

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**LOCAL COMMITTEE (Spelthorne)****DATE:** 30 JUNE 2014**LEAD OFFICER:** SUSIE KEMP – ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**SUBJECT:** SURREY FLOODS - SPELTHORNE**DIVISION:** ALL**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

In December 2013 the County of Surrey was hit by extreme weather conditions resulting in a prolonged spell of flooding affecting several districts and boroughs.

Surrey declared major incidents on 24 December 2013 and 9 February 2014 to coordinate the response to flooding across the County. Officers at Spelthorne Borough Council estimate that as many as 900 premises in Spelthorne could have been impacted by flooding. The latest figures for council tax and business rate relief for those who have been internally flooded are currently 219 and 48 respectively and applications are still being received.

A coordinated multi agency response was implemented involving officers from the Environment Agency (EA), District and Borough Councils, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), Her Majesty's Armed Forces, Surrey County Council (SCC), various utility companies including Thames Water and Public Health England (PHE).

This report provides background information on the incident and the flood recovery to restore affected communities to ensure that they are more resilient going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Committee notes the multi-agency response to the flooding event and the flood recovery work taking place.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To keep the Spelthorne Local Committee informed of progress.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE SURREY FLOODS**The Surrey Picture**

- 1.1 On 21 December 2013 forecast reports were received of potential strong winds and heavy rain raising the potential for wide area flooding on the tributaries of

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the River Mole and River Wey. On 24 December 2013, a major incident was declared when a severe flood warning was issued for the River Mole.

- 1.2 In reaction to the rainfall across the County, on 3 January 2014, water levels on the River Thames rose and flood warnings were issued for communities on Surrey stretches. Through partnership coordination isolated evacuations were undertaken for communities at risk, some roads were closed, and sewage systems were also impacted due to high river levels.
- 1.3 The majority of flood warnings were removed by mid January but the County continued to experience higher than average rainfall. On 6 February, the National Flood Forecasting Centre warned that further property flooding was likely across Surrey and flood warnings were issued for areas along the River Thames.
- 1.4 Rising river levels resulted in 9 severe flood warnings being issued on 9 February due to the risk to life. A major incident was declared with strategic coordination at Mount Browne, the Surrey Police Headquarters. At this time, due to the expected impact on residents and partner resources, a request was made for military support.
- 1.5 The severe flood warnings remained in place until 17 February and during this time the resources and arrangements to support this major incident were maintained.
- 1.6 Following the removal of the severe flood warnings the declaration of major incident was removed and a phased handover to recovery was undertaken.

Flooding in Spelthorne

- 1.7 Properties suffered from flooding throughout Spelthorne from the River Thames, the Lower Colne and the River Ash. Officers at Spelthorne Borough Council believe that the flooding that has taken place in Spelthorne could have affected as many as 900 premises.
- 1.8 In January, roads were closed and some businesses were affected. From February 9th onwards, there was extensive flooding of homes in Staines-upon-Thames, Laleham Reach and Chertsey Bridge.
- 1.9 On 13 February severe flood warnings were in force on the River Thames from Staines-upon-Thames to Penton Hook, Laleham, Chertsey, Shepperton Green and on properties closest to the river from Littleton Lane, Shepperton Green to Shepperton Lock. Flood warnings were in force on the River Colne at Stanwell Moor and the River Ash at Ashford and Staines-upon-Thames.
- 1.10 A number of road closures were put in place during this period. Roads that were closed included Sheep Walk (Shepperton), Chertsey Bridge Road, Littleton Lane, Thameside, Junc Vicarage Road (Shepperton), Chertsey Road, Renfree Way, Russell Road / High Street (Shepperton), Caledonia Road (Stanwell), Chertsey Lane (Staines-upon-Thames), Hithermoor Road (Stanwell Moor), Fordbridge Road, Walton Lane / Jessamy Road (Shepperton), Wheatsheaf Lane (Staines-upon-Thames), Bowes Road, Thames Street (Staines-upon-Thames), Leacroft (Staines-upon-Thames), Greenlands Road, Priory Green, Laleham Road, Norlands Lane, Ferry Lane, Wendover Road,

Hythe Park Road, Round Way, Penton Hook Road, and Penton Hall Drive (Staines-upon-Thames).

