

## Environment Agency English Severn & Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)

### Minutes of the English Severn & Wye Flood and Coastal Committee held on 3rd July 2012 at 13:00 - 16:00 at the Environment Agency Office at Sapphire East in Solihull

<b>Present:</b>	Dr A Wheeler, Chair	Cllr L Harvard, Coventry City Council (Part)
	Mr A Eadon EA Appointee	Cllr J Foster, Dudley MBC
	Prof, J Moverley, EA Appointee	Cllr P Awford, Gloucestershire County Council
	Mrs H Shepherd, EA Appointee	Cllr R B Hamilton, Herefordshire Council
	Mr J Turner, EA Appointee	Cllr M Price, Shropshire County Council
	Mr R Willetts, EA Appointee	Cllr J Smith, Worcestershire County Council
		Cllr H Rhodes, Telford & Wrekin Council
<b>Secretariat:</b>	Mr D Katwa, RFCC Support Officer	Deputising:
	Ms T Glover, Minutes	Cllr M Gittus, Warwickshire County Council

#### PROCEDURAL ITEMS

##### 1/17 Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the inaugural English Severn & Wye RFCC meeting with it being the newly constituted Committee and having the new Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) representation along with the new EA appointees; all bringing an expertise that will support the Committee and the EA in the important work that we do. For the purpose of the Minutes the Chair explained that the official welcoming had been conducted in the morning induction session however, a particular welcome was then given to Mr Philip Awford from Gloucestershire County Council and additional observers attending the afternoon formal meeting. The Chair announced that the Minutes were being taken by Ms T Glover, PA to Mrs S Fowler (Midlands Flood Risk Manager) and asked if anyone objected to the meeting being recorded on a dictaphone. There were no objections.

1.2 **Other Officers in Attendance:** Mr M Sitton-Kent, Director for Midlands; Mrs S Fowler, Midlands Flood Risk Manager; Mr R Stokes, Midlands FCRM Programme Manager; Mr D Katwa, RFCC Support Officer; Ms T Glover, Minutes (PA to Mrs S Fowler); Mr A Perry, West Area Flood Risk Manager; Mrs E Roberts, Central Area Flood Risk Manager; Mrs J Cooper, Programme Team Leader.

1.3 **Observers:**  
Steve Hollins and Chris Butler, Telford & Wrekin Council; David Edwards, Shropshire Council; Fiona McIntosh, North Worcestershire Water Management; Tom Palmer, South Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership; Tim Smith, Severn Trent Water; Sue Humm, Gloucestershire County Council; Graham Hodgson, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council.

## **2/17 Apologies for Absence**

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from, Worcestershire County Council – Cllr John Smith and Cllr Chris Williams, Warwickshire County Council – Cllr Mike Gittus deputising.

## **3/17 Chair's Announcements**

3.1 The Chair conveyed how out of the six EA appointee positions, one was required to be responsible for conservation issues. However, this position had not been filled as the applicants did not fit the criteria. The EA will seek suitable applicants and in the short term Prof. J Moverley had benevolently agreed to take responsibility due to his experience in land management and the Forestry Commission; Prof. Moverley will be supported by Mr J Turner and Mr A Eadon.

3.2 The Chair informed Committee members of her activities in relation to role as Chair and covered four points from the RFCC Chairs meeting at DEFRA on 30 May 2012 below:

3.2.1 **Reservoirs**, It is the responsibility of the EA to ensure the enforcement of reservoir safety of reservoirs of >25,000<sup>3</sup>m in volume. The example of Wootton Wawen Pool in Item 11 of the agenda highlights the complexity of that role.

3.2.2 **FDGiA**, The DEFRA dates are very tight this year for the LLFAs/RFCCs and this was a concern for all the RFCC Chairs. DEFRA will review this schedule for next year in order to allow for LLFAs/RFCCs to plan ahead more effectively. It was also noted that bids for project funding will need to come with a strong commitment from LLFAs and other partners.

3.2.3 **DEFRA** asked the RFCCs to provide early views on the Flood Incident Management Strategy and to feedback for the RFCC Chairs' September meeting (see Item 14). The Committee members were asked to email any thoughts or comments to Dhiren Katwa who agreed to collate the responses.

