

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee – 19 September 2024
SUBJECT:	Arun Flood Forum – Meeting No.3
LEAD OFFICER:	Karl McLaughlin – Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager Philippa Dart – Director of Environment and Communities Joe Russell-Wells – Group Head of Environment and Climate Change
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Sue Wallsgrove
WARDS:	All Wards
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: To meet the objectives set out in the Arun Flood Forum - Terms of Reference agreed by the Environment Committee on 21 November 2023.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: Response to establishment of the Arun Flood Forum by Full Council on 08 November 2023	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: A sum of £20,000 has been included in the 2024 – 2025 revenue budget.	

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 A report was taken to Full Council on 8 Nov 2023 following Storm Ciaran. The event followed unprecedented rainfall in October 2023 and resulted in flooding across the District. Full Council recognised the impacts on business and residents agreeing that the Environment Committee should establish a Forum to review the incident, to investigate and consider the contributing factors, impacts and possible solutions. This report sets out the terms of reference for the Forum.
- 1.2 This report seeks to update the Committee following the third meeting of Arun Flood Forum, held on the 5 August 2024.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report including the proposed changes to the town and parish council representation on the Flood Forum in future.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 As a result of recent flooding within the District, the 'Arun Flood Forum' has been established to investigate the contributing factors, impacts and possible solutions in collaborative way.
- 3.2 This report gives an update on the third meeting of the Forum. Following a round of introductions each authority providing updates against the previous meetings actions. The Forum were then presented with a cross organisation presentation featuring information from the Environment Agency, Southern Water, Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council, this can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 The Chair then invited representatives of FACT (Flood Avoidance Community Taskforce) to provide an update on their work and encourage discussion within the group. The details of the update and discussion can be found in the minutes, see **Appendix 2**.

4 DETAIL

4.1 Background

Storm Ciaran arrived on the south coast of England on 2 November following unprecedented rainfall during October. The storm was subject of Yellow and Amber weather warnings for wind and rain. The weather warnings resulted in the Environment Agency (EA) issuing flood alerts and flood warning across the district. Subsequently, a number of residents and businesses were impacted by flooding either directly, or indirectly.

On 8 Nov 2023 Full Council acknowledged the devastating impact of the flooding and unanimously resolved to recommend that the Environment Committee establishes a 'Forum'. It was proposed that the Forum was to be made up of various partners responsible for flood preparation, planning and response. Members should include the Environment Agency, Southern Water, West Sussex County Council and other key partners. Investigation and consideration should be made to the contributing factors, impacts and seek possible solutions to the flooding events and impacts.

A report recommending the Terms of Reference was taken to the Environment Committee on 21 November 2023 in which the Committee amended, debated, and approved, the document.

On 26 February 2024 the Forum held it's inaugural meeting consisting of a presentation by Southern Water followed by a question and answer session in with both Forum members and members from the floor were invited to ask questions. Full details of the meeting can be found in the agenda pack for the Environment Committee held on 19 March 2024.

The second meeting of the Forum was held on 20 May 2024 consisting of a detailed presentation from the Environment Agency. The presentation laid out the challenges associated with managing all sources of flooding with particular attention given to the catchment affected by the Lidsey and Aldingbourne Rife's. Full details of the meeting can be found in the agenda pack for the Environment Committee held on 20 June 2024.

The third meeting of the Forum was held on 5 August 2024 which this report gives an update on.

4.2 Agencies Joint Presentation

Environment Agency

The Environment Agency's segment included details on the following;

- A recap of the presentation given at the previous meeting
- A laser scanned topographic map (LiDAR) demonstrating which section of the catchment are below sea level
- An update on the review of the Aldingbourne Rife Study
- A high-level assessment of possible improvements and associated limitations
 - o Upstream storage
 - o Improved embankments
 - o Pumping changes
 - o Desiltation of the lower catchment
 - o Reconnection of the Ryebank Rife

West Sussex County Council

The section presented by West Sussex County Council included;

- An update on when the Section 19 report is due to be completed
- An update on the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and associated workshops
- Jetting and cleansing works undertaken in Shripney

Arun District Council – Coastal Engineers and Flood Prevention

Arun District Council representatives presented:

- Strategic Actions
 - o Overhaul of Planning Application Validation Requirements
 - o Changes to how SuDS are reviewed on minor and non-minor applications
 - o Standardisation of ADC drainage responses
 - o Digitisation of flood risk management mapping
 - o Inclusion of digitised maps on ADC interactive mapping
 - o Full details of sites can be found in the appendices attached to the presentation

- Tactical Actions
 - o Mapping showing areas of work
 - o Full details of sites can be found in the appendices attached to the presentation
- Multi Agency flood plan updates

Southern Water

Southern Water's component of the presentation included details on:

- Further information about their roles and responsibilities
- A programme work works covering the catchment
- Southern Water's business plan for 2025-2030
- Tabulated information detailing where they are investing in wastewater treatment in the District
- An update on overflows in West Sussex and where they will target investment to stop these occurrences
- The launch of a new web service which will pull together relevant information such as real time sewage overflows

Arun District Council

Representatives of Arun District council concluded the presentation by giving an update on the Multi Agency Flood Plan and the Communication plan. Full details of the presentation can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.3 FACT update and discussion

The Update provided by FACT can be summarised as follows:

- The flooding experienced last year caused significant losses to local businesses
- The losses incurred by small local business was approximately £2 million
- The losses incurred by the larger businesses was not possible to obtain due to it being market sensitive information.
- Businesses are considering leaving the area as it is becoming unviable
- The impacts of climate change are clear but the rife appeared to work better before the IDB was disbanded
- The group recognised that the main function of the rife was to transmit water. This function has been compromised due to competing interests.
- If there are clear benefits to be realised the local businesses are prepared to provide contributions in terms of Partnership Funding.
- The group had explored setting up an independent body but quickly realised that this was a complicated task
- One of the main issues limiting progress was the lack of a full condition report of the Rifes
- The group have documented that there is a large blockage as a key section of the rife. They have raised this with the Environment Agency.
- Having investigated an independent body route the group believe the best way forward is to work with EA

- There is significant misunderstanding as to who is responsible for what and which sections of the catchment are main river and ordinary watercourse.
- The group, together with relevant stakeholders, need to be more creative in how we deliver the service in the future. The group recognised that third party contractors are often cheaper than using government frameworks.
- The group believes that desilting should not be discounted and that it forms part of the maintenance works together with grass cutting and reed removal.

