

SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN SPELTHORNE – 17 March 2014

AGENDA ITEM 6

MEMBER WRITTEN QUESTION TIME

1. Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos will ask the following question:

“You will see from the Petition that has been received from the residents of Greenlands Road and Leacroft the strength of feeling that residents have as regards the recent flooding. From talking to residents so far and from my own observations it would appear that on Sunday 9th February at 5pm there was no water. At 8pm the area was completely flooded. A sluice gate in the River Colne feeding into the River Ash was jammed in the open position. This allowed the River Ash to quickly overwhelm and flood the roads mentioned above. I have been in contact with the Leader of Surrey County Council to assist me in getting to the bottom of this local disaster. I wanted to seek the support of this Committee. The question also arises as to who informed Surrey Police to knock on the doors of the residents of Greenland Road and Leacroft after 11.30pm telling them to "evacuate"? This tells me that someone in authority must have been aware in order to inform Surrey Police to do this. The residents need answer to this, and so do I. The ensuing disaster to residents' homes and gardens had to be seen to be believed. I visited the area after the floods and I have never seen anything quite like it.

These residents had no idea this was about to happen. May I please have some up-to-date information from our officers on this incident and also what steps are the authority going to take to make sure that the people who are responsible for this take urgent steps to compensate the residents. It is very interesting indeed that on Thursday 13th February a workforce had attended and repaired the sluice gate. Who repaired the sluice gate? I would be most grateful if officers could let me have any update or information they have obtained on this issue.”

Ian Good, Head of Emergency Management, will give the following answer:

Evacuation

“The decision to undertake the door to door calling was a decision from the Strategic Coordinating Group at Mount Browne. The task was undertaken by officers from across the partnership including the Police, Fire Service and Borough Council staff, with the County Council leading on the identification of, and support to vulnerable people in the risk areas. The decision was taken once the Severe Flood Warnings were issued by the Environment Agency for

communities along the Lower Thames in Surrey and in neighbouring authorities in Thames Valley.

There had been a number of warnings of flooding issued by the Environment Agency. Residents in the Lower Thames area, who have signed up to the Flood Warning Scheme would have received Flood Warnings, (the risk of flooding in properties) from the 6th Feb 2014 and would have been sent the Severe Flood Warnings (the risk to life) on the 9th Feb 2014, once the risk had been identified.”

Sluice Gate

“From the description we have been given appears to be the gate on the Staines Reservoir Aqueduct. Thames Water maintain the Staines Reservoir Aqueduct and associated assets. There is uncertainty as to whether the sluice gates that reportedly caused the flooding issue are on the River Colne, the Staines Reservoir Aqueduct (or possibly both). Surrey County Council has no direct responsibility for operating or maintaining these sluice gates but will take forward residents concerns and provide feedback to the committee.

Given the complex nature of the ownership and actions undertaken there will be a full investigation into the sluice gate that has been raised by residents. This will be a formal investigation under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Act 2010 led by Surrey County Council.”

2. Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos will ask the following question:

“Between Saturday 31st January and Sunday 9th February there were tanker lorries queuing to discharge floodwater/sewerage (24 hours day and night) into the manhole on Leacroft Green, Staines - opposite the Old Red Lion pub. I have been told that the tankers were relieving Riverbridge School flooding and taking it to Leacroft as described above. Why was this happening and on whose authority? I would be most grateful if officers could investigate this as a matter of urgency.”

Ian Good, Head of Emergency Management, will give the following answer:

“Thames Water did undertake tankering of the sewage contaminated flood water from the Riverbridge School. This was necessary to ensure that the water levels at the school were managed and was undertaken by Thames Water as a part of the excessive water levels in the sewer caused by the flooding in the local area. Given the water levels and flooding from the River Thames it was necessary for this work to be undertaken on a 24 hour basis.”

3. Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos will ask the following question:

“As regards the recent flooding to the Penton Hook area and in particular Wheatsheaf Lane, Penton Hook Road, Garrick Close and Riverside Close, Grosvenor Road, Baden Close and Laleham Road, Staines, would officers please let me know how the Authority assisted these residents and how the

Emergency Plan was put into effect? On behalf of the residents I would like to thank the County Council for taking urgent action to call in the Army to assist. I would also like to thank the officers of Spelthorne Borough Council who worked in partnership with the Police and the Army. Also the numerous local heroes and volunteers who worked day and night to help residents. It was an unprecedented event which we hope never happens again.”

Ian Good, Head of Emergency Management, will give the following answer:

“Partner agencies had been working closely together since the 21st December 2013 dealing with flooding and the impacts of the storms in areas of the County.

The planning for emergencies in the County is undertaken through the Surrey Local Resilience Forum. Unfortunately flooding of this nature is a known High Risk and partners have plans in place to respond to such events that have been tested through multi-agency exercises. The plans allow for a scalable response to flood events, and once it was known that Severe Flood Warnings were to be issued a 'major incident' was declared. Following these plans Command and Control arrangements were instigated to allow the partnership response required to respond to the flooding. As part of these standing arrangements the Military Aid to the Civil Authority protocol (MACA), was activated.

Partner agencies had been working closely together since the 21st December 2013 dealing with flooding and the impacts of the storms in areas of the County.”

4. Cllr Carol Coleman will ask the following question:

“At the full council meeting of December 2013, under item 7, questions from members, I asked a supplementary to question number 3, which was, "can members have sight of the footway programme". The response from Cllr John Furey, the cabinet member for transport matters replied that members could see the programme through their local committee chairman. Could the chairman please make this available to members of the Spelthorne Local Committee?”

Cllr Walsh, Chairman will give the following answer:

“A copy of the proposed footway programme has been sent to Members of the Local Committee.”

5. Cllr Carol Coleman will ask the following question:

“At the full council meeting of February 2014, under item 7, questions from members, question number 5, I asked for assurances that savings in all non essential costs within Surrey Fire & Rescue Service had been investigated

before the decision had been made to reduce front line fire cover for Spelthorne. In her written reply, the cabinet member stated that "For bullet point 2 regarding the number of vehicles in SFRS, this information is available but does require a detailed briefing which is available to all Members should they wish to avail themselves of this."

I am sure that all members of the Spelthorne Local Committee would wish to avail themselves of this detailed briefing, and so respectfully request the chairman to arrange this for the committee?"

Mark Arkwell, Assistant Group Commander, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service will give the following answer:

"SFRS have a wide range of vehicles that can be determined as front line. These are not exclusively fire engines, but include many different vehicle types which allow us to respond to the various types of incident we are called to respond to.

In addition to our operational capability, we also have a fleet of vehicles providing support to frontline operations or that allow delivery of our statutory non operational responsibilities. eg Community Safety, Fire Prevention, Mechanical and logistical support.

These vehicles are essential in the delivery of a Fire and Rescue Service, which operates in all conditions, at all times of the day, every day. We have adequate assets to deal with business as usual, however on occasion, as has been illustrated in the recent spate of flooding, we may need to supplement these vehicles with assistance from our partners and other Fire and Rescue Services.

For clarity below is a list of our current vehicles as requested:

- 35 x Fire engines
- 8 x Spare fire engines for maintenance, accidents, etc
- 3 x Fire engines for training
- 2 x Fire engines which have been purchased by the boroughs for the Youth Engagement Scheme
- 4 x Water carriers
- 2 x Aerial ladder platforms
- 4 x Unimog off road vehicles (3x fire fighting & 1 x animal rescue)
- 5 x fire fighting landrovers
- 2 x Land Rovers for towing and deployment of boats and other water rescue equipment
- 1 x Incident Command Unit
- 1 x Forward Command unit
- 2 x Rapid command Vans
- 1 x Detection monitoring and identification vehicle (provided as national asset)
- 5 x Prime Movers (provided as national asset)
- 1 x Incident response unit (provided as national asset)
- 65 x Flexi duty officer response vehicles & Area Commanders cars.

