

# London Councils' Transport & Environment Committee

## Flood Partnerships Update

Item no: 05

**Report by:** Cllr Alan Smith      **Title:** TEC Lead for the Thames RFCC  
**Date:** 23 March 2017  
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**Summary:** As part of the TEC and Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (Thames RFCC) Joint Working Arrangements, TEC receives an annual update on the work of the seven London sub-regional flood partnerships, the Thames RFCC and the Environment Agency.

**Recommendations:** The Committee is asked to:

- Note and comment on the report.

### **Flood partnerships update**

1. This report is the third such report TEC has received since the Joint Working Arrangements with the Thames RFCC were agreed.
2. The Thames RFCC is a statutory committee that brings together Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs; each borough and the City of London), the Environment Agency and Thames Water.
3. The Thames RFCC has catchment responsibilities that include London and encompass Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Surrey, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and parts of Essex and Warwickshire.
4. London has seven sub-regional partnerships which are each represented on the Thames RFCC by a lead member. These appointments are agreed by TEC each June. They are:
  - North West (covers Hillingdon, Hounslow, Ealing, Brent, Harrow and Barnet) represented by Cllr Dean Cohen.
  - South West (covers Richmond upon Thames, Kingston upon Thames, Sutton, Merton, Wandsworth and Croydon) represented by Cllr Nick Draper.
  - South East (covers Bromley, Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley) represented by Cllr Alan Smith.
  - North East (covers Havering, Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge) represented by Cllr Lynda Rice.
  - North Central (covers Hammersmith and Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, City of Westminster, City of London, Camden and Islington) represented by Cllr Timothy Coleridge.
  - South Central (covers Lambeth and Southwark) represented by Cllr Jennifer Brathwaite.
  - London Lee (covers Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Haringey, Enfield, Waltham Forest and Newham) represented by Cllr Daniel Anderson.

### **Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) – sub-regional flood partnership updates**

5. London Councils requested an update from each partnership about its work over the last twelve months. All but the London Lee partnership responded.
6. LLFAs have statutory responsibilities for surface and groundwater flooding and smaller watercourses. They are responsible for producing Local Flood Risk Management Strategies which identify the risks of flooding and the measures which could be taken to reduce this risk. These strategies inform Flood Risk Management Plans which must be produced for all Flood Risk Areas. Almost all of London is designated a Flood Risk Area, and every borough and the City of London has at least some of its area within the Flood Risk Area.
7. Defra has continued to raise its concerns that not all of London's authorities have a Local Flood Risk Management Strategies in place. The latest picture is that all but two authorities now have a strategy out for consultation or in place.
8. Other duties include producing an asset register which identifies significant assets in the local authority area and their risk of flooding. LLFAs are statutory consultees as part of the planning process, responsible for considering the impact of a planning application on surface water flooding risk. They investigate flooding incidents, and where appropriate complete flood investigations.
9. All LLFAs in London are eligible to apply for funding from the Thames RFCC to address flood risk management in their area. Three boroughs have a proportion of their area in the Southern RFCC catchment (Greenwich, Bexley and Bromley), and so are eligible to put forward projects in that catchment area to the Southern RFCC for funding.

## North West

### *Summary of key themes / issues discussed at partnership*

10. Projects in critical drainage areas, investigations into flooding incidents, planning applications and the statutory consultee role are discussed. Updates include funding, legislative changes and soft engineering techniques.

### *11. Projects in this partnership – brief update*

- Ealing, Hounslow and Hillingdon will be looking to explore joint working opportunities going forward in critical drainage areas across boundaries with Thames Water and the Environment Agency.
- Ealing – four initial assessment flood studies for four critical drainage areas with three being progressed to outline business case.
- Harrow – two river restorations and flood storage projects completed, and Thames RFCC funding allocated for four other projects.

