

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 21 February 2023
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors English (Chairman), Cannon (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Blackmore, Brice, Cleator, Conyard, Garten, Hastie, Hinder, Jeffery, Knatchbull, McKenna and T Wilkinson

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 20 December 2022	1 - 3
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Question and Answer session for Local Residents (if any)	
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
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Issued on Monday 13 February 2023

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 17 February 2023). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 17 February 2023). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2022

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors English (Chairman), Cannon, Brice, Cleator, Conyard, Garten, Hastie, Jeffery, Knatchbull, T Wilkinson and Brindle
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44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Hinder and McKenna.

45. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Brindle was present as Substitute for Councillor Hinder.

46. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that he had accepted an urgent update in relation to Item 12 – Committee Work Programme, which contributed to the matter’s consideration.

47. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman stated that Item 12 – Committee Work Programme would be considered after Item 13 – The Council’s Performance against the Waste Strategy – draft Committee Report, to enable the Committee to consider its work programme moving forward, following the former’s conclusion.

48. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

49. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Brice stated that she was a Council representative on the One Maidstone BID Advisory Board.

50. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

51. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 November 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

53. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

54. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from Local Residents.

55. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

56. THE COUNCIL'S PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE WASTE STRATEGY - DRAFT COMMITTEE REPORT

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report, requesting that the consideration be given to the (draft) formal report attached at appendix 1 to the report, and agree the report for submission to the relevant decision-makers. The draft report outlined the how the review into 'the Council's Performance against the Waste and Recycling Strategy, 2018-2023' had taken place, the evidence provided and the recommended actions and intended outcomes produced as a result.

During the discussion, several Members of the Committee felt that some of the recommended actions and intended outcomes should provide greater direction and measurable outcomes, to assist in their implementation and review by the relevant decision-makers. The changes proposed applied to actions six, eight and twenty, alongside further expansion of the review's rationale on page 3 of appendix 1 to the report.

In response to the comments made, the Democratic Services Officer advised that if agreed, the report would be accompanied by a Scrutiny Recommendation and Action Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) when presented to the relevant decision-makers; the SCRAIP would include the relevant officer's comments on each proposed recommended action such as its feasibility and the possible method and timeline for implementation for the decision-makers to consider.

The importance of ensuring that the information provided to the Committee was relevant and useful was reiterated, as it would assist the Committee in fulfilling its role to be a 'critical friend' to the Executive. The importance of reviewing all the lines of enquiry within a review's scope was highlighted. A post-review evaluation could take place, although this would likely be in the next two-to-three years to allow the recommended actions to be implemented and their effects fully assessed.

RESOLVED: That the report be agreed for submission to the relevant decision-makers, subject to the addition of:

1. The following text after the second paragraph on the 'Rationale' section:

- a. 'It was further hoped that the review would increase both Member and Public knowledge of the service provided, facilitate service improvements and highlight the importance of communicating the service's provision'
2. A recommended action to request customer services complaints data in relation to waster services on a quarterly basis, in order to ascertain any particular issues and investigate solutions to those issues;
3. The words 'to make sure that the issues are appropriately addressed through the Lead Members involvement in the Kent Waste Forum' within the intended outcomes section of recommendation six;
4. The words 'and include specific reference to Policy CSW3 (Kent Waste and Minerals Local Plan 2013-2030) to recommendation eight; and
5. The words 'As soon as possible' to recommendation twenty.

57. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the urgent update provided in relation to the item, which was an amended work programme proposal. The contributing factors to the proposed amendments were the feedback received from Members on the frequency of meetings, the capacity of the Democratic Services Team in supporting the new governance model and ensuring that the Committee's reviews deliver what it wants to achieve.

The key changes proposed to the work programme included cancelling the Committee's January 2023 meeting, to allow the Water Management Cycle Working Group (the group) to focus on its external stakeholder consultation meetings being held in the same week, concluding the 'Safety in the Town Centre' review in February 2023, conducting a shared review into the night-time economy in accordance with page 4 of the urgent update provided and moving the remaining two reviews to the Committee's 2023/24 work programme.

The Committee felt that the amendments proposed were suitable. In response to questions, it was confirmed that a progress update on the group's review could be provided in 2023 through the provision of its minutes to the Committee alongside a short written update.

RESOLVED: That the amended Committee Work Programme be agreed.

58. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.08 p.m.