- 1.11 At Laleham, the river rose to its highest recorded level of 1.12m upstream at Penton Hook and Sunbury Lock recorded 4.68m downstream, 7cm higher than the previous record.
- 1.12 Flooding was experienced in Greenlands Road and Leacroft in the vicinity of the River Ash. The cause of this flooding is of particular concern to the local residents who have submitted a petition to the Spelthorne Local Committee.

Humanitarian Response

- 1.13 The emergency response led by Surrey Police involved agencies such as Surrey Fire and Rescue, Surrey Highways, the Environment Agency, Thames Water and Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC).
- 1.14 Spelthorne Borough Council, as part of its initial response, provided detailed and updated local information, developed with partner agencies, via its website. This information included advice on provision of toilet and shower facilities, sand bag policy, skips and street cleaning. Information and support was provided by SBC and over the period 19,000 calls to customer services, 25,000 hits on the flooding webpages, 6,400 hits on the 'engage app', and 1,900 sandbag requests were received. SBC distributed 15,000 leaflets to local residents and businesses. SBC very quickly established a rest centre for people who had been made homeless and also quickly established four locally based flood recovery centres offering advice and support at:
 - Spelthorne Museum, Staines-upon-Thames
 - The Wellbeing Centre, Greeno Centre, Glebeland Gardens, Shepperton
 - The Lord Lucan Pavilion, The Broadway, Laleham
 - St Mary's Church Hall, Green Street Sunbury

The recovery centre opening times and location were scaled back in line with demand toward the end of February, during the recovery phase.

- 1.15 Adult Social Care teams supported a number of vulnerable residents and a number of Voluntary, Community and Faith sector organisations also supported affected residents.
- 1.16 An investigation is currently being conducted into the tragic death of a seven-year old boy from Abbeyfields and deepest sympathies are extended to his family. It is not appropriate at this time to comment further until the outcomes of the investigation have been published.

2. FLOOD RECOVERY

- 2.1 On Friday 21 February the official sign over into the recovery stage from Surrey Police to Surrey County Council took place. The incident room at Mount Browne was closed down and the County Emergency Centre at County Hall was deemed operational from Saturday 22 February to deal with recovery activity.

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2.2 A Recovery Plan has been implemented and work has begun to restore the affected communities. The recovery is a multi-agency effort, with a Recovery Coordination Group overseeing the recovery programme to ensure that communities and District and Borough councils receive the support that they need. This group consists of representatives from all those who had been involved in the response to this incident and is chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive of Surrey County Council. The group met daily for the first two weeks of the recovery programme and meeting frequency has now reduced. The group met on 10 April to look at the medium to long term recovery plan. The flood recovery is being managed through a programme of workstreams, which include:

- **Environment**, including waste collection, skips and sandbag removal.
- **Infrastructure**, opening and repairing council buildings and roads.
- **Humanitarian**, establishing Flood Recovery Centres, dealing with sanitation and safeguarding issues.
- **Communities and mutual aid**, working with partners and voluntary agencies.
- **Communications and engagement**, ensuring adequate information is provided.
- **Resources**, collective assessment and coordination of resources and funding.

2.3 Whilst most of the immediate clean-up work in affected communities has been carried out, there is much ongoing activity, ensuring that support and advice is at hand for those individuals and families who are still getting over the effects of the flooding or who still need to get back into their homes.

Recovery in Spelthorne

2.4 During March, the National Flood Forum had a mobile trailer, funded by Surrey County Council, which moved into flood affected communities to provide advice and information (see **Annexe 1**). The trailer made a total of 11 visits to locations in Spelthorne between the 3rd and 28th March, locations visited included (some of the locations listed were visited on more than one occasion):

- Green Street Car Park, Sunbury
- Shepperton Village Hall, Shepperton
- High Street, Staines-upon-Thames
- Laleham Park, off Shepperton Road
- The Kingfisher Pub, Chertsey Bridge
- Stanwell Moor Village Hall

2.5 Building on this engagement with flood affected communities; Spelthorne Borough Council with support of lead agencies organised a Community Flood meeting on the 5th June. The meeting consisted of a market place session followed by a public questions session and the event was exceedingly well attended by several hundred people.