4.4 Key information from outbreak discussion and future agenda items.

- Southern Water confirmed that they are carrying out 'Health checks' on all of their pumping stations to identify what upgrades are required
- Southern Water confirmed that they will investigate if the Saltbox develop are in breach of their condition by discharging above the agreed rate
- SW are investing approximately £96.5m in the district over the next 5 years. The works will focus on reducing discharges from storm overflows.
- Concerns were raised over sewer sealing and how this would impact ground and surface water
- The EA confirmed that additional gauging works would be unlikely to increase the number of properties identified during the Cost benefit ratio assessment.
- Economic Factors will need to be raised at the next meeting so identify if these can bridge the funding deficit
- Reaffirmation that the catchment is very flat, below sea level and tidally locked
- The 2017 assessment identified costs were approximately £22m. Costs are likely to have risen significantly since then.
- **The 2017 assessment identified a Cost benefit ratio of 0.16. In layman's terms, this means that if the scheme were to proceed, for every million-pound invested by the taxpayer only £160k of benefit is realised.**
- Collaboration and significant Partnership funding is needed if a capital scheme is to progress
- There have been significant financial losses to local business and opportunities exist to raise funds through FACT

4.5 Notes of the meeting

The notes of the meeting and action points can be found in **Appendix 2.**

5 **Town and Parish Council representation**

5.1 The membership relating to town and parish councils is set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR) as follows:

“Up to 4 Parish Council representatives, who should be the Chair or Vice Chair of their Parish Council, (with not more than one representative from each parish)”

The Parish Council's that had the most reported number of incidents following Storm Ciaran in the autumn of 2023 were asked to attend. These were:

- Bersted
- East Preston

- Barnham
- Middleton-on-sea

During the Committee meeting held on 20 June 2024 the Members supported the proposal to rotate the representatives from the towns and parishes to attend the Flood Forum to ensure that representation was increased, but that the membership of the Forum was maintained at the same number.

As there are 31 T/P in the District it is suggested that those that have been worst affected by significant flooding, or could in future be affected, are identified for future representation. This includes:

- Aldwick
- Arundel
- Barnham & Eastergate
- Bersted
- Bognor Regis
- East Preston
- Felpham
- Littlehampton
- Middleton-on-sea
- Walberton
- Pagham
- Yapton

The next meeting will take place in November this year. It is therefore proposed that for the next meeting representatives from the following town and parishes will be invited to attend:

1. Arundel
2. Aldwick
3. Pagham
4. Littlehampton

The parish council's that have previously attended will be informed of this change. As with every other town and parish they will continue to be able to make representation to the Forum through the District Councillors who attend the Forum.

- 5.2 The full Terms of Reference (TOR) can be found in **Appendix 3**.

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 No further consultation has taken place.

7 OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 7.1 None.

8 COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 8.1 The costs of the proposals in this report are £20,000. The Council's 2024/25 revenue budget was approved by Policy & Finance Committee on the 8 February 2024 and by Full Council on the 21 February 2024, and included a provision of £20,000 within the central contingency budget to fund the work of the Arun Flood Forum.

9 RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 None to date.

10 COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 10.1 The Arun Flood Forum is a body established by the Environment Committee and the appropriate statutory power for its establishment is the Council's general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. This report provides an update on the Forum's work and any recommendations that might be required from the Committee and Full Council in the future will be brought to and through the Committee.

11 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 11.1 The newly appointed Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager, Karl McLaughlin, will carry the project as part of his caseload.

12 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

- 12.1 Health and Safety impacts will be assessed as actions from the forum are proposed and agreed.

13 PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

- 13.1 Impacts to be assessed as actions from the forum are proposed and agreed.

14 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

- 14.1 The overall objectives of the Forum is to understand and reduce the impact of flooding on the districts residents, businesses and environment.

15 CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

- 15.1 To be considered as actions from the Forum are proposed and agreed.

16 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

16.1 Not applicable.

17 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

17.1 To be considered as actions from the Forum are proposed and agreed.

18 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

18.1 Sensitive data will be handled in accordance with the GDPR.

CONTACT OFFICER:

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Full Council report 8 Nov 2023

[\(Public Pack\)Full Council - 8 November 2023 - Supplement Two - Urgent Items Agenda Supplement for Full Council, 08/11/2023 18:00 \(arun.gov.uk\)](#)

Environment Committee report 21 November 2023

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Environment Committee, 21/11/2023 18:00 \(arun.gov.uk\)](#)

Environment Committee report 19th March 2024 – Inaugural meeting

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Environment Committee, 19/03/2024 18:00 \(arun.gov.uk\)](#)

Environment Committee report 20 June 2024 – Second meeting

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Environment Committee, 20/06/2024 18:00 \(arun.gov.uk\)](#)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Cross Organisation presentation

Appendix 2 – Meeting minutes

Appendix 3 – Terms of Reference