Maidstone Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2022-23 Municipal Year

Review Title & Objectives	Expected Start Date & Method	Relevant Officer/s	Timetable
<p data-bbox="125 472 551 539">The Council's performance against the Waste Strategy</p> <p data-bbox="125 579 533 754">Review the Waste Strategy whilst considering best practice of other Local Authorities to identify innovative improvements</p>	<p data-bbox="573 472 831 499">November 2022.</p>	<p data-bbox="954 472 1328 571">William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place</p> <p data-bbox="954 616 1272 715">Jennifer Stevens, Head of Environment and Public Realm</p>	<p data-bbox="1350 472 2011 499">Evidence Collection - 2 & 3 November 2022.</p> <p data-bbox="1350 544 2067 608">Recommended actions reviewed - 22 November 2022.</p> <p data-bbox="1350 647 2051 711">(draft) formal report presented - 20 December 2022.</p>
<p data-bbox="125 799 517 826">Safety in the Town Centre</p> <p data-bbox="125 871 551 1002">Review existing measures and ascertain any changes needed, in consultation with stakeholders.</p> <p data-bbox="125 1046 454 1110">Stage 1: Town Centre Safety</p>	<p data-bbox="573 799 831 863">September 2022 (safety element)</p> <p data-bbox="573 903 925 967">OSC acting as the C&D Committee Meetings</p>	<p data-bbox="954 799 1328 898">John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services</p> <p data-bbox="954 943 1290 1074">Martyn Jeynes, Community and Strategic Partnerships Manager</p>	<p data-bbox="1350 799 1648 826"><u>Town Centre Safety</u></p> <p data-bbox="1350 871 2067 898">External Evidence Collection – 18 October 2022.</p> <p data-bbox="1350 943 2096 970">Internal Evidence Collection – 20 December 2022.</p> <p data-bbox="1350 1015 2074 1078">Recommended actions & draft report reviewed – 21 March 2023.</p>

<p><u>Night-Time Economy</u></p> <p>To review the twilight and night-time economy within Maidstone Town Centre.</p>	<p>February 2022, Committee Meetings</p>	<p>Shared Review with the Policy, Communities and Engagement and the Economic Development Teams</p>	<p>February 2022 – Information pack presented by the relevant teams (see left column), with a proposed timeline for the review.</p> <p>Policy Communities and Engagement and Economic Development Teams to present issue to Committee regularly, seeking the Committee’s contribution and steer to the review.</p> <p>UPDATE – Officers have advised that as work is ongoing to support the overall review into the night-time economy, it would be beneficial to delay the review’s commencement to ensure that Officers are able to present the most up to date information to the Committee. The review could likely start post-May 2023.</p>
<p><u>Water Management Cycle</u></p> <p>Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the supply and disposal of water; and disposal of sewage <p>to identify improvements.</p>	<p>October 2022, Working Group.</p>	<p>Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement</p> <p>William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place</p> <p>Philip Coyne, Interim Local Plan Review Director</p>	<p>Ongoing; Report likely to be presented in from March 2023.</p> <p>Officer consultation – 15 and 22 December.</p> <p>External Stakeholder Consultation – x2 meetings across week commencing 23 January 2023.</p> <p>Lead Member Consultation – (from) February 2023 as required.</p> <p>Report Writing – February/March 2023 as required.</p>

Key:

Completed



In Progress



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023-24 Municipal Year

Review Title & Objectives	Expected Start Date & Method	Relevant Officer/s	Timetable
<u>Enforcement</u>	Post-May 2023	To be confirmed.	To be confirmed.
<u>Health Inequality</u> Increased understanding of health inequalities across the borough and an overview of strategy and police across the relevant bodies.	Post-May 2023	Alison Broom, Chief Executive, John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services Senior Public Health Officer	U/K.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 February 2023

Water Management Cycle Update Report

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	21 February

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Lead Director	Angela Woodhouse, Director for Strategy, Insight and Governance.
Lead Officer and Report Author	Oliviya Parfitt, Democratic Services Officer and Alanna Randall, Democratic Services Officer.
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update of the progression of the Water Management Cycle Working Group.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report asks the Committee: That the progress of the Water Management Cycle Working Group be noted.

Water Management Cycle Update Report

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>As this report is for noting, the recommendation should not impact the corporate priorities. Any impact of corporate priorities arising out of the review will be assessed upon its conclusion.</p>	Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>As this report is for noting, the recommendation should not impact the cross cutting objective. Any impact of cross cutting objectives arising out of the review will be assessed upon its conclusion.</p>	Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
Risk Management	See section 5 of the report.	Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. Any financial implications	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	arising out of the review will be assessed upon its conclusion.	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
Legal	In accordance with Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) the Council is operating under Executive Arrangements. These arrangements must include provision for the appointment of one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committees to review and scrutinise executive decisions made, or other action taken – LGA 2000, Section 9F	Team Leader Contentious & Corporate Governance
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations from the review could have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Housing & Inclusion Team Leader
Crime and Disorder	No impact identified.	Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
Procurement	No impacts identified.	Insight, Communities and Governance Manager & Head of Finance.
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and aligns with actions 5.4; 5.5; 6.7; 6.9 and 8.5 of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At its 19 July 2022 meeting the Committee agreed to conduct a review into the Water Management Cycle via a Working Group (the Group). The aim of the review was to:

Identify actions to be taken by the Council and/or its partner organisations to improve the management and resilience of the Water Management Framework.

- 2.2 The group membership was agreed on 6 October 2022 and the Members are Councillors English (Chairman), Brice, Cleator, Garten, Harwood and Jeffery. The Substitute Members are Councillors Conyard, Springett and D Wilkinson.
- 2.3 In accordance with Part A2 – Core Provision 6 Rule 6.7.2 (c) the Groups minutes must be reported to the Committee, these have been attached as appendices to this report. The Committee also requested a very brief update on the Groups progress, with this information below.