3.2.4 **LLFAs Local Flood Risk Management Strategies:** These are important strategies that can influence future investment decisions. The EA will work in partnership with LLFAs regarding their plans offering data, information and technical advice. DEFRA asked the RFCCs to consider how the Committees can work effectively with the LLFAs (see Item 15).

#### **4/17 Declaration of Interests**

- 4.1 The Chair asked members to declare any interests at the earliest opportunity.

#### **5/17 Minutes of Previous Meeting**

- 5.1 The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 17th April 2012 were approved as accurate.

#### **6/17 Matters Arising From The Minutes**

- 6.1 The Chair raised item 21 from the previous meeting as an arising matter that had been noted addressing the need for a joint workshop with the water companies to discuss strategy, developments and solutions. An additional note to the minutes had been added to say that this has now been arranged for 25<sup>th</sup> September 2012. The Chair asked those interested in attending to liaise with the RFCC Support Officer who would provide details when available.

### **ANNUAL REPORT**

#### **7/17 Severn Trent RFCC – Midlands Annual Report 2011/2012**

- 7.1 The Chair led into the next item explaining how the above report replaces the Stewardship report which the Chairs themselves were involved in writing in previous years. The Chair believes this to be an ideal new approach, full of interesting information and gave the example of being unaware of the number of flood exercises that were undertaken across the region; she then went on to urge the Committee to read the report in depth for a greater understanding of the work involved in Flood Risk Management.
- 7.2 The Chair added that the EA will be putting together information and it is the Chairs responsibility to approve its content and then feed through to Defra.
- 7.3 The FCRM Programme Manager drew the Committee's attention to some of the points which the Committee could then revisit and comment upon:
- 7.3.1 Page 26 - the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments undertaken by lead local flood authorities. The FCRM Programme Manager commended their fantastic work which had been audited and how they are now able to pull together the local strategies which will form the basis of future work.
  - 7.3.2 Page 27- working with the LLFAs who are very willing to share their information.
  - 7.3.3 Page 28 - Catchment Flood Management Plans and how in turn on Page 81 on Item 9, Annual report – shows the actions coming out of those plans and influencing how we are thinking which is very much about the long term approach.
  - 7.3.4 Page 31 - highlights the co-operation. Internal drainage boards (IDBs) have been amalgamated resulting in a share of management and resource.

- 7.3.5 Page 8 - Work with the Highways Agency illustrates how we work with our partners successfully.
- 7.3.6 Page 10 – Local levy schemes that were delivered last year and commented how last year was the record so far.
- 7.3.7 Page 13 - Delivering benefits for the environment, welcoming contribution, particularly from Mr J Turner, on how we can expand and explore the delivery of benefits more fully.
- 7.3.8 Page 14 - Water Framework Directive – reminding the Committee of the pressure on this country to bring all of our water bodies into good ecological status. Also, Farming and Water for the Future project – the last committee had supported this; helping to reduce local flood risk management.
- 7.3.9 Page 18 - Operating and running exercises – ensuring all are familiar with each others’ role. How ever good we think we may be there are always lessons to learn as every incident is different.
- 7.3.10 Page 20 – Showing the value in keeping focussed; our work with caravan sites to help owners understand the risks they face and sharing from other caravan site owners. It was noted that last year there were only two flood warnings – what a difference a year makes!
- 7.3.11 Page 51 - Really good news that we have lead local authorities on board who have the understanding to move this forward and now that the Severn-Trent Committee has split we will have better focus on issues pertinent to the Severn and Wye catchments which will bring greater quality to the decisions we make for the region.
- 7.4 The Chair invited the Committee to respond Mr J Turner commented on the value of spending time on site visits and speaking to EA offices.
- 7.5 Prof. John Moverley commented that being a new member, he enjoyed reading the Annual Report and asked whether on page 20, remarking on the super examples of Community Engagement, could there be further collaboration with the University of Gloucester and involvement within education in general. The Chair commented on how she has taken an active part in this as it benefits and contributes to the community engagement and citizenship as well as education. The West Area Flood Risk Manager agreed adding this would be a positive and we would encourage this further and embrace the benefits.
- 7.6 The Committee **resolved** to:
1. Approve the Severn Trent Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Annual Report for 2011/2012
  2. Arrange a group site visit
  3. Progress and action community engagement collaboration
  4. The RFCC Support Officer to produce an abbreviations list for reference