- 3 x Principal Officer response vehicles

In addition to our operational capability, we also have a fleet of vehicles providing support or allow delivery of our non operational responsibilities. These include:

- 25 x Vauxhall Corsas, used for transporting fire fighters between stations and delivery of prevention and protection activity
- 2 x Personnel Carrier Vehicles to transport fire fighters to and from incidents and training
- 10 x multi purpose vans. (Technical service, Supplies, Training, Hydrant testing, infrastructure support, etc)
- 3 x workshop mechanic vans
- 1 x Land Rover Engineering support & off road fuel delivery/recovery
- LGV for Driver training, logistical support and bulk foam delivery.”

6. Cllr Robert Evans will ask the following question:

“At the recent Ashford North Residents Association meeting, concerns were expressed about the dangerous A30 and Town/Stanwell road junction (the BullDog / Ashford Hospital). Will this Committee agree to investigate the traffic flow, the Lane markings, the sequencing of traffic lights and other factors to see if safety improvements can be made?”

Richard Bolton, Local Highways Services Group Manager, will give the following answer:

“Surrey County Council is not responsible for the A30 London, which is maintained by the Highways Agency directly. Specifically in terms of the Stanwell Road/Town Lane crossroads at the ‘Bulldog junction’, this consists of the carriageway, traffic light operation, including signal phasing and associated white line destination markings and signing, of all arms.

The Highways Agency has received contributions from recent redevelopments on the A30, which will allow them to investigate the junction and make any necessary capacity and safety improvements. This may include alterations to the layout, and operation, as well as continuing the current cycle lanes on the A30, at least up to the Bulldog junction. This proposal is currently in progress by the Highways Agency consultants. The County Council, as the Local Highway Authority will liaise and work with the Highways Agency to ensure that any proposals do not impact adversely on the local network.”

AGENDA ITEM 7

PUBLIC WRITTEN QUESTION TIME

1. Mr Andrew McLuskey will ask the following question:

“Why, given that the Spelthorne area was afflicted with serious floods in 2003 which were very similar to those we have recently been affected by, did the County Council not take appropriate action to prevent a repetition?”

Peter Agent, Asset Planning Group Manager will give the following answer:

“The current Surrey Local Flood Risk Strategy is informed and influenced by the significant events that initially occurred in autumn 2000 and continued throughout that winter. During that period, previously considered the worst flood event for which records are held, over 500 properties were flooded across Surrey. In the winter of 2002/03 the Chertsey area experienced severe fluvial flooding and in August 2006 two months of rainfall fell in just six hours in north-west Surrey, again affecting over 500 properties.

The council used the information and knowledge from all these severe weather events to better plan and manage its various responses and, working with other risk management authorities, deal with identified priorities throughout the county. Our efforts at that time were further enhanced by the Pitt Review in response to further serious flooding that occurred across England in the summer of 2007. The subsequent report, in June 2008, made 92 recommendations that helped change the way that local flood risk is managed and ultimately lead to the introduction of The Flood and Water Management Act in 2010.

This Act made the County a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) responsible for managing the flood risk associated with surface water runoff, ordinary water courses and groundwater. These responsibilities are in addition to the duties also imposed on the council as Highway Authority.

The LLFA has a duty under the Act to:

1. Produce a local flood risk management strategy
2. Create an asset register
3. Carry out an investigation where significant flooding occurs
4. Create a Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (not yet enacted)

In these circumstances Surrey has and will continue to respond to flooding issues throughout the county providing practical support and assistance with partner organisations where possible. The council is also ensuring that flood information is obtained, maintained, shared and communicated widely with other flood risk management authorities, and internal and external stakeholders, for future reference and action where appropriate.

Since Christmas the council has been working with its partners and has identified that official 'investigations' are required at approximately 30 sites across the county where significant flooding has occurred. Any individual investigation of this nature will require the involvement of all the relevant flood risk management authorities concerned in order to provide appropriate conclusions. It is, however, noted that managing the flood risk associated with main rivers, like the Thames, is primarily a task for the Environment Agency.