Any Working Group of any of the aforementioned Committees shall:

- (a) Be limited in its terms of reference to exploratory work on behalf of its parent Committee;*
- (b) Report the minutes of its proceedings to its parent Committee;*
- (c) Be drawn primarily though not necessarily exclusively from the membership of its parent Committee, and shall aim for inclusivity though not subject to the requirements of political balance cited above.*

- 2.4 The Group first met on 1 November 2022, with the detailed lines of enquiry agreed on 5 December 2022, these are set out below and the Group was provided with an information pack containing documents and information relevant to the topic:

Supply of water

- Mitigating the effects of increased rainfall, including capacity
- General Supply of Water

Disposal of Water

- Importance and Influence of development management
- Flood mitigation mechanisms
 - To effectively control water
 - Natural flood mitigation measures
- Management of highway and surface water flooding
- Working with partner

Disposal of sewage in water courses

- Combined systems and link to foul and surface water mixing
- Council powers and partnership working
- Working with partners
- Water neutrality and planning

2.5 Throughout their discussions the Working Group felt it was beneficial to interview a selected panel that were both internal and external, the timetable is set out below.

Date	Panel
1 November 2022	Working Group
5 December 2022	Working Group and Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
15 December 2022 MBC	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager
22 December 2022 MBC	Interim Local Plan review Director Director of Regeneration and Place Principal Planning Officer x2 Environmental Health Manager
27 January 2023	Upper Medway internal drainage board Southeast rivers trust Kent county council
7 February 2023	Southeast water Southern water

Minutes of the meetings above expect for 7 February 2023 meeting have been appended to this report.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 This report is intended to provide an update and is for noting.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 There are no current options for this report as it is for noting, as the review is ongoing.

5. RISK

5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 As outlined in points 2.1 and 2.2 the Group was created to conduct a review to the Water Management Cycle.

6.2 All Members were given the opportunity to submit questions for the Group to ask on their behalf whilst consulting with internal and external agencies.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The next steps for the Water Management Cycle Working Group is to continue with the review with an estimated timeline.
 - 7.2 For the Working Group to continue to progress with their review and a further report will be brought back to the Committee if requested. Minutes of the Groups future meetings will continue to be provided.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Minutes (Order of Meetings)
 - 1 November 2022
 - 5 December 2022
 - 15 December 2022
 - 22 December 2022
 - 27 January 2023
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes held on 18 July 2022: https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/council-and-democracy/primary-areas/your-councillors?sq_content_src=%2BdXJsPWh0dHBzJTnBJTJGJTJGbwVldGluZ3Mu bWFpZHN0b25lLmdvdi51ayUyRmlITGlzdERvY3VtZW50cy5hc3B4JTNGQ0lkJTNEj5JTI2TUlkJTNEgZniUyNlZlciUzRDQmYWxsPTE%3D
- Constitution: <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/council-and-democracy>

WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE WORKING GROUP - NOTES

TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2022

5.30 P.M. – 6.30 P.M. VIA MS TEAMS

<p>Present:</p> <p><u>Members</u> Councillor English (Chairman) Councillor Harwood Councillor Brice Councillor Garten Councillor Jeffery</p> <p><u>Reserve Member</u> Councillor Springett</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Oliviya Parfitt</p>	
Item	Minute
1. Apologies	No apologies were received.
2. Substitute Members	<p>There were no Substitute Members in attendance.</p> <p>Councillor Springett was in attendance as a Reserve Member in accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's previous agreement that Reserve Members would be welcome to attend all Working Group (the Group) Meetings.</p>
3. Approach to the Review	<p>The Group discussed the Review's Scope attached at Appendix 1 to the agenda.</p> <p><u>External and Internal Stakeholder Consultation</u></p> <p>It was felt that Kent County Council's (KCC) involvement in the review should be extended to include its role as the Highways Authority, as well as the Lead Local Flooding Authority. This was due to the importance of highways drainage connecting to the sewage network, alongside mention of diffuse pollutants and that the sewage systems associated with new developments were being monitored by other companies as opposed to Southern Water. To support the highways' involvement, it was felt appropriate to receive information from the Council's Planning Department in relation to the development control requirements (if any) relating to sewage for new developments, alongside National Highways and the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board.</p> <p>It was highlighted that KCC's Kent Risk Management Committee would also be considering water quality, and that it would be helpful to ascertain whether there was an overlap between the working group's remit and that Committee's consideration of water quality. As other Local Authorities had been reviewing water quality, it was suggested that the Democratic Services Officer look into how these had taken place.</p> <p>In considering the impact to the local environment, it was suggested that the Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager be requested to provide evidence to the group.</p>