## PROGRAMME

### 8/17 FCRM GiA Allocation Planning Assumptions for 2013/15 and Transparency

- 8.1 The FCRM Programme Manager gave an overview:
- Our reduction in revenue funding of 4.5% per year to 2015.
  - Appendix A, the Flood Risk Management Principles for 2013/2014 allocation.
  - Capital is fixed at £259 million for the next four years.
  - Outcome Measures – this is the second transitional year from one funding format to the partnership funding approach.
  - Allocation Timetable
  - Transparency – we are spending from the public purse and we are often questioned and challenged on the spend and how we justify the operation. We are very keen to ensure our decision and projects have the evidence and transparency to demonstrate as to why they are there.
- 8.2 The Chair asked the Committee whether all were clear on the above and asked the Committee to support the recommendations and approve the allocation planning. There were no objections at this point.
- 8.3 The Chair asked for any comments on the baseline or strategy to be sent to herself or the FCRM Programme Manager.
- 8.4 The Director for the Midlands observed the difference in arrangements between partnership funding and the previous local levy approach where there was a three year rolling programme.
- 8.5 The FCRM Programme Manager proceeded to explain the partnership funding approach and the calculator which gives a clear score depending on the scale of contributions.
- 8.6 The FCRM Programme Manager explained how Moderation in the programme allowed a scheme to be included for reasons of Health & Safety It is important we have transparency of decision making on such schemes in Moderation in the future.
- 8.7 Mr A Eadon asked whether the Committee will be involved when things get tricky. The FCRM Programme Manager replied yes and that this is the Committee's programme and the Committee will be part of the difficult decision process.
- 8.8 The Committee **resolved** to:
1. Support the FCRM GiA allocation planning assumptions presented in this paper. These apply to the SR10 principles agreed by the Environment Agency's Board.
  2. Support the recommendations within this paper to improve transparency.

3. Comment on the baseline assessment of transparency made in Appendix D.
4. Note the allocation timeline and deadlines for this year's allocation process and look at this in October.
5. Forward any comments on the baseline or strategy to the Chair or to the FCRM Programme Manager.

#### **9/17 Programme Priorities and Looking Forward to 2013/14**

- 9.1 The Chair highlighted the importance of the Committee to understand funding arrangements as decisions are required at this meeting. She explained some of the decisions can be reviewed in October, once we have found out what has been funded and what has not from Defra.
- 9.2 The FCRM Programme Manager added a further recommendation paper which will be to ask the Committee to approve our plan going forward.
- 9.3 The FCRM Programme Manager brought the Committee's attention to the map and the ten indicative flood risk areas of which two fell in the Committee's patch.
- 9.4 The FCRM Programme Manager welcomed the support of Severn Trent working closely with the EA and the benefits of working together; sharing capital programmes and discovering any overlaps.
- 9.5 The FCRM Programme Manager stated how assets are changing all the time. That we have over 99% of our assets in high risk systems in the right condition.
- 9.6 The FCRM Programme Manager recognised this will be a challenging year to develop our programme across all regions. To support a fair and equal approach, the FCRM Programme Managers agreed to work at a target figure in the partnership funding score. The target figure we are aiming at to give a project a chance is around 200%.
- 9.7 The FCRM Programme Manager referred to fig 2, Page 75, 6.8 – and explained that he expects to see the blue line that drops in 2017 to come back up once we have had discussions with LLFAs for any new capital projects we will have to look at attracting additional funding. Any project refurbishments over £100K will also have to go through the calculator and seek Partnership funding.
- 9.8 The FCRM Programme Manager advised the Committee on how tight the timetable was in terms of the allocation process. There is a scoring system to which the Programme Managers have agreed to work to a target of 200% to ensure money is distributed fairly. This will reduce over time, but not surprisingly the higher the score, the higher the ranking
- 9.9 Warwickshire County Cllr, Mike Gittus asked for clarification on what timescale local authorities had to come back to us on promoting schemes. The FCRM Programme Team Leader gave background to us working closely with the local authorities. That

they had attended workshops and were aware of the timescale for bids being in by 15 June.