### *Sustainable drainage*

12. Boroughs continue to work with planning colleagues to ensure planning applications comply with policies. The TfL streetscapes guidance and London Sustainable Drainage Action Plan published last year will assist with this. Ealing is drafting local sustainable drainage guidance.

## South West

### *Summary of key themes / issues discussed at partnership*

13. Variety of discussions and presentations on the following topics: project updates; policy changes; LLFA duties; funding routes; regional and national meetings (e.g. Drain London, London Drainage Engineers Group (LoDEG), Thames RFCC); asset management; sustainable drainage; climate change allowances; Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment updates; flood risk resilience; TfL Comprehensive Review of Flood Risk; retrofitting sustainable drainage; training possibilities.

### *Projects in this partnership – brief update*

14. Numerous critical drainage area / local flood risk zone flood alleviation schemes (feasibility studies, modelling and options appraisal) in all boroughs – all Thames RFCC funded.

### *Sustainable drainage*

15. Generally there has been a slight improvement in the level of information submitted by applicants with planning applications but the majority still have limited above ground/green sustainable drainage features and often achieve the minimum London Plan requirements and no better. There is generally no cost or benefit quantification given as to why increased number of sustainable drainage features cannot be included in a new development. Developers typically play Thames Water off against the local authority. The partnership is going to build a list of case studies of constructed sustainable drainage schemes within the boroughs to aid lessons learnt.

## South East

### *Summary of key themes / issues discussed at partnership*

16. The partnership meets regularly both with members and as officers. Many subjects are discussed including boroughs current progress, projects and issues. The meetings are always attended by the Environment Agency, Thames Water and London Councils which allows the partnership to discuss and act on issues both strategically and locally.

### *Projects in this partnership – brief update*

17. All boroughs have funded projects from both Thames and Southern RFCC currently in study or design. The boroughs are also progressing their own projects mainly around asset collection.

### *Sustainable drainage*

18. All boroughs are commenting on major developments, and all boroughs are designing, installing or incorporating sustainable drainage within their own work.

## North East

### *Summary of key themes / issues discussed at partnership*

19. Partnership recently re-established; aspiration is to meet quarterly. This has led to an open dialogue on flood risk matters between the boroughs; for example the sharing of modelling outputs and an analysis of development impacts alongside one river on a shared boundary.

### *Projects in this partnership – brief update*

#### 20. Redbridge

- Mayesbrook – modelling identified properties at risk, though not cost beneficial to develop risk reduction options at present time.
- Seven Kings Water/Loxford Water – flooding occurred June 2016, work underway to understand mechanism of flooding and develop risk reduction options.
- Clayhall – modelling identified properties at risk, risk reduction options being developed. Intend to submit a business case to the Environment Agency in late spring 2017.
- Woodford – modelling identified properties at risk, risk reduction options being developed. Intend to submit a business case to the Environment Agency in late spring 2017.
- Wanstead Flats – modelling being developed to improve understanding of flood risk in area.

#### 21. Havering

- Following the June 2016 floods and the EA's report received in December 2016, feasibility studies are being carried out on the following schemes:
  1. Identify a way of slowing down the River Rom catchment north of Collier Row.
  2. Identify improvements to the land drainage north of Frinton Road.
  3. Identify additional ways for the River Rom to flow under Collier Row Road bridge during high flow levels.
  4. Consider re-commissioning the Cross Road Flood lagoon.
  5. Environment Agency to look at creating a new flood storage area at the confluence of the River Ravensbourne and Rom.

#### 22. Barking & Dagenham

- Thames RFCC funding being utilised to update borough-wide flood risk modelling. This will inform five schemes that were awarded funding in 2016/17.

### *Sustainable drainage*

23. Boroughs note the volume of planning applications requiring input is increasing. Havering has used its Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to inform the Local Plan and Barking and Dagenham is updating its planning guidance to incorporate more advice on sustainable drainage.

