

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee – 30 January 2025
SUBJECT:	Arun Flood Forum – Meeting Number 4
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 8 Nov 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 provides the Committee with an update following the fourth (4th) meeting of Arun Flood Forum, held on the 25 November 2024.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report.

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1 As a result of flooding experienced within the district in 2023, 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 fourth meeting of the Forum.
- 3.3 For the benefit of the new members, the meeting begun with a round of introductions followed by an update against the previous meetings actions. The Forum were then presented a cross organisation presentation featuring information from West Sussex County Council (WSCC), Southern Water (SW), the Environment Agency (EA) and Arun District Council (ADC). A copy of the presentation can be found in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.4 The presentation was followed by a question & answer session where members took the opportunity to ask site specific questions and discuss the strategic impacts of future works.
- 3.5 The Chair summarised the Forum's progress to date and invited members to consider how they thought the group was progressing, and what the group should strive to achieve next year. A copy of the meeting minutes can be found **Appendix 2**.

4 **DETAIL**

4.1 Background

Storm Ciaran arrived on the south coast of England on 2 November 2023 following unprecedented rainfall during October 2023. The storm was subject of Yellow and Amber weather warnings for wind and rain. The weather warnings resulted in the Environment Agency 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 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 its 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 and presented a cross-organisation presentation featuring information from the Environment Agency, Southern Water, Arun District Council and West Sussex County Council. The presentation focused on how the agencies work collaboratively to reduce flood risk, detailing strategic and tactical actions taken by each authority. Full details of the meeting can be found in the agenda pack for the Environment Committee held on 19 September 2024.

The fourth meeting of the Forum was held on 25 November 2024 which this report gives an update on.

4.2 Agencies Joint Presentation

West Sussex County Council

West Sussex County Council began the presentation by providing details on the following;

- An update on the progress of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, associated workshops and public consultation.
- An update on the Section 19 reports. These were expected to be published by the end of the year (2024).

Southern Water

WSSCC handed the floor to Southern Water whose presentation slides included details on:

- SW's Sewer relining and sealing programme and how this work is carried out.
- Their work programme and progress in Shripney.
 - o The programme includes 1.8km of foul network sealing & lining.
 - o Work is expected to be completed by the end of the year (2024), subject to obtaining the necessary permits.
- A map showing the lining progress in Shripney to date (Nov 2024)
- An update on their 2025 - 2030 Business Plan
- Explanation why SW disagree with Ofwat's Draft Determination.

Environment Agency

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

- Their ongoing engagement with key stakeholders across the district who have been affected by various sources of flooding – Coastal, Fluvial and Pluvial.

- The open day held at Felpham Pumping station.
- An update on 3 Capital Schemes the EA are progressing in the district;
 - o Barham Natural Flood Management
 - o Felpham Pumping Station
 - o Additional Gauges in the Aldingbourne catchment

Arun District Council – Coastal Engineers and Flood Prevention

The presentation concluded with Arun District Council representatives providing updates on the previously identified Strategic Actions and recent Tactical works.

- Strategic Actions
 - o Sharing the updated EA guidance regarding Riparian Rights and Responsibilities. “Your watercourse: Rights and roles update”. See **Appendix 3**
 - o Publishing updated guidance as part of the Arun Floodsmart media campaign.
 - o Guidance relating discharging drainage conditions for householders and small developers is underway. We have been working to simplify language and establish methodologies that are proportionate to the scale of development.
 - o ADC have commissioned the first portion of The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) update but are awaiting several key documents that will form part of the evidence base. These documents include:
 - The updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - The National Flood Risk Assessment dataset (NaFRA2)
 - An update to the Lower Arun hydrological model.
- Tactical Actions
 - o ADC representatives, together with WSCC, have been investigating a potential network issue at Hoe Lane.
 - o ADC, EA, WSCC, FACT, Landowners and local businesses have been working in collaboration to improve the open watercourse that runs adjacent to Durban Road. The watercourse is in the epicentre of where the flooding occurred in 2023 and is heavily vegetated and silted.
 - o Property level protection has been explored with several individuals to help reduce the impacts when flooding does occur.

Arun District Council – Awareness Campaign

Arun District Council’s Communication team have been running an awareness campaign working with internal and external stakeholders to simplify and share information. The campaign includes a wealth of information including simplified infographics to aid communication when explaining technical aspects of flooding.