	<p>The Democratic Services Officer advised that it would be suitable to conduct the internal stakeholder consultation first, to allow the Group to receive updates and other relevant information ahead of interviewing the external stakeholders. This would provide increased notice to those stakeholders.</p> <p><u>Information relating to the review</u></p> <p>The Group felt it would be helpful to have the below information where possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates concerning the Medway Flood Partnership and flood risk mitigation measures; • Environment Agency’s updated FCERM Plan; • Data and/or information relating to sewage plant capacity; • Complaint’s data; • Incidents of surface water flooding and a map of those incidents, preferably across multiple years; • The number of requests for land clearance;
<p>4. Frequency of Meetings</p>	<p>After discussing the meetings required for Internal and External Consultation, the group felt that it would be appropriate to have two meetings to interview MBC Officers and two meetings to interview External Stakeholders.</p> <p>The meetings with MBC Officers would take place before Christmas 2022. The meetings with External stakeholders would take place in the New Year. The Democratic Services Officer was requested to contact the External Stakeholders to let them know and maintain a good working relationship.</p> <p>The relevant Lead Members would be consulted after the above evidence collection meetings.</p> <p>The Group expressed a preference for in-person meetings in the first instance, with virtual meetings as a second option. Hybrid Meetings were not felt suitable.</p>
<p>5. Summary of Agreed Actions</p>	<p>Actions: That the Democratic Services Officer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consult the following individuals to partake in the review: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Major Projects Team Leader (MBC) b. KCC (from their perspective as the Highways Authority) c. National Highways d. UMIDB e. Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager 2. Consult the Democratic Services Officers at other authorities, such as Wealden Council, to see how they have approached similar reviews; 3. Inform the external stakeholders that have agreed to partake in the review that they will be consulted in January 2023; 4. Organise x2 meetings with officers to collect evidence, to take place before Christmas 2022; 5. Consult MG for updated information relating to the review; and

	6. Consult the KCC Kent Risk Management Committee to ascertain whether there will be any overlap between the Working Group's terms of reference, and the former's review of water quality.
6. Duration of Meeting	5.30 p.m. – 6.30 p.m.

WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE WORKING GROUP - NOTES

MONDAY 5 DECEMBER 2022

5.30 P.M. – 7 P.M. VIA MS TEAMS

<p>Present:</p> <p><u>Members</u> Councillor English (Chairman) Councillor Harwood Councillor Cleator Councillor Garten Councillor Jeffery</p> <p><u>Reserve Member</u> Councillor Springett</p> <p><u>Visiting Member</u> Councillor Perry</p> <p><u>Officers</u> Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement Democratic Services Officer</p>	
Item	Minute
1. Apologies	No apologies were received.
2. Substitute Members	There were no Substitute Members in attendance. Councillor Springett was in attendance as a Reserve Member in accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee's previous agreement that Reserve Members would be welcome to attend all Working Group (the Group) Meetings.
3. Technical Briefing – provided by the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement	<p>The Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement provided a technical briefing based on the briefing note provided to the working group; the actions included were based on the Council's actions and capabilities in relation to the Water Management Cycle. These focused on flood resilience and were generally in response to specific situations rather than as the product of a flood resilience strategy. The group were advised that the current gaps concerned developing feasibility studies, as previous experience had demonstrated that once a scheme has been identified the Council had been successful in obtaining funding.</p> <p><u>Flood Resilience (Actions)</u></p> <p>Following the 2013/24 floods, solutions to prevent reoccurrences were preferred. One large scheme included the expansion of the Leigh Flood Storage Area, although flood barriers were not suitable for all areas including Yalding due to the area's geography, so micro-measures were considered.</p> <p>The Environment Agency (EA) led on the Middle Medway Flood Resilience Scheme, which involved providing flood resilience equipment to homeowners that were likely to be affected by flooding, such as window and doorway covers. This included providing training</p>

to ensure that the equipment was used effectively. Whilst positive, the equipment could not be used within older properties.

The actions taken within Mote Park Lake were outlined, with the project having cost £1.5 million. These actions gave additional protection to the town centre; if the dam failed the affects would be significant. The EA had since certified the safety of the dam.

The Medway Street Flood Barrier Scheme was still progressing, which was originally part of the large Bridges Gyratory Scheme. The issue's background was highlighted, with the flood barrier to be built across the landward side of the subway to prevent the latter's closure at times where flooding was likely and/or had taken place. The scheme's management was positively referenced, as the East Kent Business Partnership had supported the Council in obtaining an additional £100,000 in funding for the project. The project remained on schedule to be completed in 2023.

Flood Resilience (Maintenance, Management & Resilience)

The Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement outlined the Council's actions in maintaining privately owned watercourses to supplement Kent County Council's (KCC) overarching work on the matter. KCC provided the Council with the funding to undertake this responsibility.

The group were advised that there had been increasing interest in natural flood management measures, which included working with the landscape to increase resilience. This included the installation of leaky dams and riverbank restoration. Given the previous interest in undertaking large scale schemes, a line had been included in the Council's capital budget that could facilitate smaller, natural measures moving forward. Examples give included the progress towards achieving a wetland in Staplehurst and the work facilitated by the Southeast Rivers Trust.

The importance of community resilience and the Council's role in supporting this were highlighted. The actions taken by the Council with Parish Councils, particularly Collier Street and Yalding in particular, were outlined. The example given was that the previous work undertaken helped the Council to assist Ulcombe Parish in developing community flood plans, as the area had experienced flooding expectedly.

