

**Minutes of the Meeting of Thames Water, Environment Agency, Hampshire
County Council with Hart District Council Members**

7 March 2022 at 2pm

Present:

Hart District Councillors (HDC)	Ambler; Forster, Neighbour, Oliver, Southern, Worlock (Chairman)
Hampshire County Council (HCC)	Cllrs. Collett, Davies, Glen, Parker Keith Thompson Susanna Hope
Environment Agency (EA)	Neil Landricombe
Thames Water (TW)	Nikki Hines, Sarah Edmunds, Carly Mason
Hart District Council (HDC)	Alex Jones, Philip Sheppard, Stephanie Baker, Rebecca Borrett

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from:

Councillor Dorn (HDC); Councillor Butcher (HDC) Councillor Quarterman (HDC)

2. Minutes & Action Table of 11 October 2021

Councillor Davies proposed the minutes of the previous meeting were correct and this was seconded by Councillor Southern.

Action Table

The Chairman referenced and email sent to all members by Councillor Dorn providing a comprehensive update regarding the Crondall Sewer Lining.

- 2) **Steering group for Fleet and Sandy Lane Ditch** – AJ to speak with Cllr Dorn regarding a template for projects. NL to produce a presentation for the next meeting in March 2022.

Alex confirmed this was in respect of the project timeline. This has not been completed yet, but he will be working with Neil to discuss the various projects to develop a full timeline. This should be complete in the next month and should include all the projects including the EA and DC are working on. **This will be shared with all attendees once finalised.**

Alex will share the presentation received from Neil as part of his update and will forward this to all participants after the meeting.

- 39) **Crookham Park (between Nepal Gardens and Naishes Lane)** HCC to continue to pursue enforcement but low evidence of impacts.
- Susie confirmed a meeting had been held with the developer in February and a site visit is scheduled for April.
- 44) **Planning** – Briefing note to be provided and Planning to attend next meeting.
- This relates to Agenda Item 4.
- 45) **Processes - potential strengthening of Flood and Water Management Act powers (HCC)** – SH to provide numbers year on year since 2014.
- Susie to send figures to Alex** following the meeting for him to put into context and circulate.
- 48) **TW - Surface Water Management Plans** – this will be discussed as part of the TW update later in the agenda.
- 51) **To make 101 aware of the Hart sandbag procedures** – This has now been completed. 101 have been made aware of the Hart Sandbag Procedures. In relation to the educational campaign and website review the flooding webpage as been updated and in respect of educational campaigns, social media posts have been developed to be posted at relevant times of expected floods.
- 53) **Fleet FAS** – Not discussed
- 54) **EA (NL)** - report on the 6yr forward programme and existing projects.
- This is to be outlined in Agenda Item 5.1 as part of the status update
- 55) **Webbs Corner**
- To be discussed as part of Agenda Item 5.5

3. Impact of Storms since last meeting

Councillor Southern asked if debris in ditches and on the side of the road from trees that came down in Arrow Lane were the responsibility of HCC to clear. Keith explained there are 500 jobs across county, teams are working as quick as they can, but priority had to be to get road networks open. After this work on clearing away debris started.

Cllr Glen advised they had a meeting with Steve Kellet and had a presentation on the three recent storms. A lot of normal work North Hampshire highways are asked to do will be delayed as clear up from the problems with the trees is enormous. Once cleared from roads, any trees lying on landowner's land become the landowner's responsibility to deal with.

4. Hart DC Planning Update

The Chairman welcomed Stephanie Baker to the meeting. Stephanie had provided a briefing note covering Planning and Flood Risk in advance of the meeting.

Cllr Davies asked if HDC wanted to make sure people put in sustainable drainage systems, would this be a planning condition or would it be restrictive in practice. SB advised it would depend on nature of scheme, if a minor application, a householder application then flood risk assessments would not be asked for. If it was a medium to large scale application, then would need upfront information that has sustainable urban design systems included. A strategic flood risk assessment is needed on a site-by-site basis and there are triggers for that. On most schemes, a condition would then be made that the development is carried out in accordance with those fundamental details.