Full details of the presentation can be found in **Appendix 1**.

4.3 Presentation Questions and Discussion

Following the presentation, several site specific and strategic questions were asked facilitating outbreak discussions. The key information is summarised below;

- Southern Water confirmed that the discharge rate from the Saltbox development is currently within the consented range.
- If the consented rate is exceeded, Southern Water will step in to put a stop on their discharge until it is resolved.
- Sealing the foul sewers will help to prevent the foul system becoming overwhelmed by surface water and groundwater ingress. The surface water that is currently entering their system will be directed towards the appropriate networks.
- Barnham is Southern Water's next sewer sealing priority. They are awaiting the outcoming of funding before confirming when Barnham will be addressed.
- Southern Water carried out "Health checks" on 16 pumping stations. As a result, maintenance activities such as impeller replacement has been carried out.
- Southern Water are holding weekly meetings with their contractors to get updates on outstanding works.
- Southern Water confirmed that in advance of sealing numerous manholes they have modelled the impact ensure effluent is not discharged elsewhere.
- The EA confirmed that the majority of the Rife had been subject to vegetation maintenance and was in a much better position than in 2023.
- The EA have been assisting residents at Rope Walk, Littlehampton by providing engineering advice and general resilience and preparedness information.
- ADC have also been working with residents at Rope Walk providing Emergency Planning information and information on permitted development rights (Planning Law).
- All agencies acknowledged the challenges associated with reaching residents who were non-digital and agreed to act on this with assistance from Parish Councils.
- An investigation regarding the ad hoc drainage solution employed by Rolls Royce was confirmed as underway.
- The group discussed what, if anything, could be done to address drainage on older housing. It was explained that although the drainage solutions were inferior, they were compliant at the time of construction and very little could be done. When property is redeveloped, the Local Planning Authority (ADC) take the opportunity to secure betterment.
- Southern Water have a team dedicated to investigating and resolving misconnections. A significant amount of work has been carried out in Aldwick and Bognor Regis reducing flooding and improving bathing water quality.

- Southern Water are investigating various methods of separating the surface water from the foul network. However, they also confirmed that it is not feasible to lay a new surface water sewer network and connect the existing infrastructure.
- Southern Water confirmed they are looking at practicalities of enforcement action where private systems are facilitating groundwater ingress into their system.
- WSCC are investigating where Highway Gullies can be disconnected from the foul network to increase the capacity of the foul network.

4.4 Forum Reflection and Next Steps

To conclude the fourth meeting, the Chair invited members to reflect on the progress of the forum to date, to think about what the forum would like to achieve over the next year and to share their thoughts with the group. The salient points have been summarised below;

- The Forum has been very successful in bringing the agencies together.
- It has demonstrated how the agencies interact and work with one another.
- Through the Forum, closer working relationships have demonstrated meaningful outcomes for the public
- The Arun Flood Forum is frequently referenced by the agencies as a meaningful piece of work. It has been identified that other councils could benefit from adopting a similar approach.
- Given the complexity of governmental tiers, the Forum does a good job of connecting the relevant parties, but more could be done with the Parish Councils.
- The Forum needs to enhance its external communication channels so that more people can benefit from the great work of the Forum.
- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) webpage would be beneficial to help answer the technical questions.
- The group should place importance on working with community groups such as FACT (Flood Avoidance Community Taskforce). Such groups are an invaluable resource providing local insight opening up new communication channels.
- The Forum should continue to focus on high-level strategic outcomes. This is where the largest benefits will be realised through cross pollination.

4.5 Notes of the meeting

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

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 No further consultation has taken place.

6 OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1 None.

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

7.1 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.

8 RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 None to date.

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

9.1 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.

10 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 The Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager, Karl McLaughlin, will carry the project as part of his caseload.

11 HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

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

12 PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

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

13 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

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

14 CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

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

15 CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 Not applicable.

16 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

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

17 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

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

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Karl McLaughlin

Job Title: Flooding and Coastal Engineering Manager

Contact Number: 01903 737814

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 \(arun.gov.uk\)](#)

Environment Committee report 19 September 2024 – Third meeting

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Environment Committee, 19/09/2024 18:00](#)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Cross Organisation Presentation Nov 2024

Appendix 2 – Arun Flood Forum Minutes 25 November 2024

Appendix 3 – Your Watercourse: rights and roles