The Council's role in the Medway Flood Partnership was reiterated, which met twice annually and provided a forum for the Council to work collaboratively with the relevant agencies.

Emergency Planning

The Council was a member of the Kent Resilience Forum, facilitated by Kent County Council, and worked closely during emergency situations.

Development Management

The Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement stated that the as a Local Planning Authority, the Council had significant

involvement in facilitating new developments and the supply of water to those developments. The importance of consulting the relevant officers as part of the group's evidence collection process was reiterated.

Biodiversity and Climate Change

The Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan contained actions across flood management, to mitigate climate change, protect communities and enhance biodiversity. The Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager worked closely with the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement to ensure that, whilst related, their areas of work were not duplicated.

The group thanked the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement for the information and briefing provided, which was felt to be extremely helpful.

During the discussion, the group highlighted the following points:

- The importance of the Design and Sustainability Development Plan Document Regulation 18 consultation, with attendees encouraged to respond before the consultation's end.
- The importance of natural flood mitigations, particularly in rural areas. This included reiterating the importance of tree cover, which acted as both a natural flood prevention and climate change mitigation measure.

An example given was the natural flood solutions on the River Len, whereby the area that flooded significantly in 2000 reconfigured to woodland and wetland. Consequently, no properties were flooded during the flooding of 2013/24 as mentioned above. The flood water was able to be pumped through the existing drainage systems into the River Len.

The small financial cost against the scheme's impact was highlighted. It was stated that the Council's urban tree cover was lower than other towns within the UK, which could have been impacted by town centre development. The importance of finding suitable solutions was reiterated.

- The significance of highway and surface water flooding across the borough this autumn, particularly when considering that fluvial flooding has been less common. The impact to properties could potentially be mitigated through the Council's role as a Local Planning Authority, particularly when the use of combined systems led to the mixing of foul and surface water. The role of KCC as highway authority was highlighted, with the agreement of drop-curbs given as an example.

The mixing of foul and surface water was felt to be significant issue to be examined by the group, to find a resolution. The need for involvement of partner agencies in this was referenced.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council’s role in development management was highlighted. Specific reference was made to the use of delegated powers on planning applications, landscaping conditions, consideration of water management cycle related matters, i.e. through the planning report template. • In relation to surface water, the group highlighted that this would have been affected by changes in land use and agriculture. <p>In response, the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement suggested that a representative of a landowner’s association be interviewed by the group. This was due to ongoing discussions with the Southeast Rivers Trust on how the latter have been developing flood management from engagement with landowners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the investment into suitable systems by water companies. The example given was the special are of conservation in Stodmarsh, which prevented wastewater from being discharged to the water treatment plants. The potential to lobby central government on widely enforcement water neutrality was highlighted. Southern Water were also lobbying central government for this purpose.
<p>4. Lines of Enquiry</p>	<p>The group wished to explore the following within the lines of enquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>Supply of Water</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mitigating effects of increased rainfall, including capacity b. General supply of water: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. (Consultation with Environment Agency and Water companies on the supply of water) ii. (Southeast water had suggested providing information on supply issues to loose & Coxheath, alongside drought management and communications in extreme weather). b) <u>Disposal of Water</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Importance and influence of development management (including considerations at planning committee) b. Flooding mitigation Mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To effectively control water ii. Natural flood mitigation measures; (ditches, hedging, additional tree cover, wetlands, etc.) c. Management of highway and surface water flooding d. Working with partners, including interviewing landowner associations/representatives.

	<p>c) <u>Disposal of Sewage in Water Courses</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Combined systems (also relevant to point b) and link to foul and surface water mixing. b. Council powers and partnership Working, e.g. development management, planning and lobbying. c. Working with partners d. Water neutrality and planning (lobbying as a possibility) <p>The actions within the Council’s Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan that related to the above lines of enquiry would be collated for the group. The power point presented provided by Cllr Val Springett would also be distributed to the group.</p>
<p>5. Next Steps – Officer Consultation Meetings</p>	<p>The Democratic Services Officer outlined the changes proposed to the reserve meeting dates & times for officer consultation. The group were asked to confirm their availability for the dates.</p> <p>Confirmation would be given at a later date on whether the meetings would be held in-person or virtually, depending on Member and officer availability.</p>
<p>6. Any Other Business.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>7. Summary of Agreed Actions</p>	<p>Actions: That the Democratic Services Officer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compile the information relevant to the Lines of Enquiry, in accordance with the working group’s areas of interest, including highlighting the relevant aspects of the biodiversity and climate change action plan. 2. Organise the officer consultation meetings and inform the group.
<p>8. Duration of Meeting</p>	<p>5.30 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.</p>

WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE WORKING GROUP - NOTES

THURSDAY 15 DECEMBER 2022

3 P.M. – 4.30 P.M. VIA MS TEAMS

<p>Present:</p> <p><u>Members</u> Councillor English (Chairman) Councillor Harwood Councillor Cleator Councillor Garten Councillor Jeffery</p> <p><u>Reserve Member</u> Councillor Springett</p>		<p><u>Officers</u> Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager Democratic Services Officer</p>
Item	Minute	
1. Apologies	Apologies had been received from Councillor Brice.	
2. Substitute Members	<p>There were no Substitute Members in attendance.</p> <p>Councillor Springett was in attendance as a Reserve Member in accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s previous agreement that Reserve Members would be welcome to attend all Working Group (the Group) Meetings.</p>	
3. Interviews with Council Officers, in accordance with the lines of enquiry.	<p>The Groups Members and Officers introduced themselves.</p> <p>Each of the Council’s Officers in attendance were asked to provide introductory remarks:</p> <p><u>Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement, Mark Green:</u></p> <p>The Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement referenced the briefing note provided to the working group at its meeting on the 5 December 2022. The previous actions taken to improve resilience across the borough was reiterated.</p> <p>The group was advised that they could explore how the previous actions taken could be built upon and assess what else is needed across the Borough, as much of the work undertaken has been reactive. This would ensure that schemes could be developed and prioritised and be ready to implement when funding was available.</p> <p><u>Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager, Uche Olufemi:</u></p> <p>The Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager outlined their role in leading the Council’s emergency preparedness, ensuring that the Council was ready to respond to incidents including flooding. The previous actions taken following the 2013/24 flooding experienced within the Borough, including engagement with the Kent Resilience Forum, the provision of equipment to improve the flood resilience of properties susceptible to flooding and the creation of the Medway</p>	

Confluence Framework, was outlined. The latter included implementing a plan for all partners to respond to during incidents of flooding, as part of a combined response through a well-practised framework.

The actions taken to improve the resilience of parishes was outlined, with the importance of working together with the Council's Members reiterated.

Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager, James Wilderspin:

The Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager referenced the Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan (BDCCAP), stating that the plan had 12 actions within it that related to the Water Management Cycle.

These included; a section on the Council adapting to flooding and identifying longer-term actions to assist in its management, including in response to extreme weather; strengthening water supplies and critical water infrastructure and the importance of linking the action plan to planning policy and community resilience, particularly when considering housing developments, with the example given being the Design and Sustainability Development Plan Document that had recently undergone its Regulation 18A public consultation.

Specific attention was also drawn to the actions that focused on biodiversity, such as expanding wetland and tree coverage, that were effective and affordable.

During the discussion, the group highlighted the following points:

- The importance of emergency planning and resilience in response to flooding, with reference made to ensuring that urban drainage systems were sustainable.

In response, The Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager reiterated the work undertaken to build community resilience and encourage local areas to respond to incidents.

The group highlighted that whilst responsiveness and resilience were important, adapting to the changes seen to the climate and water management cycle generally should be emphasised.

- The importance of ensuring that water management cycle related schemes were readily available for implementation. The group felt that these should be applicable across the water management cycle, rather than to mitigate flooding only. The importance of identifying areas for change, as opposed to identifying the existing problems, was reiterated.

Examples of where these schemes could be applicable included agricultural land, due to its affect on water pollution, and for public recreational use. This included identifying where previous measures, such as culverts and wiers, were no longer required and removing them to contribute to re-wilding.

The Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager stated that the BDCCAP included SuDS and nature-based solutions such as wetlands, to reduce surface water run-off. The importance of implementing schemes that combined elements of the water management cycle was highlighted, as this increased a scheme's cost effectiveness. For example, tree planting would slow water flow rates and increase biodiversity and habitat creation.

- The importance of ensuring that the Council's policies supported the delivery of projects to improve the water management cycle. This would enable resources such as CIL and Section 106 monies to be used for any schemes and/or actions identified and assist in securing appropriate conditions to planning consents. This was raised within the context of increased housebuilding and the alternative routes available to progress schemes that benefitted the water management cycle.

In response, the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement stated that to progress with the types of schemes required, a small fund should be allocated to developing feasibility studies. This would assist the council in identifying and defining what action was required, so that specific proposals could be developed in response. The Council would need to commission this work. Other organisations, such as the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board, were currently looking into conducting feasibility studies for this aim. The group supported this suggestion.

The Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager reiterated the importance of aligning the planning and biodiversity aspects of the Council's work. The biodiversity net gain as contained within the Environment Act 2021 was referenced, which was akin to a tax in that developers would have to provide a set percentage net biodiversity gain. If the Council had undertaken feasibility studies and had schemes ready for delivery, the biodiversity net gain could be maximised. The opportunities contained within documents such as the D&S DPD was reiterated, alongside the use of previously published information such as the Council's Flood Risk Assessment (2016), to direct the Council's actions in positively impacting the water management cycle.

The Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager stated that they were currently working to identify the opportunities associated with the biodiversity net gain.

In response, the group requested that a proposals map be created, to outline the areas where there could be multiple benefits across the water management cycle. It was also suggested that the group request that a similar proposals map be attached to the D&S DPD, although this request would have to be made to the relevant Lead Member as the Regulation 18A public consultation had now closed.

