

Worcestershire County Council and District Councils  
Joint Scrutiny on Flooding  
Report of meeting at County Hall Monday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008

County Council officers, members from various districts and five groups of witnesses. The meeting started at 2:30 and finished at 6:30

**National Flood Forum** : They are a self help group who have become a charity. They act as critical friend to many organisation including the Environment Agency (EA). They work with DEFRA to arrange grants for flood protection. They are aware of situation were partnership working as failed and warnings not considered important. They believe that EA does not have the resources to act as the over view for flooding. District Councils to maps and maintain/improve urban drainage systems and set up flood teams to advise on mitigation (crime/fire prevention office). Seven Trent is able to do work on individual properties and like to see a change from major to minor works.

**Local Media** : Both BBC radio H&W and Worcs. News had good relationship with public bodies. Radio would like to be in physical contact with Sliver control to enable instant info. to be broadcast. Feel that press officers are not in a position to work with both local and national press (therefore two officers) and be ready to speak on the air, even if only to reassure the public that action is on the way. W. News assistant editor emphasised the lack of understanding of their web site that can give instant access to info. Where there is a differences between official info. and the public info. this need to be treated with care. They both asked for a central point of contact for info.

**Local Residents** : Outlined their particular problems and emphasised the need to clear water courses. Impressed the group with the understanding of using local knowledge to influence local action.

**Highway Agency** : Now have an Incident Manager who is responsible for clearing blockages on the Motorways and major routes. Must have national, regional and local plans in place. (Local = County). Accepts that there are gaps in the action for floods, holding a desk top exercise soon. Having an audit of the drains. Would anticipate being more proactive, improve their command

response and review the National Plan. Working with Local Resilience Forum who are link to the Gold command structure.

**Parish Councils** : Four councils were represented including Feckenham. All explained how they had been affected and the actions they have taken. Would like to see PPS25 given more teeth in planning. Use of legislation to enforce land owner to clear ditches and where they are the responsibility of districts or county given the funds to ensure that the work is done. Would use Length men to either do the work or supervise it. Be allowed to hold and display signage when necessary to advise the public of flooded roads. Have emergency telephone numbers available. Need to be involved in emergency planning. Would like to see Post flooding plans and a Ditch/water course directory produced by the Districts and maintained by the parish.

Overall two main points emerged, need for communication and using local knowledge to influence local action.

Cllr Mike Chalk - Redditch Borough Council

Apologies for the length but impossible to keep to one page even when in semi notation form