

minutes



Meeting	FLOODING (DRAINAGE AND WATERCOURSES) SELECT COMMITTEE
Date	Monday, 25 February 2008 (commencing at 10.30 am)

Membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLORS

Yvonne Davidson (Chair)
Andy Stewart (Vice-Chair)

	John Carter		Sue Saddington
A	John Clarke	A	Dave Shaw
	Tom Pettengell		Yvonne Woodhead
	Ken Rigby		

NON-VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Councillor Michael Bennett - Bassetlaw District Council
Councillor Melvyn Shaw - Newark and Sherwood District Council
Councillor Mel Shepherd - Gedling Borough Council

MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting held on 28 January 2008, having been circulated, were confirmed and signed by the Chair, subject to the addition of parish councils to list of organisations to be invited to submit evidence.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Clarke and Dave Shaw.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Saddington declared a personal interest as a member of Newark and Sherwood District Council and the internal drainage board.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT

John McGuigan, Emergency Planning Manager, Communities Department gave a presentation on the roles of the various organisations involved in flood risk management. Rob Fisher, Head of Emergency Management and Registration, explained the policies about providing sandbags. Ian Harrison, Strategic Manager – Risk and Resilience, Newark and Sherwood District Council, gave further information

during a presentation on the impact of the 2007 floods in his area, sandbag policies, and the development of a local resilience programme.

Councillor Saddington recognised that there were effective partnerships, but found Severn Trent to be unresponsive. She queried the impact of flood defence measures on insurance premiums. Mr Harrison replied that such measures would not reduce premiums, but might be a requirement of insurers for providing cover. Councillor Carter wondered whether neighbourhood watch might be a tool in flood warning, and whether mobile flood defences should be available. Mr Harrison stated that two parishes were planning to make such use of neighbourhood watch, and that mobile defences were expensive and had to be deployed quickly, but they might be useful in certain locations. Councillor Carter commented that a local levy might be used to provide such defences.

Councillor Woodhead believed there should be work on major watercourses to prevent flooding and to keep drains open and free from misuse. Councillor Davidson believed the Select Committee might make a recommendation about the use of neighbourhood watch and other voluntary groups. She wondered how Newark and Sherwood residents had responded to the Defra pilot, whether any properties were damaged by a failure to provide sandbags, and whether internal drainage boards ever took enforcement action. Councillor Rigby observed that the silicon bags could be heavy when full. Mr Harrison explained that they were still under trial.

Councillor Davidson supported the mapping exercise in Newark and Sherwood, and suggested the select committee might wish to encourage a similar exercise in other districts. She wondered about the impact of the highways partnership arrangements. There was discussion about the effect of new housing on flood plains, and the impact of PPS 25.

HIGHWAY DRAINAGE

Andy Wallace, Drainage Manager, Communities Department, gave a presentation on the County Council's responsibilities for drainage as highway authority. He summarised the costs of the 2007 floods, the responses to them, and the outstanding issues.

Councillor Shepherd asked how gullies were cleaned where cars were parked. Mr Wallace replied that it could mean that some gullies were missed. He was unsure about whether householders were given notice of forthcoming cleaning work. Councillor Saddington wondered whether, given the new equipment available, the committee should recommend gully cleaning twice per year. Councillor Pettengell agreed, and referred to instances when gullies had not been cleaned as claimed, and of no notice being given. Members suggested that notice could be given through County News, the local press and local councillors.

In reply to Councillor Davidson, Mr Wallace explained that the specialist drain cleaning vehicles were used in response to problems reported by highway inspectors and gully cleaners. Councillor Woodhead referred to drains on Coal Board estates, and wondered how people were given permission to build over drains. Mr Wallace replied that this would depend in the purpose of the drain. Councillor Rigby pointed out that Broxtowe Borough Council had brought gully cleaning back in-house, after problems with sub-contraction.

SCRUTINY PLANNING

It was agreed to invite Severn Trent and the Environment Agency to the meeting on 31 March, and British Waterways to 28 April. Martin Gately, Scrutiny Officer, agreed to circulate a summary of the Pitt Report.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

CHAIR

Ref: flooding d&w/m_25feb08