

- on the need to ensure a broad spectrum of skills was covered by the representatives on the Committee. It was suggested that an 'audit of skills' be undertaken to identify any gaps prior to any recruitment process.
- on the suggested range of knowledge and experience required to fulfil the role of the committee. It was suggested that the list should be broadened to include: someone with fisheries interests

and knowledge of river trusts; planning experience and someone from the private sector with knowledge of business planning/marketing.

- on the lack of maritime district authority representation within the committee composition. It was questioned how the LLFAs would link up with the maritime authorities. *The Chairman responded that the LLFAs have a role to play in developing this relationship. The Chairman had recently been invited to give a presentation to a workshop organised by Hampshire County Council who invited representatives from all their maritime district authorities. It was suggested that the RFCC could host a meeting inviting all maritime districts. The role of the RFCC and LLFAs could be explained at such a meeting. The Chairman referred to Paper C3 and the suggestion that the RFCC should meet with the Coastal Groups in the autumn.*

0506.3 The Chairman referred to Appendix A and the reference to ‘The London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich’ and suggested the wording in the right hand column be amended to read “One member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Lead Local Flood Authorities”. This was agreed by the Committee.

Resolved:

- (a) To note the new requirements of the RFCC regulations.
- (b) To approve the composition of the Southern RFCC as set out in Appendix A with the following amendment:
London Boroughs of Bexley, Bromley and Greenwich – one member appointed by, or on behalf of, this group of Lead Local Flood Authorities.

0507.0 0411/B5 Review of the Southern RFDC Sub-Groups and Committees

0507.1 The Chairman explained that he had reviewed the number of Sub-Groups and proposed to combine the Inland Overview Sub-Group with the Strategy Sub-Group.

0507.2 This would result in three Sub-Groups going forward: Strategy Sub-Group, Finance Committee and Incident Preparedness/Flood Warning Sub-Group.

Resolved:

- (a) to support the continuation of the Finance Committee (incorporating the Local Levy Sub-Group) and the Incident Preparedness/Flood Warning Sub-Group.
- (b) to support the establishment of a new Strategy Committee, incorporating the former Strategy and Inland Overview Sub-Groups.

0508.0 0411/B6 Strategy Sub-Group – 29 March 2011

0508.1 Mr Quarmby advised that the RFDC Strategy Sub-Group last met on 29 March 2011 where it discussed the Portchester to Emsworth Coastal Defence Strategy.

0508.2 The Sub-Group recognised that any schemes that came out of the Strategy would not be 100% funded and therefore significant external contributions would need to be sought. The recommendations recognised that requirement.

Resolved:

- (a) To note the discussions of the Strategy Sub-Group.
- (b) To support the recommendations within the Portchester to Emsworth Coastal Defence Strategy.
- (c) To ask the Environment Agency to pursue third party contributions in order to progress the preferred options.

0509.0 0411/B7 Proposed Variations to the Statutory Main River Map

0509.1 Mr Quarmby explained that the variations proposed were purely technical variations to correct the line on the main river map. Maps of the proposed variations were available if Members wished to review them.

0509.2 A review in principle of what should or should not be main river was imminent. Once the outcome of the review was known, a decision on further enaminments/demainments would be taken.

0509.3 Mr Quarmby stressed that rivers were originally enmained due to their flood risk. Those rivers were known as critical ordinary watercourses and would therefore be maintained by the Environment Agency.

Resolved:

- (a) To approve the submission of 25 applications to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to vary the Statutory Main River Map.

0510.0 Information Updates

0411/C1 2010/11 FCRM Programme – Progress and Finance Report
– Mr Gilham reported that the end of year figures were close to those reported.

0411/C2 National Coastal Erosion Risk Mapping Project

0411/c3 Exercise Watermark

Resolved:

- (a) That the Committee note the information papers.

0511.0 Standing Items

0411/D1 Water Situation Report
0411/D2 Draft REPAC Minutes
0411/D3 Draft RFERAC Minutes

Resolved:

- (a) That the Committee note the standing items previously circulated.

0512.0 Dates of Future Meetings

Wednesday 13 July 2011
Wednesday 12 October 2011
Wednesday 11 January 2012

Dates of Sub-Groups will be sent out shortly.

0513.0 Committee Visits

0513.1 **Medmerry** – Given the better weather a visit would now be arranged.

0514.0 Any Other Business

0514.1 **Motor Vehicle Allowance** – Cllr Thomas questioned whether the rate was going to increase. Miss Green undertook to find out and let Members know.

Resolved:

- (a) To find out whether the motor vehicle allowance was going to be increased.

0514.2 **Drought Conditions** – Cllr Harrison requested a position statement on the drought conditions. Mr Davidson responded that from a public water supply point of view, all water companies were in a relatively healthy position. However, the prolonged dry spell had affected the river systems. It would require a very prolonged dry spell into next year before public water supply would be affected.

0514.3 Cllr Harrison added that he found the monthly water situation reports useful and would like to continue to receive them.

0514.4 **Acknowledgements** – The Chairman thanked Mr Gilham and Miss Green for their work with the Committee and wished them well in their new roles.

0514.5 **Dr Tom Crossett** – The Chairman announced that it was Dr Crossett's last meeting before his term of office expired in June. Dr Crossett had

been a great asset to not only the RFDC but to the REPAC whose broad knowledge of the environment would be sorely missed.

With there being no other business the meeting was declared closed at 12.50 pm.

ENDS