

Item 5 - Matters Arising

Update on Flooding in the Whitstable Road area:

The MP Helen Whately along with Members of the public who were affected by flooding were in attendance at the September 2021 Eastern Area Committee meeting along with the Kent County Council Asset Manager Drainage and Structures.

The Area Committee and invited guests listened to how the residents are being affected by the increasing problems of surface flooding and the lack of action by Southern Water.

It was agreed that Helen Whately MP would lead on setting up a meeting with all the relevant agencies and residents who had brought the matter to the attention of the Area Committee. Swale Borough Council (SBC) requested that a number of councillors and officers attend this meeting including the Chair of the Area Committee, the Cabinet Member for the Environment and the Head of Environment and Leisure.

On Friday 12 November 2021, Helen Whately MP chaired a meeting at the Alexander Centre, Faversham with the Chief Executive of Southern Water and representatives from Southern Water, Kent County Council (KCC), Swale Borough Council and Faversham Town Council.

SBC were told that they could only send one representative to this meeting and the Leader asked me as the Cabinet Member for the Environment to attend.

The minutes provided by James Mickle, Helen Whately's Senior Researcher are provided as a note to this appendix. My understanding of the discussion was that action point 2 in the minutes provided was about Southern Water liaising with SBC planners over the capacity of their systems to cope with future housing development and how best water efficiency can be promoted in new developments. My understanding of action point 3 was that Southern Water committed to working with KCC officers and local community representatives including councillors to develop discrete plans to improve the situation in locations where there are sewage discharges during flash floods. When I wrote to James about this, he acknowledged that his notes were not meant to be a comprehensive set of minutes and that my understanding was 'a more detailed overview of what was agreed'.

Since the meeting Southern Water have come back to confirm that there will be a specific link person that SBC can deal with moving forward. They have also provided some specific information on planning, which I have shared with the relevant SBC officers. On 25 November they reported that they have begun looking at the issues outlined in East Street, Whitstable Road, Forbes Road and Tanners Street. That the issues are complex and that they will be liaising with KCC's Asset Manager for Drainage and Structures and the County Engineer to see how they can take this forward.

I will be seeking a further update from Southern Water before the meeting.

I would encourage those interested in KCC activity in relation to the problems at Whitstable Road and other areas of Faversham to read the Drainage Report which was prepared for the 6 December meeting of the Joint Transportation Board and which is at p 399 of the papers.

Cllr Julian Saunders

Cabinet Member for Environment and Vice Chair of the Eastern Area Committee