Councillor Davies asked when people applied for new drive is it a condition that it is permeable. SB advised it is not a condition in itself, but policy on flood risk does ask for permeable surfacing if possible, and reasonable. Going forwards Planning are considering a matrix for validation of what must be provided from national and local standards, together with other elements including flood risks and climate change etc. for people to at least consider.

Councillor Collett asked if it was felt the planning process can ensure we do not add to flooding problems when developments take place, and how much are you dependent on the EA and other appropriate bodies making meaningful consultation responses to be able to take action to prevent future problems. SB advised if it is something where they are dependent of their technical colleagues for specialist input, if as an officer this is any concern they need to wait for input or further consult, then would go back and question to make sure any scheme overall is acceptable. The Local Plan policies and the MPPF are clear the development should not increase flood risk on or off site.

Councillor Collett asked if it was not a larger development, for example an extension to a house, and the design means the roof of that extension drains into a pipe that then gets fed into foul sewer rather than a surface water system, would n active interest be taken in that? SB responded that the cumulative impact as small developments is not caught by the Local Plan or the MPPF, so over it's lifetime if that development would meet its flood risk, and not increase and offsite flood risk in isolation then an onus cannot be put on that development to do anything. If it becomes an issue over time, then it would become part of larger remit and Building Control, or County and other agencies may start looking at a common issue. Council Collett asked if a condition that any additional drainage must go into a surface water system not a foul system? SB confirmed not on small householder applications.

Councillor Worlock confirmed SB was happy for her briefing note to be sent to parish and town councils. SB confirmed she was happy for this and advised in the coming months was looking to set up some meetings with parish councils on different planning

topics. SB she is also happy to respond to any questions that come out of the meeting and to feel free to email her.

5. Status Updates

5.1 Environment Agency

Neil shared his presentation covering Blackwater flood modeling, progress to date and confirmation the scoping stage is the modelling. Councillor Southern asked why, if have finished scoping is modeling not starting now, and why will it take two years to do basic model of stream? Neil clarified they are about to start the actual modelling process and the complexity of the process to model a whole catchment this size involves much detail. Modelling is starting now but the process will take two years, running series of time periods 5,10,20,100-year scenarios for climate and flood modelling to be rerun over and over, with multiple other factors to be taken into account.

Keith asked if one of the streams not within Hart district, but on the boarder, Cove Brook that feeds into Blackwater and that was in a flood warning situation the previous week due to high levels at Hawley Lake, will be included in the modelling. Neil confirmed tributaries running through stream in Rushmoor, Guildford and Surrey Heath will be picked up.

Councillor Collett asked it things like recognising the functional role the balancing pond in Hawley Hill should be having. Neil confirmed he would hope ponds would be included in the model, but this is a catchment model so will not pick up every detail.

Councillor Collett asked if the outcome of this would enable us to understand the potential for more floodplains along the Blackwater Valley, helping to prevent floods along the river's course. Neil confirmed where there is an improved understanding this would assist in holding water up.

Fleet – Neil provided details of the key points of what has been done in recent years, and options identified following initial workshops. Modelling has been almost completed and is being reviewed internally. There will then be a meeting with the Risk Management Authorities (RMA) including HCC; HDC; TW etc. with a view to having further consultation with stakeholders and partners July/August.

In terms of business case Neil confirmed they are looking to submit this early 2023. Neil also confirmed he was aware from the previous meeting he needed to set out a plan of what was happening and when. **Neil confirmed he will supply this in coming weeks.**

Councillor Forster asked for clarification of the area covered. Neil confirmed it to be the Sandy Lane ditch; Fleet Brook; basically, the urban area through fleet. Councillor Forster advised this is Church Crookham not Fleet mostly. Neil

confirmed possibly, and a whole suite of options is being considered. In terms of what is deliverable, flood risk projects must be a technically feasible option to attract funding to deliver the project. In terms of funding calculator and any benefits through the scheme, he was unable to say at this time what those options may be. Councillor Forster thanked Neil for the clarification, but suspected most works were in the Church Crookham area but may possibly impact fleet.

Neil confirmed other areas at risk in HDC area were:

- Griffin Stream (Hook)
- Mill Lane, North Wanborough
- Crondall
- North Yateley
- Frogmore
- Everlsey and Lower Common

Funding for Griffin Stream and North Wanborough to do initial appraisal to potentially move these schemes forward had been agreed. Bids for funding the other areas would be made in May. It will not be possible to do all of them in one go, and some of them, like Frogmore and North Yateley will be informed by the Blackwater remodeling, so evidence is needed from that to align these.

