

Flood Risk Action Group (FRAG)

21 July 2022 at 4pm - Virtual meeting via Teams

Meeting Minutes

Present

Councillor Karen Shore – Chair

Councillor Hugo Deynem

Councillor Paul Roberts

Councillor Sam Naylor

Councillor Andrew Cooper

Councillor Paul Williams

Councillor Gillian Edwards

Jayne Black (JB) – Head of Highways

Jim Gibbins (JG) – Place Area Commissioner

Andrew Coward (AC) – Major Flood Event Management Engineer

Lewis Williams (LW) – Flood Risk Technician (Minutes)

Apologies

No apologies were given

1. Welcome and introductions (Cllr Shore)

2. Change of Terms of Reference and Approval (Cllr Shore/Jim Gibbins)

Cllr Shore – Noted Minor Change with membership, particularly occasions where no visiting Members will be invited. Also made clear that the relevant people should be invited to attend the FRAG meetings including other RMA's and interested parties.

Cllr Roberts – Consideration should be made to invite Welsh Water to the relevant meetings as they are the sewerage provider for some of the Western border and Chester.

Severn Trent only supply Clean Water in these areas.

Cllr Roberts – Noted dissatisfaction from residents who have localised flooding issues, and that if there is not a wider impact of the flooding, they feel overlooked, and the issues tend to be monitored rather than solutions to the problems raised.

JG – We will be sure to investigate reports of flooding.

Cllr Williams – Dutton Meadows Flooding issues. Asks whether Peel Holdings would make consideration to help with flooding issues.

JG – has contacts within Peel Holdings and can make contact.

Cllr Naylor – Explained the scrutiny exercise regarding the sewage out falling into watercourses and pointed out that there are talks of merging this process into the FRAG remit.

Cllr Shore – Issues regarding sewage entering watercourses is actioned by the Environment Agency.

JG - CWAC Team are aware of the issues and looking into it.

All accepted changes

3. Storm Christoph Section 19 Update (Andy Coward)

AC ran through the S19 sites with an overview of what had been discovered/recommended at each site.

Cllr Williams – Asked when the Northwich S19 will land.

Andy C – Explained that a draft form has been received and that they should be ready soon and needs to be reviewed by RMA's.

Cllr – Asked where the Interim reports are available.

AC – Direct people to the flooding pages of the CWAC website.

Cllr Shore/JG– Advised that S19 reports will be reported to Cabinet on the 14 September.

JG is completing the Cabinet papers that will contain the S19 reports from Atkins.

Cllr Deynem – Commented that collaboration and communication to gain local knowledge relating to these drainage systems is key to solving the issues.

Cllr Naylor – referenced the climate crisis and its role in the increase of flooding.

Cllr Shore – asked of the introduction of Environmental Land Management.

AC – the purpose of this is to identify key areas that can be used and maintained by landowners to use as flood plains to reduce the impact of storm events. This will come into place in 2024.

Cllr Roberts – Use of flood plains is very important. Noted the importance of the flood plain in Farndon. With current climate change, are the storm return periods being reassessed?

JG – Will make that contact with the EA to ask. (FRAG 24)

Cllr Deynem – what policies and processes do we already have for resident protection/development of flood plains?

AC – His experience through the S19 investigations are that Planning have taken consideration to planning applications in flood plains and run off rates from new developments.

Cllr Shore – Request to invite a senior member of the planning team to a future meeting. (FRAG 25)

4. Northwich Town Centre Flood Resilience Update (Jim Gibbins)

Temporary pumps installed over the winter period of 2021/22 at Dock Road and Barons Quay pumping stations Pumps have not been activated (other than dry testing) during the installation period between November 2021 and April 2022.

Cost of the pumps - £207,000 between the three RMA's (The Council, EA and United Utilities).

Currently looking for a consultant to model the area and suggest long-term solutions.

Looking to hire mobile pumping units when needed.

AC looking at Gully sensors at previously flooded locations. Allows us to be more reactive to flood events.

Emergency Flooding plan for Northwich Town Centre is almost complete. Agreed by RMAs that the plan needed updating.

Several ways of activating this plan including weather alerts and EA sensor trigger levels.