- Previous actions taken by the Council in relation to the BDCCAP and possible future actions.

The Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager explained the previous 'call for sites' exercise undertaken in 2021. Landowners would submit sites for the Council to plant trees and/or take other actions such as pond and wetland creation, as appropriate. There had been 16 applicants, although most had withdrawn from the scheme due to its requirements, such as that the trees had to remain planted for at least 30 years in accordance with Defra guidelines.

However, one scheme had been successful in the area north of Yalding, with the Council currently waiting on the Environment Agency's sign-off on a scheme to plant trees along the riverbank. The aim was to slow the river bank's erosion and the water flow. As the scheme had progressed due to the landowner's interest, it was proposed that suggestions on how to discuss the benefits of a scheme with other landowners be included within the proposals map requested.

Several Members of the group raised the importance of the Council progressing with these types of scheme, with examples given to the projects undertaken by other Councils within the Kent County, including Canterbury City Council. This included increasing the amount of open spaces available and improving biodiversity within these areas. The possibility of compulsory purchase was raised.

In response, the Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager stated that they were producing a business case whereby numerous schemes could be implemented onto the same piece of land, to increase the effects to the local environment. If the work could be linked to the biodiversity net gain (as outlined above), the business case could facilitate significant improvements. An example was given of a developer that had purchased a 20-hectare site within the borough for use as a 'bio-bank' in meeting their future biodiversity net gain quota.

The Council could investigate setting up similar areas through purchasing local land, provided that it was aware of what the challenges were to the area, the types of schemes that could be implemented, the benefits of those schemes and the schemes' affordability. The group requested that the business case be progressed, and that a scale of the land available for purchase starting with agricultural land as the most affordable, be included. Any other information as applicable, could be included on the land scale.

The Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement stated that the structured approach suggested was a suitable idea, as it would provide the Council with the framework needed to negotiate with other organisations and/or developers in promoting the achievement of the actions within the BDCCAP and positively impacting the Water Management Cycle. The

	<p>Council’s role as a developer for the 1000 Affordable Homes Programme was highlighted, as the Council could assess whether any suitable schemes could be delivered through the programme in addition to house purchase and/or construction.</p> <p>The Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement stated that it would be beneficial if the group could discuss the development of feasibility studies with the external stakeholders in January 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of nitrates and phosphates within agricultural land and local rivers. <p>In response, the Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager stated that the forthcoming Natural England has a Nutrient Mitigation Scheme where they work with landowners to create habitats, wetland, and woodlands to receive ‘nutrient credits’ that could be sold to developers, to offset the negative impacts of the development. These types of scheme could be included within the case studies requested by the group.</p> <p>Ahead of the meeting’s closure, the officers in attendance were asked if they had any final remarks.</p> <p>The group thanked the officers in attendance for their contributions.</p>
4. Next Meeting	<p>In response to questions, the Democratic Services Officer outlined the officers that would be attending the group’s next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Health Manager, Tracey Beattie • Principal Planning Officer, Richard Timms • Interim Local Plan Review Director, Philip Coyne <p>The second and third officers were from the development management and strategic planning service areas respectively.</p>
5. Any Other Business.	None.
7. Summary of Agreed Actions	<p>Actions: That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement put forward proposals on how to conduct the required feasibility studies; and 2. The Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager be requested to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. produce a proposals map, to identify which areas could benefit from schemes designed to improve aspects of the Water Management Cycle; b. continue to develop the ongoing business case, and that a scale of the land available for purchase starting with agricultural land as the most affordable, be included.

	c. provide case studies types of projects underway elsewhere in the country relating to the Water Management Cycle.
8. Duration of Meeting	3 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE WORKING GROUP - NOTES

THURSDAY 22 DECEMBER 2022

11 A.M. – 12.30 P.M. VIA MS TEAMS

<p>Present:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Members</u> Councillor English (Chairman) Councillor Cleator Councillor Garten Councillor Brice Councillor Jeffery</p> <p><u>Reserve Member</u> Councillor Springett</p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p><u>Officers</u> Director of Regeneration and Place Interim Local Plan Review Director Principal Planning Officer Principal Planning Officer Environmental Health Manager Democratic Services Officer</p> </td> </tr> </table>		<p><u>Members</u> Councillor English (Chairman) Councillor Cleator Councillor Garten Councillor Brice Councillor Jeffery</p> <p><u>Reserve Member</u> Councillor Springett</p>	<p><u>Officers</u> Director of Regeneration and Place Interim Local Plan Review Director Principal Planning Officer Principal Planning Officer Environmental Health Manager Democratic Services Officer</p>
<p><u>Members</u> Councillor English (Chairman) Councillor Cleator Councillor Garten Councillor Brice Councillor Jeffery</p> <p><u>Reserve Member</u> Councillor Springett</p>	<p><u>Officers</u> Director of Regeneration and Place Interim Local Plan Review Director Principal Planning Officer Principal Planning Officer Environmental Health Manager Democratic Services Officer</p>		
Item	Minute		
1. Apologies	Apologies had been received from Councillor Harwood.		
2. Substitute Members	<p>There were no Substitute Members in attendance.</p> <p>Councillor Springett was in attendance as a Reserve Member in accordance with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee’s previous agreement that Reserve Members would be welcome to attend all Working Group (the Group) Meetings.</p>		
3. Interviews with Council Officers, in accordance with the lines of enquiry.	<p>The Groups Members and Officers introduced themselves.</p> <p>Each of the Council’s Officers in attendance were asked to provide introductory remarks:</p> <p><u>Environmental Health Manager, Tracey Beattie:</u></p> <p>The Environmental Health Manager outlined their role and stated that environmental health had historically been associated with water quality in relation to consumption, and wastewater in regard to public health.</p> <p>In relation to water quality, the Council monitored private water supplies for commercial properties and businesses that were not linked to the mains (public) water supply. Maidstone has one commercial bottling plant in the borough.</p> <p>In relation to wastewater, environmental health worked with two other service areas; private sector housing, in managing residents that have blocked drains that impacted their housing standard and community safety in responding to complaints of blocked drains, sewers and flooding issues.</p> <p><u>Principal Planning Officer, Richard Timms:</u></p> <p>The Principal Planning Officer outlined their role in dealing with planning applications, with the group’s lines of enquiry all considerations to those applications to differing degrees. To allow the</p>		