### North Central

#### *24. Summary of key themes / issues discussed at partnership*

- LLFA statutory consultee role on planning applications – application numbers and how they are managed internally;
- Challenges securing sustainable drainage higher up in the sustainable drainage hierarchy – and the need for incentives to reuse water to come from Thames Water;
- LLFA Teams – resourcing and expertise issues;
- Asset register – definition of assets;
- Section 19 investigations;
- Limitations on capital funding for surface water schemes and how LLFAs are funding them;
- Potential Thames Water investment opportunities (Twenty4Twenty).

#### *25. Projects in this partnership – brief update*

- Kensington and Chelsea – considerable number of sustainable drainage projects following successful bid for over £1.3m from Thames RFCC. Arundel Gardens (Thames Water Counters Creek sustainable drainage pilot scheme) in construction phase.
- Camden – Hampstead Heath dams project reaching conclusion. Seeking to mainstream sustainable drainage into highways work using Local Implementation Plan (LIP) funding with a pilot in York Rise in early development. Sustainable drainage will be incorporated into the Central Somers Town greening strategy.
- Hammersmith and Fulham –no Thames RFCC funded projects in borough, delivering sustainable drainage through the use of other funding streams (LIP, Quietways, Highways Planned Maintenance, LLFA funds, EU Bids, Housing Estate Investment Plan funding etc).
- City – there are no Thames RFCC funded projects in the City at present.
- Partnership is discussing a potential joint sustainable drainage project to address the lack of capacity in the Counters Creek sewer, in particular looking at areas within the upstream catchment area (Wormwood Scrubs and Camden). This requires greater input from Thames Water to identify potential areas.

#### *26. Sustainable drainage*

- Boroughs often find planning applications do not consider the London Plan Drainage Hierarchy and do not maximise opportunities for above ground sustainable drainage (for example green roofs) before opting for below ground (attenuation tanks). This means LLFAs spend considerable time working with applicants to bring them to a level where they comply with Local Plan and London Plan requirements. Kensington and Chelsea report that developers are starting to improve their proposals, and the City of London is

considering whether to extend sustainable drainage requirements to all developments rather than only major applications in its Local Plan.

### South Central

#### *27. Summary of key themes / issues discussed at partnership*

- Projects being undertaken and the challenges faced in executing the roles and responsibilities as LLFAs. Lessons learnt have also been shared at meetings.

#### *28. Projects in this partnership – brief update*

- Lambeth
  - Brockwell Park – an outline project design and modelling of the scheme has been undertaken;
  - Streatham Vale – a scoping study by the Environment Agency concluded it was not a feasible project in terms of outcomes;
  - Highway schemes – Ingleborough Street and Chatsworth/Ardlui.
- Southwark
  - East Camberwell – phase 1 (Coleman Road Storm Water Storage) – construction to start by the end of this financial year;
  - East Camberwell – phase 2 (Property Level Protection Scheme) – on hold;
  - Peckham Rye – outline design to be completed by the end of the financial year.

### *Sustainable drainage*

29. There continue to be high levels of applications requiring LLFA input. Developers are increasingly appreciating the need to manage surface water in a sustainable manner. However, the current set up is such that it is not possible to monitor if they actually build what they present at planning application stage.

### **Challenges facing the sub-regional partnerships**

30. Partnerships highlighted challenges relating to the number of people dedicated to working on flood risk management in their authority; and ensuring their authority had the level of expertise needed (planning, drainage, engineering and sustainability). Ensuring knowledge transfer when officers left or retired were also a concern, as was the continued funding of the service given local authority budgetary pressures. Officers highlighted the need for more support to complete the economic appraisals required by the Environment Agency to access Thames RFCC funding.
31. An increase in development in areas of flood risk means that officers are spending more time on responding to planning applications and giving advice to developers. Officers want to see the London Plan Drainage Hierarchy strengthened as well as greater emphasis on rainwater harvesting in new developments.
32. Officers highlighted that the outcome measures required by Defra that drive Thames RFCC funding allocation fail to support sustainable drainage in highways projects, and do not consider reduction of risk to critical infrastructure that is not housing, making it difficult to protect other assets. In the same way, funding for small scale surface water schemes can be difficult to secure. Officers also highlighted that Defra's focus is on new capital schemes, which drives the Thames RFCC's priority for capital projects. Nonetheless, funding for the maintenance of existing schemes, assets and watercourses was raised by officers.