A version will be made available to the public and an internal version will be retained with contact info.

Cllr Shore – How does the new plan of temp pumps compare to this year's?

JG – the over pumping contingency that we are exploring for this winter period may not have the same capacity as the previous temporary pumps.

AC – 1000l/s is the aim. This target is taken from the impacts of Storm Christoph. The EA are evaluating the placement of the new pumps, with a wider spread being more effective and gives capacity to react to the severity of the storm rather than the use of one large pump that may not be as effective.

Cllr Cooper – Can you explain the rationale of the RMA's approach to this?

JG – It comes down to the cost of the assets and they are not economically viable. An evaluation of outright purchase may be an option.

Cllr Cooper – will the new system have a lower cost?

JG – Yes, it is expected that the mobile units that the Council are looking to provide will be less expensive.

Cllr Shore – Commented that the comparison of the two solutions may help to reassure the members and public and asked for other RMA's stance on the new system.

AC – UU seem to be cautious and want to model the site to be sure. Commented that the pipework was the bulk of the cost of the temporary system.

Cllr Naylor – disappointed that the temp measures that were employed helped the residents rest easy and the new system may not have the same public image. Eager to get a quote for a permanent installation.

Cllr Williams –Concerned that there is little mention of CRT in the area. Can the Sluices and lock gates at Dutton locks be opened?

JG – The Council have engaged with both CRT and the EA and they are on board and are making big steps to carry out maintenance works on their assets as well as making plans to automate processes to alleviate flooding issues where possible. The Council are building a strong working relationship with the CRT.

AC The opening of the locks by the CRT needs to be assessed.

Cllr Deynem – Concerned with the removal of the temp pumps in Northwich.

Cllr Shore – We need to look at the capacity available.

Cllr Naylor – Pointed out that the gates at Dutton locks were defective at the time of Storm Christoph and that the S19 reports may shine a light on its involvement.

Also pointed out the importance of the collaboration with other RMA's

JG – Meetings are held with Northwich RMA's bi-weekly in the winter and monthly in the summer. JG agreed to provide FRAG Members a summary of the meeting notes from the operational meetings that we have had with the CRT and the EA. n. (FRAG 26).

5. Attendance of RMA's and other Stakeholders (Cllr Shore/Jim Gibbins)

Cllr Shore – Has a FRAG meeting booked with the CRT?

Proposing the next meeting in early September to go through the S19 reports and cabinet reports before they are sent.

JG – It may be better to invite the RMA's after the reports have gone to cabinet.

Action – Two Meetings. One in August before reports are sent. One after with RMAs

Cllr Shore – Suggest sub meeting to speak with residents (Northwich)

6. Flood Engagement Events (Jim Gibbins)

There were 6 Events, the purpose of which are to understand residents' concerns and informing them of our what we are doing or are planning to do to alleviate flood risk in their area. actions. This involved a lot of Officers time to plan, however it was concluded that the events were worthwhile, and we would look to undertake further events moving forward. The RMAs were also involved, and they explained their roles and responsibilities in flood risk and alleviation.

The main criticisms encountered were focused on timescales of preventative works and the expectations from residents regarding sandbags and emergency responses from Officers.

The Service needs to raise awareness of the importance of flood risk management within the community and awareness of private flood defence techniques for residents.

FRAG Members welcomed and supported a new round of future flood engagement events. (FRAG 27)

7. Development of Forward Works Programme (Cllr Shore/Andy Coward)

JG – Suggested use of template that Kieran Collins created and pass to FRAG Members. Also, Cheshire Mid-Mersey group involvement with the FRAG and how it plays its part in Flood Risk Management.

JB – The Emergency Planning team should be invited to a future meeting. (FRAG 28)

Cllr Cooper – Can we have an update on hydraulic model for Northwich?

JG – we approached Atkins Ltd directly who have a Flood Modelling Team. They have produced a programme for delivery but is still a while off completion.

8. AOB

9. Date and times of next meeting (All)

18 August at 4pm. (Post meeting note, next meeting has been postponed to 1 September at 4pm due to tight time scales for the publication of the S19 Flood Investigation Final reports that is being presented to Cabinet on 14 September).