- 9.10 The West Area Flood Risk Manager commented that it is early days and the local authorities are working on their early strategies. This not a comprehensive list but best endeavours. The Chair explained that all of the RFCCs are in the same position where we are all slightly uncomfortable with these short deadlines, there is an element of trust with the work the Programme team have done to reach these options and the A3 sheet is to review together as a Committee and for a joint Committee decision.
- 9.11 Mr J Turner asked whether the whole Committee was going to resolve or adopt as it involves local levy. The Chair confirmed that the whole Committee need to approve the plan.
- 9.12 The Midlands Flood Risk Manager summarised for the Minutes as what she understood; that we are working on a timescale from Defra and part way through a transition year and we are not alone in this position. We have been working very hard particularly over the last four or five months for quality information to be able to make quality decisions. This is not the Committee's only and last chance as we will revisit in October. Tabled in 7.7 is an example for the paper. The A3 sheet is a summary of the projects in the region that the Committee are being asked to make decisions on. Based on what the Programme Managers have recommended that the schemes should be around the 200% level.
- 9.13 For recording purposes the Herefordshire County Cllr, R Hamilton asked what the consequence of deferring this beyond the deadline would be. The Chair replied that if no decision was made no bids would go through to Defra. The FCRM Programme Manager confirmed that if we do not put a bid in we will not get funding from Defra.
- 9.14 At this point the FCRM Programme Manager asked all to refer to the A3 appendix: Severn & Wye RFCC Scenarios 2013/2014 Balances Moving Forward and Scenarios. A presentation was given outlining the committee's options on how to make decisions:
- 9.15 Green projects  
*Are likely to be funded and agreed they are moving forward.*
- 9.16 Pink Items  
*On Local Levy with a number of questions surrounding these projects – these are now a check point where the EA are happy to support but for the Committee to give their view and support today as they have a good chance of going through, The FCRM Programme Manager then took the Committee through each scheme to secure support for the proposed options.*

- Barbourne:  
Options 1, all agreed
- Badsey Brook:  
Option 1, all agreed
- Cubbington:

Option 1, all agreed

- Aston Cantlow, Phase 2  
All agreed
- Badsey Brooke, Wickhamford  
All agreed to return funding to balances until viable proposals are established
- Slad Brook, Stroud  
All agreed to return funding to balances until viable proposals are established

#### 9.17 Yellow Projects

- Eardisley  
Herefordshire County Councillor agreed that this would make sense  
Option 2, All agreed
- Hope Under Dinmore  
Option 2, All agreed
- Hearne Brooke Flood Relief Works  
The West Area Flood Risk Manager added that they have a good track record delivering some good schemes and would like to see this project moving forward. Point added by FCRM Team Leader to say that with it being a small amount that it should go through.  
Option 3, All agreed
- Much Wenlock  
The Chair noted they are very committed in delivering their schemes. The West Area Flood Risk Manager added that they were flooded in 2007 and a number of other times and he would like to see it supported. Mr M Price from Shropshire Council commented how they have entered into discussion with landowners and designers and are confident the scheme is deliverable. Warwickshire County Cllr Mike Gittus asked whether it is affordable.  
Option 3, All agreed
- Southfield Manor Park & Sandy Lane  
Option 2, All agreed
- Hen Lane:  
Option 2, All agreed  
Revisit in October
- Bennets Road:  
Option 2, All agreed
- Dinglewell, Green Lane  
Option 1, All agreed

- Sudbrook The Lampreys & Cheyney Close  
Option 2, All agreed
- Hempsted and Rea  
Option 1, All agreed
- Stock & Bradley:  
Option 1, All agreed

9.18 Orange Projects  
*To be put through to Moderation*

- Snuff Mill Flood Alleviation Scheme (Health and Safety)
- Mousesweet Brook, Mushroom Green
- (Nafford Sluices – passed to National)

9.19 The Midlands Flood Risk Manager asked the EA appointees if they were all happy with the final allocation on all programmes that we are comfortable with the decision.

9.20 The Chair asked the Committee to raise their hand if they agreed and were happy. All agreed unanimously.

9.21 The Midlands Flood Risk Manager thanked the Committee for their support in decision making and reminded the Committee that this is not a guarantee of the FD GiA funding, but it is our best bid we can put forward.

9.22 Appendix A shows details of above decisions.

9.23 The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Revisit the Severn & Wye RFCC Scenarios 2013/2014.
2. The target figure of 200% will be revisited at October's meeting.
3. Help attract external funding for schemes.