## **ad Local Flood Authority (LLFA) Project Advisors Team**

33. The Thames RFCC is funding a team of Advisors to support LLFAs deliver existing and develop new capital projects. The London team is led by James Spragg and all five advisors are in post. The outside London team is led by Helen Berthonneau and further recruitment in March and April will complete this team. Contact details for the London team are included at Appendix A.

### *Supporting delivery of the programme*

34. The LLFA Project Advisor Team has prepared a list of priority projects, identifying where their efforts can be most effective at supporting the objective of ensuring the delivery of the Thames RFCC capital programme. This list was finalised and approved by the team's Project Board in January 2017. The list contains 24 LLFA led projects across the Thames RFCC catchment area, including 16 projects within the London Boroughs. Project Advisors have contacted LLFA officers and begun to assist them with their projects. Examples of current assistance being provided include:
- Technical flood risk input to projects;
  - Working with the LLFA to develop project outline business cases;
  - Assisting the LLFA in making funding applications to the Environment Agency;
  - Review of consultants' feasibility reports and flood water models.
35. The list of priority projects is a flexible document and projects will be added based on the needs of the LLFAs.

### *Developing a strong pipeline of projects*

36. The LLFA Project Advisor Team has discussed with LLFAs areas where the team can support the development of future LLFA led projects. After analysing the results of this the team is now working on providing general support, guidance and training. Examples include:
- Identifying and development of future projects;
  - Helping with funding sources for partnership finance;
  - Assisting in the understanding of the funding calculator;
  - Helping to formulate stakeholder engagement plans;
  - Developing partnerships, identifying experts and consultations with others;
  - Providing best practice examples.

### *Building relationships with Thames Water*

37. Another of the LLFA Project Advisor Team's objectives is to develop partnership working with other Risk Management Authorities, specifically Thames Water. In order to achieve this, Thames Water has offered to provide office space for the outside London Advisors Team in Reading. In addition, the relationship with the Thames Water Infrastructure Strategy and Planning Team has been prioritised and both teams have met together to develop working relations and identify potential joint integrated schemes between Thames Water and LLFAs. In addition the Advisor Team aims to work closely with Thames Water to support the 2019 Price Review. Through this, priority areas for investment can be identified in each partnership area to develop future partnership schemes.

### *Engagement with LLFAs*

38. There has been a high level of communication from the Advisor Team in order to inform the LLFAs about the team's purpose, objectives and governance. The Advisor Team has also been attending Partnership Meetings and meeting with individual LLFAs to discuss support and resources. A group has been created on the KHub website. This will allow the Advisor Team to have an internet presence and communicate with stakeholders. The LLFA Project Advisors webpages can be accessed by joining the group through the link:

<https://khub.net/web/thames-lead-local-flood-authority-llfa-project-advisors-group>. The Team's governance documents are also available on this site. A dedicated team email address has been set up for receiving enquiries and providing information. This is [LLFAProjectAdvisors@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:LLFAProjectAdvisors@environment-agency.gov.uk).

## Thames RFCC and Environment Agency update

### 2016/17 Capital Programme Performance

39. The Thames RFCC is three quarters of the way through the second year of the six year capital investment programme. This section provides an update on financial progress and target performance so far on the 2016/17 programme.
40. In summary, against the Thames RFCC allocation of £42.6m (£38 m Grant in Aid from Defra and £4.6m Levy from local authorities), the current forecast is to spend approximately £47.1m by the end of this year. This is £4.5m over the original budget allocation which puts the Thames RFCC in a strong position to draw in additional Grant in Aid from the national programme.