2.6 The Recovery Coordination Group's recovery plan is focused on the development of flood action groups in flood affected areas to build resilience within communities for the future. Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council and the Environment Agency have done a lot of work in the past to try and engage with communities on preparations for emergencies, including running public awareness sessions, giving talks to community groups and supporting the development of community flood plans.

Support from the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sectors and Corporate Organisations

2.7 Voluntary organisations have helped in the response and recovery, providing information and advice to affected residents. Organisations involved include:

- Runnymede & Spelthorne Citizens Advice Bureau
- Voluntary Support North Surrey
- Surrey Furniture Reuse Network
- Sunbury Flood Volunteers

2.8 Corporate donors who offered gifts in kind to assist flood-affected households in the Spelthorne area included the following:

- Tesco
- Marks and Spencer
- Johnson and Johnson
- Hitachi
- Screwfix

Section 19 Investigations

2.9 In its role as Lead Local Flood Authority, Surrey County Council (SCC) carries out investigations under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, in order to identify whether the relevant risk management authorities have carried out (or intend to carry out) their duties to manage flood risk. Additional information on the cause(s) of the flooding and potential solutions will also be included where this information is readily available. The findings of the Section 19 investigations will be written up in a report and published.

2.10 The Chairman of the Spelthorne Local Committee has written to Surrey County Council, to particularly highlight the urgency for the Section 19 report relating to the flooding of properties in Leacroft and Greenlands Road. He has also written to both Thames Water and the Environment Agency urging their cooperation in the investigations.

3. FINANCIAL RELIEF AND SUPPORT FOR AFFECTED RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES

Council Tax and Business Rate Relief

- 3.1 Spelthorne Borough Council is administering council tax and business rate relief schemes for flood affected residents and businesses. Three months [Council Tax discount](#) is available for Borough residents whose properties suffered flooding from 11 February and 12 months Council Tax discount is available for those who have had to vacate the property. Further information is available by telephoning 01784 451499 or emailing customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk.
- 3.2 At the time of writing, 219 residents had applied for council tax relief and 48 businesses had applied for business rate relief.

Repair and Renew Grant

- 3.3 From 1 April flood affected residents have been able to apply for a £5,000 Repair and Renew Grant (RRG) to better protect their homes or businesses against future flooding. The funding from Defra is primarily administered by Surrey County Council, with support from borough and district local authorities.
- 3.4 More information, guidance and a secure online application form is now in place through the Surrey County Council website. Residents can also contact Surrey Council on 0300 200 1003 for paper based forms. For more details go to [repair-and-renew-grant](#) on the SCC website.

Surrey Flood Recovery Appeal

- 3.5 The Community Foundation for Surrey has launched a Surrey Flood Recovery Appeal to ease the immediate difficulties people are facing following the devastating floods and to support the recovery of local communities over the coming weeks and months. Surrey County Council donated £15,000 to this fund. Spelthorne Borough Council has announced that the £14,600 donated to its Flood Relief Fund so far is to be given to the fund ring fenced for Spelthorne residents.
- 3.6 The Community Foundation for Surrey is working with Runnymede and Spelthorne Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to support individuals in Runnymede and Spelthorne affected by the flooding. Spelthorne Borough Council is supporting this scheme and has made additional funding available for Spelthorne residents. Individuals in need of support can call the CAB helpline more information and to apply for assistance. Priority will be given to the most vulnerable and isolated, including older people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes and families with young children.
- 3.7 The Community Foundation for Surrey is also awarding grants to community and voluntary groups assisting in the flood recovery effort, and enabling the continuation of services to vulnerable people in affected areas. Information about how the funding is distributed is available at: www.cfsurrey.org.uk .

