

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND COUNCILS  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Date: 4 April 2014

Subject: Flooding in the South East:  
Steps to manage future problems

Report of: Nick Woolfenden, SEEC Head of Policy Co-ordination



**Recommendations:**

SEEC Executive members are asked to discuss issues arising from recent floods and suggest:

- i) Any further issues to raise with Defra Minister Dan Rogerson on 9 April
- ii) Any other flood-related work SEEC should consider on specific issues or with key partners.

**1. Issues to discuss with the Minister**

1.1 A group of SEEC and SESL members will meet Defra Minister Dan Rogerson on 9 April to discuss the impact of recent flooding on the South East and what more needs to be done to minimise future flood risk. A letter to the Minister sets out four key areas where Government support is needed. Members are invited to discuss the issues raised, below, and highlight any local examples or further priorities to raise with the Minister on 9 April. Suggestions are also invited for any further influencing SEEC should consider to help councils manage future flood problems – for example on specific topics to raise or particular organisations to contact.

**i. Ensuring sufficient funding for immediate repair and response work**

- Government's emergency capital funding for roads and repairs must be sufficient to cover councils' costs as the full extent of the damage comes to light. Otherwise costs may delay, or even halt, councils' other priority local investment projects.

**ii. Investing today to reduce the cost of future flood emergencies**

- A robust, long-term capital investment programme is needed from Government to make critical infrastructure more resilient to extreme weather. Councils alone do not have the multiple millions of pounds required for major schemes.
- Government's move towards a longer-term six-year programme for Flood Defence Grant in Aid is welcome, but assurance is needed that the programme will remain open so that councils can submit bids for schemes based on evidence from this year's flooding.

**iii. Ensuring effective and efficient council-led multi-agency action**

- Councils across the South East have led effective and efficient local multi-agency action to deal with recent flooding impacts but Government support could further reinforce this eg:
  - Ensuring Environment Agency shares intelligence and mapping tools re flood risks.
  - Ensuring water companies fulfil their response, recovery and flood risk management obligations, for example in taking responsibility for sewerage overflows.

**iv. Taking forward Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)**

- Clarity on the way forward for SuDS is needed. Government needs to ensure careful consideration is given to:
  - Implementing SuDS legislation in two-tier areas, particularly in relation to the planning process and potential billing and delivery responsibilities.
  - How Government will ensure local flood authorities have the necessary resources to approve, adopt and fund the on-going maintenance costs of SuDS.
  - How charges for SuDS, including administration costs, will be applied and recovered.

**2. Lessons learnt and good practice sharing**

2.1 The LGA is keen to share local experience and information from recent flooding and has a dedicated '[Flood Risk Portal](#)' on its website. If members have information they want to share with the LGA they should contact [jo.allchurch@local.gov.uk](mailto:jo.allchurch@local.gov.uk).