5.2 HDC projects

[a] Mill Corner, North Wanborough - Alex advised there had not had much progress since last meeting. Legal are reviewing the agreements to be signed by the landowners, and work is still ongoing with the university who were interested in the area.

[b] Phoenix Green – Alex confirmed some progress. A full review of all the available information and the approach being undertaken to determine the best approach following approval of the grant from EA. Some issues with the EA framework in terms of timeframe, but they appear resolved now. Legal agreements with residents for when the flood mitigation measures are installed have been completed and will be circulated to residents with next round of communication. Progress will be asap, but within next couple of months.

[c] Kingsway – Very similar project to Phoenix Green. In December this was pushed back to next financial year (April) in terms of timeframes and budget allocation. Hoping to use a similar pattern and approach to Phoenix Green, will be based on same model so should move quicker.

[d] Hawley Hill – TW rejected our application for funding from the Surface Water Management Programme, but Alex has been working with Sarah and her colleague from TW and progress has been made to show evidence the Hawley

Hill Pond links to the TW network around Kingsway. Now working to identify what can be done to improve the balancing pond but the difficulty may be the evidence behind how this will be improved. This can be achieved relatively easily but the funding programme ends April 25th, so a fully evidence bid must be made by then.

Councillor Collett asked about Kingsway, as far as protection measures in new financial year are concerned will you liaise with local councillors so they can talk to residents to encourage them to be less reluctant. We know we will not solve the flooding problems but will protect people from them in the meantime and that needs to be sold to people. Other issue with Kingsway, the ditch behind back of houses and water not getting away from there to the river, is Neil envisaging the study discussed earlier will help us make case to solve these issues? Alex confirmed he will be engaging with councillors to help with uptake from residents. He went on to explain Kingsway and the surrounding areas have been looked at in terms of what help can be provided to solve the issue, as there are multiple issues, not just one singular one.

Councillor Davis asked if this is a problem with a culvert under a railway as other areas where culverts under railway lines are a problem. Pale Lane has one and floods more than once a year, and there may also be culverts blocked under railway lines at Fleet Station.

Neil advised the model will look to represent risk, and a need to work in partnership to come up with potential solutions. There are a lot of issues needing to be worked through and will be a separate process. Neil needs to make sure the model team are aware of issues in that location so they will model risk and work to address issues.

Alex confirmed Network Rail (NR) tried to clear the culvert under Kingsway but levels in the river was so high the water could not escape from the NR culvert. The river is just dropping sediment and vegetation due to the standing water, and we almost need to work backwards from the river to reduce the level there.

The culvert at Pale Lane, Alex will look into this and see if NR can look at this. Regarding Fleet Station, Alex confirmed these were the culverts from the upper to lower pond at Fleet. Alex advised from the Hart side; this is being worked on as part of Fleet Pond footpath works. Large sediments were on the other side. We are trying to get NR to clear these to prevent flooding up stream.

Philip Sheppard advised annual inspections with reservoir engineer has resulted in a growing frustration with NR to clear the ballast on the northern side. Our reservoir engineer will be writing to the Senior Government Reservoir Engineer who will write to the EA who will take action against NR to make them remove the ballast.

In terms of works going on there, they are due for completion by the end of this month, and we have now opened western side which is flowing. The eastern culvert has work starting tomorrow for next 2 weeks, so on our side the culverts will be free and open, but unfortunately the water will be stuck, but hopefully EA will get network rail to do this.

Councillor Forster felt it good this had been highlighted to EA but had HDC formally raised this with Phil Dommely, Regional Director at South Western Rail. Philip confirmed he had raised it with him directly previously, but would do so again and copy in Councillor Forster in the hope it may get resolved quicker and without timely without legal issues. Philip hoped although it fell outside Phil's remit, he may be able to persuade someone to do it before EA force them to.

Councillor Collett advised in relation to Kingsway, a network engineer from TW met with various officers and advised the problems referred to previously would only be solve by dredging a substantial area of the River Blackwater, thus lowering the water level. Where would we start with making something like that happen, how would we get significant stretch dredged to lower the water flow. Neil felt it unlikely the EA would action this as a funding stream would be needed, like a project, and how would they assign work to that, and dredging would go beyond what a typical maintenance programme would address.

