

Questions to the Planning, Transport & Environment Scrutiny Panel Tuesday 4th March 2014

The Chew Valley Flood Forum would appreciate responses to the following points:

1. Has the second meeting with UK Flood Barriers taken place? February was mentioned by the Service Manager (January Panel meeting minutes). The Flood Forum think it is imperative UK Flood Barriers rectify equipment/installation defects free of charge under the original contract - in no way does it feel that any of the £200,000 should be used for this purpose. UK Flood Barriers should revisit properties and rectify as appropriate, although, no doubt, in some cases they will argue the problems are householder inflicted.

Answer:

UK flood barriers have indicated that they are happy to hold a second meeting. Due to a number of emergency incidents it has not yet been possible to hold a follow up meeting.

It will be necessary for both UKFB and the CVFF to provide their complete record of remedial issues for consideration at the meeting.

2. Has the Council decided how the, very welcome, £200,000 will be disbursed? No doubt, JBA's recent house by house survey will be a critical input, but are there any initial thoughts re supplier/installer, division of funds by household, householder wishes etc?

Answer:

No decisions have been taken in respect of the way that the £200k should be spent. The survey will help provide the information required to ascertain what options are available for consideration by the Cabinet Member in due course.

3. Can the Council advise on the Strategic Flood Risk Management Group, which was to be set up post 2012 floods, in terms of composition and terms of reference? Has it met and is it open to the public? Also, some months ago, the Flood Forum agreed to join a B&NES Flood Working Group - is there any information on the setting up of this body?

Answer:

We have had meetings with EA to discuss the set up of the groups and have approached members to canvas support. The initiative will be from the top down and we anticipate the Flood working Groups will be set up under the governance of the Strategic Flood Risk Management Group and follow on from the formation of the strategic group. We still intend the Working groups to be based on the main river catchments Avon, Chew and Somer.

4. As a Lead Flood Authority, has B&NES any information on the criteria and application procedure for access to the Government's recently announced £130 million funding for flood resilience? The Flood

Forum suspects modelling output will be needed to identify projects that can then be subjected to cost/benefit analysis, but some idea of what will be needed and when would be very useful.

Answer:

£130 million allocation

The government has provided an additional £130 million over 2014/15 and 2015/16 for the purpose of restoring critical flood defences such as sea walls and river walls, defences that were damaged in the Winter 13/14 storms. As yet no information on how to apply for this funding or the criteria that will be used to assess applications has been disclosed.

5. The Panel's January meeting minutes regarding the impact of farming practices stated that the Service Manager had concluded they had a negligible impact on flooding at the moment, but that a meeting with NFU officers was planned in February. Has this occurred and what was the outcome? In any event, post modelling, and with the help of input from hydrologists etc, the Flood Forum feel this subject must be actively revisited. For the Flood Forum, this subject has a medium/long term dimension and will likely include not just ploughing and ditch issues, but also hedge maintenance/reinstatement, tree planting and hence will probably be part of a wider national programme of land management to combat weather pattern changes.

Answer:

Due to the considerable number of weather related incidents it has not been possible to hold the meeting. The Council is committed to holding this meeting and would want the CVFF to participate in the discussions and bring local knowledge to the debate.

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Mike Curtis
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