The council's operational response to the severe weather events since Christmas has included officers from a variety of services, together with staff from our service provider partners, who have successfully delivered on the ground. Many of the individuals concerned have worked throughout this period on a round the clock rota, and continue to do so, to ensure all services to Surrey residents have been generally maintained throughout. As the event has developed over recent weeks we have also worked closely with the military and emergency services to respond to a large number of network issues including many fallen trees and road defects etc. in addition to the serious flooding throughout the county."

2. Mr John Carruthers will ask the following question:

"We are currently undergoing the worst flooding from the river Thames for many years, with bridge and roads closed, dwellings flooded with dirty water, and major disruption to communications and activity.

Ten years ago a scheme was considered by Thames Conservancy for a second relief channel such as now above Staines, from below Staines to run as far as about Molesey. I was the Surrey CC representative on the Thames Conservancy at the time. This never progressed.

I ask that Surrey CC prevail upon Thames Conservancy to reconsider and activate this scheme as soon as possible.

As major schemes, such as this, usually attract major protests with bad publicity, I suggest that to proceed with it now would seriously help this scheme's progression. Surrey CC does have a representative on the Thames Conservancy Board."

Peter Agent, Asset Planning Group Manager will give the following answer:

"The scheme referred to by Mr Carruthers was renamed in 2013 as 'The River Thames Scheme (Datchett to Teddington)' to better reflect the nature of this programme of projects. The aim of the current scheme is to:

- Construct a flood channel (in three sections totalling approximately 17 km in length and 20-30 m wide to increase flow capacity of the River Thames
- Increase the capacity of three of the Thames weirs

- Develop a major incident plan
- Install property level protection for up to 1,200 properties

A multi agency team of senior officers and members from affected authorities is working closely with scheme owners and managers from DEFRA and the Environment Agency (EA), to promote the new scheme and develop joint funding initiatives to locally raise approximately £120 m towards the total scheme cost, currently estimated to be approximately £256 million. The provisional programme indicates that from the current consents stage completion of the scheme is programmed in Spring 2025.

The recent severe weather events and widespread flooding throughout Surrey will all be subject to review as all the risk management authorities and partners move from the operational response to the recovery stages of the process. The EA is responsible for flood risk management on main rivers, including the River Thames, and Surrey County Council will continue to work with them and other responsible authorities to reduce the future risk from all forms of flooding in the county. This will include further development of the River Thames Scheme to reflect any identified outcomes from the recent events.

As the various flood risk management authorities move from their immediate operational response to the recent severe weather events and flooding into the recovery stage it will also be essential to review all aspects of the flood event.”

3. Mr John Seaman will ask the following question:

“When SCC's external financial adviser carried out value for money (to the taxpayer) and affordability (to the council) assessments were these and similar costs and potential liabilities fully considered? (Cabinet agenda paragraphs 47 - 51).” (Mr Seaman presented this question at the Local Committee (Spelthorne) on 16 December 2013)

Richard Parkinson, Waste Group Manager will give the following answer:

“Firstly I would point out that the terms of the contract between Surrey County Council and SITA have been developed in consultation with government to ensure that the public sector is properly protected.

As is a principle with all PFI contracts, SITA will only start to receive payment from the council, in respect of the asset, once the plant has passed its commissioning tests and is proved to be operating satisfactorily. Evidence of satisfactory performance will be provided by the Independent Certifier who will be jointly appointed by SITA and Surrey County Council.

Following successful commissioning, SITA will accept the plant and continue to operate it until the expiry of their contract with Surrey County Council in September 2024. During the time of their operation of the plant, SITA will be required to operate the plant to its design capacity and to maintain the plant in

accordance with the agreed maintenance schedule. If at any time, the performance of the plant were to become unsatisfactory then contractual mechanisms require SITA to take action to restore the performance.

Prior to handing the plant back to the council in 2024, SITA will be required to undertake a thorough inspection of the plant to demonstrate that the condition of the plant is such that it can operate for the remainder of its 25 year design life. If any defects are found during this inspection, SITA are required, at their own expense, to rectify these and to ensure that the plant is handed over in such a condition that it is capable of being operated for the remainder of its design life.

From September 2024 onwards the Council is responsible for the operation on the plant."