4. CURRENT SCHEMES FOR FLOOD REPAIRS AND FUTURE DEFENCE

River Thames Scheme

- 4.1 The River Thames Scheme is a proposed scheme to reduce flood risk in communities between Datchet and Teddington including Staines-upon-Thames, Shepperton and Sunbury. The scheme consists of large scale engineering work to construct a flood channel as well as improvements to three of the existing Thames weirs, installation of flood protection products for up to 1,200 individual properties (to make homes more resistant to flooding) and improved flood incident response plans. The flood channel will be between 30 and 60 metres wide and 17 kilometres long (built in three sections). The Environment Agency (EA) is working in partnership with local authorities to develop the scheme and needs the support and involvement from the communities it will benefit. It will deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits alongside the reduction in flood risks, including new wildlife habitats and areas for recreation.
- 4.2 Progression of the River Thames Scheme depends on securing the partnership funding required and obtaining planning consents and authorisations. The EA have to comply with legislation and procedures set out by the Treasury, the Cabinet Office and Defra and with the planning process. At this stage the exact timings for construction of the River Thames Scheme await confirmation. The EA would expect construction work to take five to six years to complete. Beginning with modifications to the first Thames weir and the flood channel, it is hoped to complete construction in 2020, though the EA are looking at ways to speed this process up.

River Thames Property Level Products

- 4.3 As part of the Lower Thames Scheme, the EA is offering property level flood defence products (for example door barriers, non-return valves and air brick covers), to residents in households which are in locations that will not benefit from the wider Lower Thames scheme. These households are being contacted by the EA in order to encourage their take up of the PLP scheme.
- 4.4 Due to the similar nature of the products offered through the PLP scheme and Defra's Repair and Renew Grant being administered by SCC, the EA and SCC are currently working to align the process for these two schemes. This means that residents who can benefit from both should be able to follow just one application process if they wish, benefitting from the amalgamation of funding and having the EA's contractors install property level products.

Surrey County Council Highways Flood Recovery Programme

- 4.5 SCC Highways has proposed a £17 million flood recovery programme for Surrey roads. This has adapted capital and revenue maintenance programmes and is planning to address identified issues across the county. The programme will be conducted in a phased approach, with 20,000 potholes being fixed in phase one, spanning an eight week period through to the end of June 2014. Phase two will consist of a major resurfacing programme to be undertaken through to the end of October 2014 alongside the continuation of the £24 million Project Horizon.

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- 4.6 By reviewing customer service records, Members feedback, flooding reports and SCC 'wet spots' database, SCC has been planning drainage improvement works to address identified issues across the county. £4.5 million will be invested in drainage infrastructure as part of this programme.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 5.1 The Environment Agency has confirmed that the incident on the Lower Thames is the worst flooding that has occurred in Surrey since 1947.
- 5.2 The Surrey Local Resilience Forum held a flooding de-brief on 22 April 2014 to review the response and will continue to monitor the actions required to implement the lessons learnt from the flooding incident to improve future response.
- 5.3 The Recovery Coordination Group as part of the recovery plan will continue to encourage the development of flood action groups in flood affected areas to build resilience within communities.
- 5.4 Surrey County Council is producing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which will contain an assessment of local flood risk as well as detailing objectives for managing this risk, including an action plan of measures to meet these objectives. Surrey County Council also chairs the Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board which provides strategic leadership on flood risk management in Surrey and facilitates greater multi-agency cooperation.
- 5.5 An Environment Agency and Met Office detailed report on the incident will be drafted and published at the start of July 2014. There is also ongoing work through the Flood Risk Partnership Board to look at flood defences going forward.
- 5.6 The findings of SCC Section 19 investigations will be written up in a report and published. These are due in autumn 2014.
- 5.7 It is recommended that the Local Committee may like an update on flood recovery progress in December 2014.

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Consulted: Spelthorne Borough Council & Environment Agency

Annexe: Spelthorne Borough Council Flood Meeting flyer

Sources/background papers: None
