

**Minutes of a Meeting of the External  
Partnerships Select Committee held at  
Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House  
on 16 September 2014**

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+ Cllr Josephine Hawkins (Chairman)  
+ Cllr Paul Deach (Vice Chairman)

- Cllr Glyn Carpenter	+ Cllr Ken Pedder
+ Cllr Ian Cullen	+ Cllr Chris Pitt
+ Cllr Tim Dodds	+ Cllr Ian Sams
+ Cllr Liane Gibson	+ Cllr Pat Tedder
+ Cllr David Hamilton	+ Cllr Alan Whittart
- Cllr Lexie Kemp	+ Cllr John Winterton
+ Cllr Adrian Page	

+ Present

- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr Bill Chapman

In Attendance: Cllr Rodney Bates, Cllr Mrs Vivienne Chapman and Cllr Heather Gerred

**9 Chairman's Announcements and Welcome to Guests**

The Chairman welcomed Ian Tomes and Justine Glynn of the Environment Agency and Seamus Kearns from the Surrey Search and Rescue Service. She also welcomed Councillor Heather Gerred to her first meeting of this Committee.

**10 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 June 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**11 Presentation by Surrey Search and Rescue**

Seamus Kearns, the Operations Manager from Surrey Search and Rescue, explained that the organisation, a charity with no funding other than by donations, and operating with volunteers, was formed in 2010 along the lines of a similar team in Sussex, to support the emergency service in a search and rescue role, across Surrey.

The Team, consisting of 60 volunteer operators, 10 support officers and 6 operational dogs, had been called to assist the emergency services on 70 occasions already in 2014. All tasks came from the emergency services, which filtered all calls for assistance. The team had an off-road ambulance and an incident command vehicle, as well as water-borne transport.

The biggest demand on the team was to search for missing persons, such as people with Alzheimer's or dementia, vulnerable adults, people threatening self-harm, and young people.

In the UK, search and rescue is split into Mountain Rescue, Lowland Rescue and Air Sea Rescue. The Surrey Team was part of a national lowland rescue arrangement. In addition to rescuing many individuals, it was estimated that the team had saved Surrey Police in excess of £500,000 over the previous 2 years.

Each volunteer received a minimum of 6 months training and the Team had recently participated in training provided by Surrey Fire and Rescue on wildfires. They were required to reach set standards on navigation, medical qualifications (such as CPR, using defibrillators and safely transferring people onto spinal boards) but could also be called on to operate road blocks or rest centres. The 6 rescue dogs were also volunteers and had to undergo extensive training.

The Committee congratulated Seamus Kearns and the Surrey Search and Rescue Team for their valuable service to Surrey residents, noting that the Team and individual members had already been the recipients of a number of awards.

Despite having excellent social media arrangements, Surrey Search and Rescue had an ongoing need to recruit new volunteers and raise funds. The off-road ambulance, whilst carrying up to date equipment, was 18 years old and would, in due course, need replacing. Members suggested that the Council should promote the service through a Heathscene article and suggested a presence at the Surrey Heath Show.

**Resolved that**

- (i) The presentation be noted and Surrey Search and Rescue be invited to provide an update to a later meeting;**
- (ii) Officers be asked to explore the possibility of a related article in Heathscene; and**
- (iii) Surrey Search and Rescue be advised to attend the Surrey Heath Show for publicity purposes.**

Note: Councillor Paul Deach noted, for the record, that he had previously published content for Surrey Search and Rescue on the Residents Network.

## **12 Presentation by Environment Agency**

Ian Tomes and Justine Glynn from the Environment Agency's Flood and Coastal Risk Management Team for West Thames (covering Oxfordshire, Berkshire, South Buckinghamshire, North East Hampshire and West Surrey) gave a presentation on the work of the Environment Agency (EA), both in the Borough and on projects that impacted on Borough residents.

Mr Tomes noted that, under recent regulations, responsibility for risk management had been more clearly defined, with strategic flood risk management of rivers lying with the EA, whilst Surrey County Council was the Lead Local Flood Authority for the County.

Thames Water was responsible for operating foul and surface water sewerage systems and Borough/District Councils having permissive powers to maintain and improve ordinary watercourses.