41. Table 1: Thames RFCC financial position

	Budget	Forecast for 2016/17
<b>Grant in Aid</b>	£38m	£42.9m
<b>Local Levy</b>	£4.6m	£4.3m

42. Table 2 gives details of how the Thames RFCC 2016/17 programme is delivering against its national targets for households at reduced risk.

	Households at reduced risk target	Households at reduced risk forecast	Variance
Environment Agency	1,321	2,971	1,650
Local authorities	757	202	-555
	<b>2,078</b>	<b>3,173</b>	<b>1,095</b>

Table 2: Thames RFCC households at reduced risk performance 2016/17

43. The national target is to reduce the risk of 43,726 properties this financial year. Within the Thames RFCC, against a target of 2,078 properties at reduced risk for 2016/17, this is forecast to be exceeded by reducing risk to an additional 1,095 properties. There has been a decline of 555 properties at reduced risk protected through local authority schemes. This is mostly due to the re profiling of the delivery of some schemes, as opposed to schemes falling from the programme.

### Efficiency claims

44. Defra agreed an unprecedented 6 year funding settlement for grant in aid nationally across all risk management authorities which has three conditions:
- 300,000 houses better protected over the six years of the settlement;
  - At least 15 per cent in Partnership Funding contributions from other sources;
  - A further efficiency improvement of 10 per cent in delivering the capital programme.
45. Achieving the 10 per cent efficiency target is key to offsetting the risk of inflation affecting the ability to deliver projects to achieve the Defra targets. The grant in aid funding allocation did not take into account inflation in the construction industry which is higher than the normal



inflation rate. Inflation may also rise more generally over the six years especially in London. The funding settlement was based on a very low inflation rate so in effect the affordability of the programme to deliver protection for the 300,000 houses hinges on making efficiencies in the order of the target of 10 per cent.

46. In broad terms an efficiency saving is something that:-

- Results from positive management action at any level during the project lifecycle;
- Delivers the same (or better) output/function for lower cost;
- Does not result in an increased exposure to risk than ascertained in the original baseline;
- Brings benefit that will materialise during the project or at some time in the future;
- Is measurable against a robust baseline.

47. The Environment Agency has a larger 12 per cent target against its allocated grant in aid, with local authorities asked to make 10 per cent of their grant in aid. This target is across the 6 year settlement as it is acknowledged that making savings on projects will vary depending on the stage it has reached.

48. The Thames RFCC has been looking at various approaches to achieve the efficiency target:

- Packaging – to package groups of projects into a programme for delivery and to enable greater efficiencies from the supply chain with continuity of work.
- Standardisation – greater opportunities for standardisation of design and commissioning design works once given future stability in the programme.
- Bulk Buying – the stability of the longer term settlement supports longer term planning for delivery including commitment to bulk buying and continuity of work.
- Continuity of work & performance measures – to incentivise suppliers to deliver savings and the potential of reinvestment does not mean they will lose out on possible work.

49. It is important to note that grant in aid that is released through efficiency savings are released back into the programme and re-invested locally. This allows the Thames RFCC to plan to deliver more work than it has grant in aid budget for and either drawing in recycled grant in aid from across its programme or nationally released funding that cannot be recycled in other areas.

50. So far in 2016/17 the Thames RFCC has claimed £3.1m of efficiency savings. In London the work on the Thames Estuary Asset Management 2100 (TEAM2100) programme has £2.7m of confirmed savings and has identified a further £3.5m of claimable savings they have submitted for approval before the end of the financial year.

#### *Highlights from across London*

51. The Environment Agency has successfully influenced Frasers Property (UK) Ltd through the planning process to raise the height of the Thames Tidal Defences on the Wandsworth Riverside Development taking account of climate change projections to 2100. Approximately 200m of river wall will be raised to this new standard.