## **OPERATIONAL MATTERS**

### **10/17 Programme Delivery**

10.1 Referring to page 101; Approval was given by the Committee for local levy funding of the Chipping Camden Scheme

10.2 The FCRM Programme Manager referred to the Outcome Targets for the year and asked the Committee to look at Page 107 and 108 on this year's delivery programme.

10.3 The Committee **resolved** to:

1. Approve the updated Severn and Wye Programme for 2012/2013.

2. Approve the increase of £20K for Chipping Camden.

### **11/17 Key Issues**

- 11.1 The FCRM Programme Manager referred to the Severn Vale Water level Management Plan. The West Flood Risk Manager explained how this work had come out of the Severn Estuary strategy. We identified a number of locations where we could create inter tidal habitat, showing we are not limiting our investment to that one particular area.
- 11.2 The FCRM Programme Manager noted that work at Wootton Wawen Pool highlights some of the challenges we face with reservoirs.
- 11.3 The FCRM Programme Manager recommended we set up RFCC subgroups to support and provide refined information and data on the allocation in the future to ensure the RFCC meetings run effectively.
- 11.4 The Committee **resolved** to:
  1. Consider and discuss the key issues presented in the paper and make recommendations for alternative key issues to be included in the future papers.
  2. The FCRM Programme Manager will keep the Committee updated on the Wootton Wawen Pool.
  3. Approve the change to allocating local levy to projects on an annual cycle.
  4. Agreed in principle to set up subgroups and look at deciding on Terms of Reference.

### **12/17 River Basin Management – Working Together Consultation**

- 12.1 The Environment Planning Manager gave a presentation on the Water Framework Directive and outlined the opportunity to work together. Then asked that the Committee give their views in the consultation by completing either online or via a hard copy consultation.
- 12.2 The Committee **resolved** to:
  1. Look at and respond to the Severn Working Together Consultation
  2. Invite partners in the Severn River Basin District to respond to the consultation

### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### **13/17 Flood and Drought Report April – June 2012**

- 13.1 The Midlands Flood Forecasting Team Leader & Midlands Drought Co-ordinator submitted an information item giving a Flood and Drought Report for April to June 2012 which the Committee **resolved** to note.

#### **14/17 Updating the Flood Risk Management Strategies in England**

- 14.1 A paper was submitted by the Director of Flood and Coastal Risk Management asking for the Committee to note the scoping paper and the work to begin production of the Flood Incident Management plan. Provide any early view on key issues and to note that further paper will be submitted to the October Committee surrounding the initial engagement with partners and customers which is also in the information item. The Committee **resolved** to note.

#### **15/17 Local Flood Risk Management Strategies in England**

- 15.1 The FCRM Programme Manager asked all to refer to page 167 how this Committee would engage and think about how we can work with local authorities.
- 15.2 The FCRM Programme Manager asked if the Committee wanted a more proactive role, to which Mr A Eadon expressed an interest.
- 15.3 The West Flood Risk Manager suggested to meet with some of the local authorities. The Chair commented on how she would like to be invited to her Local Authority meeting for her comprehension.
- 15.4 The Committee **resolved** to:
1. Note the importance of local flood risk management strategies, particularly for future investment decisions.
  2. Note the role that the EA will undertake in relation to local strategies.
  3. Consider how the Committee could engage with LLFAs as they develop their local strategies
  4. Look into Committee members attending future local authority meetings for a common understanding.
  5. Session at next meeting regarding what is happening around other Counties/Regions.

#### **16/17 Commemorative Flood Summary**

- 16.1 The **Committee** resolved to note the paper.

#### **17/17 Dates for Future Meetings**

- 17.1 Midlands RFCC Support Officer informed Members of forthcoming RFCC meeting dates which members **resolved** to note:  
9<sup>th</sup> October 2012, 10.00 am until 1.00 pm

8<sup>th</sup> January 2013, 10.00 am until 1.00 pm

### **Any Other Business/Members Feedback**

Members were given the opportunity to feedback on recent events/meetings attended as representatives of the Committee.

### **Meeting Closure**

The Chair thanked all for their contributions and decisions made at the meeting, reiterating what a great Committee and constituency it was with a vast knowledge and expertise. The Chair closed the meeting with a final comment to say that she is looking forward to seeing the Committee at the one-day workshop on 25th September 2012.