In the previous year, the EA had cleared vegetation and some shoals (sandbanks) at 46 locations in Surrey and expected to achieve a similar number of operations in the forthcoming year.

Justine Glynn reported on mapping that the EA undertook on the risk of inundation from coastal water, reservoirs, lakes and rivers. This allowed management of these systems and assisted in planning for a large number of organisations, including Councils, insurers and developers.

The EA was a statutory consultee on planning applications and provided pre-planning advice on floods, pollution control and other areas. It carried responsibility for water resources and quality control, river basin management plans, pollution control, fisheries licenses, waste, conservation and ecology.

Inevitably, decisions had to be based on the likelihood of flooding. The flood events in the previous winter had resulted from 6 months rain falling in only 66 days, with some areas experiencing 80% of their annual rainfall in 2 months.

The EA provided a flood warning to thousands of properties in the area, issuing flood alerts, flood warnings and severe flood warnings depending on the level of the risk.

The EA received grant in aid from the Government for flood attenuation projects. However, funding did not cover 100% of necessary work and a local levy was raised, through the Council Tax precept, to bridge potential funding gaps.

In terms of Surrey Heath, The EA had commenced the Bagshot and Windlesham Initial Assessments, Surrey Heath Borough Council Flood Defence Grant in Aid schemes and was working with the Chobham Community Flood Action Group.

169 properties had been identified in Bagshot as being at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding. The Council had been successful in funding for the Chobham and Lightwater flood alleviation schemes.

Members voiced support for the work with the Chobham Community Flood Action Group and sought advice on how more communities could engage with the EA on flooding issues.

Justine Glynn reminded Members that flood plans were a requirement for neighbourhood plans and that those plans had to comply with the Council's Local Plan and national policies. The EA would welcome the opportunity to assist further community resilience groups and she and Doug Hill, the EA Team Leader for Surrey Heath, would be the first points of contact.

As well as working to avoid or mitigate flood risks, community flood plans would assist communities in knowing exactly what to do in the event of a flood, including assistance to elderly and vulnerable residents.

In terms of lessons which could be learned from the recent periods of heavy rainfall, Mr Tomes emphasised the role that partnerships forged in advance had assisted in the way flooding events were tackled.

The mutual support, notably provided by Surrey Heath, to Boroughs experiencing serious inundation should be built upon and awareness built across community groups.

In the previous severe flooding, agencies in Surrey had been heavily dependent on military support. Mr Tomes emphasised the need in the future for greater community resilience.

Members, in welcoming the comprehensive presentation, emphasised the need for continued support for the Environment Agency and in particular for the Surrey Flood Partnership.

**RESOLVED, that the presentation be noted and that Officers be encouraged to continue to be fully engaged with the Surrey Flood Partnership.**

### **13 Committee Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report on the work programme for the remainder of the 2013/14 municipal year.

Members noted that Thames Water had agreed to attend the Committee's November 2014 meeting. It was hoped that Affinity Water would also attend.

All other organisations invited to speak in this municipal year had confirmed their agreement.

**RESOLVED, that the Work Programme for 2014/15, as attached at Annex A to these minutes, be agreed.**

Chairman

**External Partnerships Select Committee Work Programme – 2014/15**

<b>Date</b>		<b>Topic</b>	<b>Presenter/ Author</b>
<b>25 November 2014</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>Affinity Water</b>	Emma Grigson, Head of Corporate Affairs – Affinity Water  Richard Aylard External Affairs and Sustainability Director
	<b>2.</b>	<b>Thames Water</b>	
<b>20 January 2015</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>Crime and Disorder Update</b>	Inspector John Davies
	<b>2.</b>	<b>Police and Crime Panel</b>	Cllr Charlotte Morley
	<b>3.</b>	<b>Street Angels</b>	Karen Kendall
	<b>4.</b>	<b>Your Sanctuary</b>	Fiamma Pather
<b>3 March 2015</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>Surrey Heath Health and Wellbeing Board</b>	Tim Pashen
	<b>2.</b>	<b>Frimley Park Hospital</b>	TBC

**To be allocated:**

Collectively Camberley BID  
EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership  
Taxi Marshals