52. The Caterham Multi-Agency Steering Group has been established. This was formed and is chaired by Surrey County Council following flooding in Caterham in June 2016. It consists of members from Surrey County Council, London Borough of Croydon, Tandridge District Council, the Environment Agency and Thames Water Utilities Ltd. The group work collaboratively on three capital projects and it provides a forum for all risk management authorities to address issues in a holistic way. This has proved to be a very efficient way of moving projects along and also acts as the conduit for local flood action groups. This is an excellent example of embedded Multi-Agency working.

53. The Environment Agency is working closely with Wandsworth Borough Council to use S.106 funds working with the Thames Tideway Tunnel project to remove Half Tide Weir at the confluence of the Thames and Wandle. This is a significant redundant structure that once removed will greatly improve fish passage and riverine habitat in the Wandle.
54. The Thames Barrier flood gates are undergoing inspection and maintenance. The works started in 2016, with work on the six smaller gates. Accessing the gates is complex and at times risky. Successes include saving in the region of £60m over the next 50 years, by reducing the need for a full repaint of the gates. Instead the gate steel is protected from corroding using Cathodic Protection. This is safer and quicker to maintain. There is now a highly specialist team of staff and suppliers with intimate knowledge of the risks and complexities of working on the gates. The team will continue to work on the next phases of work to the remaining gates.

### **Recommendations**

55. The Committee is asked to:

- Note and comment on the report.

### **Financial Implications**

56. There are no financial implications to London Councils arising from this report.

### **Legal Implications**

57. There are no legal implications to London Councils arising from this report.

### **Equalities Implications**

58. There are no equalities implications to London Councils arising from this report.

## Appendix A – Contact details for the LLFA Project Advisors Team (London)

### LLFA Project Advisors Team (London)

**Team Email address:** [LLFAProjectAdvisors@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:LLFAProjectAdvisors@environment-agency.gov.uk)

Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AL

**James Spragg CEng. M.I.C.E.**

**LLFA Project Advisors Team - Team Leader**

**Email:** [james.spragg@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:james.spragg@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 07585 125 426

Experienced with working for a large marine contractor through all project stages including design, tendering and execution of capital maritime projects. Experience of project planning as well as supervising contractors, plant and resources.

**Luis Brines**

**LLFA Project Advisors Team - Advisor**

**Email:** [luis.brines@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:luis.brines@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 07771 388 359

Knowledge and experience in GIS Mapping and Flood Model Data reviews, Environmental Permitting for Flood Risk and Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications. Experienced in reviewing surface water management plans and ensuring implementation of SuDS.

**Selisa Fergus-Fleary**

**LLFA Project Advisors Team - Advisor**

**Email:** [selisa.fergusfleary@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:selisa.fergusfleary@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 07789 273 546

Knowledgeable in relating government policy into practical FCRM solutions, with a particular understanding of the planning system. Extensive experience supporting LLFAs deliver physical works involving external partners and stakeholders.

**Anna Parr CIWEM (Currently on Maternity Leave)**

**LLFA Project Advisors Team - Advisor**

**Email:** [LLFAProjectAdvisors@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:LLFAProjectAdvisors@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Tel:** t.b.c

Holds a complete overview of the Environment Agency FCRM with in-depth knowledge of planning, environmental permitting and Environmental Impact Assessments. Experience at reviewing flood risk assessments, activity permits & flow modelling, leading on River Lee sites.

**Chris Thilthorpe**

**LLFA Project Advisors Team - Advisor**

**Email:** [chris.thilthorpe@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:chris.thilthorpe@environment-agency.gov.uk)

**Tel:** 02030 258 995

Knowledge of flood risk planning policy for development, particularly with flood risk implication and development in a floodplain. Experience of the promotion of SuDS and project management of flood alleviation schemes in North West London.