Neil confirmed he was happy to look into that, but it was unlikely to be case for EA to do. However, there was a clear need for permitting discussions and he would be happy to be involved. A meeting to be set up to explore this.

Councillor Collett agreed a joint meeting, including Steve Bailey, Manager of Blackwater Valley Countryside Project to attend, would be a good starting point.

Alex will organise a meeting with relevant parties.

Councillor Southern asked as doing a model of Blackwater Valley part of that process should be the distribution and flow capabilities so no meeting should be necessary, as this should be a fundamental part of the Blackwater modelling. Neil confirmed flow data would be considered as part of the modelling, but this is talking about dredging and banks work, which is more engineering than a modelling solution which the EA is not a lead authority for this aspect, so needs to be discussed further.

5.3 HCC projects

Councillor Southern advised shopkeepers in Hartley Wintney were distressed at the impact on trade that Fleet Road was still closed for South East Water to install a pipeline was causing. It is expected to reopen on 22nd March, is this likely to happen? Keith advised South East Water does not come under him and he has no information or control over utility contracts, but he may be able to get information from their Street Works Team. Councillor Forster advised the South

East Water website details this and exactly where are 350 meters had been completed. It also showed works were on track and expected to be completed for the end of March. As they get nearer Pale Lane, they will consider opening with one way traffic lights operating, but only if it is safe. Keith confirmed the website one.network can be used for current utility situations.

[a] Highway Authority - Webbs Corner Susie updated that work progressing. The existing culvert on A327 and reading roundabout is complete but contractors come across unexpected and significant issue on Walbrook Lane drench crossing. Works to install a new pipe at a new location stated 28th February and this will be followed by a new pipe and throttle to be installed in the Walbrook House grounds to enable able to flow eastwards towards the new pipe crossing, while restricting flows to the Northwest of Walbrook Lane.

5.4 HCC Local Flood and Water Management Strategy

Susie advised an updated strategy was published in November 2020. Now moved to next stage with a suite of 18 catchment plans. These will be going out for consultation in May. The one relevant for HDC is Lodden East, and the catchment plan process has undertaken whole prioritisation process to identify which communities in Hampshire are at worst risk of flooding. 66 priority area have been identified, 11 in the Lodden East catchment, 7 in Hart. Alex will receive a link that he will forward to enable the group to comment on.

5.5 TW projects:

[a] Surface Water Management Plans – Sarah advised rainwater planters were available and it was hoped to encourage relevant organisations to apply for funding for these by end of April.

[b] Drainage and Waste Management Plans – Sarah confirmed these are industry wide long-term plans for 2050 looking at things like climate change. They are still working to a timeframe of having them out for consultation in July this year. Prior to that a newsletter will be circulated and webinars held once out for consultation.

Sarah felt Councillor Dorn's' update on Crondall very comprehensive, spring and lots of work progressed.

Carley asked if there were any reports of further flooding in London Road, as she had not received any, but they were still carrying out investigations. Councillor Southern will look into this.

6. Parish Flood Forum: Update (HDC)

Alex advised the group there had not been another meeting since the last MAFF. These meetings will now be held in February and September and Parish meetings in May and November. Alex will be passing information to the parishes very soon to get

date in diary arrange. Alex confirmed most likely to be held virtually to encourage attendance.

7. Forward Water Situation (EA & TW)

Sarah confirmed levels at Tile Barn borehole are relatively normal, boarding on below normal aligning with it being a dry winter so far. A slight increase in next 6 months is predicted, but ground water will remain in normal range.

In terms of rainfall this has been below average at 33% of long-term average rainfall. Over the next couple of months changeable weather patterns are predicted with normal to wetter conditions being seen.

8. Any Other Business

Councillor Collett asked if he was able to access a section of the meeting he was unable to attend. It was confirmed the meeting was recorded and a link to this was available at the bottom of the chat.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Next meeting will be on Monday 12 September 2022 at 2pm.

As normal with the minutes, there will be a post-meeting note added for the responses of the various agency partners.

Meeting ended 15:47pm