Council to apply standards greater than nationally required, for surface water drainage for example, further policy and guidance would need to be created to support this.

Interim Local Plan Review Director, Philip Coyne:

In their introductory remarks, the Interim Local Plan Review Director reference the ongoing Local Plan Review (LPR) in relation to the group's lines of enquiry; the LPR contained a policy to restrict water usage per dwelling of 110 litres per person each day, with further exploration into the details relating to water capture and re-use as part of the ongoing progression of the Design and Sustainability Development Plan Document (D&S DPD).

In relation to wastewater, the proposed Heathlands Development had been captured by the Nitrate Phosphate guidance issues by Natural England in 2020, which limited additional release in various areas such as the River Stour. The existing wastewater treatments works in Lenham would be unable to provide the capacity and treatment levels now required, with a privately operated wastewater treatment plant proposed as part of the scheme. Southern Water did not want to operate the new plant; a private operate would have to be secured. To achieve the required levels, additional wetlands would be needed.

Principal Planning Officer, Helen Garnett:

The Principal Planning Officer provided introductory remarks alongside the Interim Local Plan Review Director, and highlighted several policies contained within the LPR that applied to the review, including:

- Policy DM3, which required the Council to control pollution to ground water, surface water and mitigate against the irrigation of water bodies and ground water sources of protection zones. The policy had been enhanced to allow major developments to demonstrate that the existing infrastructure could accommodate new developments; and
- Updated SP14A, which applied across the borough.

Director of Regeneration and Place, William Cornall:

The Director of Regeneration and Place stated that the issues relating to the Water Management Cycle were more pertinent than ever before. The Council's involvement in building regulations was highlighted.

During the discussion, the following points were raised:

- The involvement of Environmental Health in the Water Management Cycle.

In response to questions, the Environmental Health Manager outlined the public health legislation applicable to drainage, (Public Health Act 1961) and reference various building control

acts. The Environmental Health service worked collaboratively with the Council's other service areas to resolve drainage problems, only becoming directly involved in instances where a breakdown in communication between the property owner and occupier had occurred, although this was rare.

Several of the group's members expressed concern on the management of drainage and/or sewage infrastructure within the Private Rental Sector (PRS) by private companies, due to there having been several mis-management issues in recent years.

In response, the Environmental Health Manager outlined the difficulties associated with this, in that those companies were responsible for maintaining the infrastructure. The potential for a cyclical effect of council involvement was highlighted, although they were unsure how often the private rented housing within Maidstone had experienced drainage and/or sewage infrastructure related issues. It was stated that the Community Safety Team received an average of 12 complaints annually from the public relating to the water management cycle, which were investigated with the relevant parties directed as required.

In response to further questions, the Environmental Health Manager stated that the Council was responsible for testing private water supplies only (public supplies were tested by the relevant suppliers). There were only five private water supply sites in the Maidstone Borough, and a detailed overview of the testing parameters was provided. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that if any of the tests were failed, then action had to be taken, although there was no evidence to suggest that the quality of the private water supply was in decline; it was cyclical.

The importance of raising water supply, infrastructure and water transfer with the Water Companies that would be consulted as part of the External Stakeholder consultation was highlighted, to gain further insight into how their management.

It was suggested that the Group review the processes for monitoring tap water quality in the near future.

- The Council's involvement in mitigating flooding from individual developments.

Several Members of the group queried the actions that could be taken by the Council in mitigating flooding, given that some residents were unaware of the measures taken historically to support the water management cycle, such as shared culverts and soakaways.

In response to questions, the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that where an individual property owner had made improvements to their home (such as extensions) which

inadvertently impacted neighbouring properties, these would be classed as a private matter. In many cases, extensions could be facilitated through permitted development, rather than through the submission of a planning application.

The Interim Local Plan Review Director further advised that in such circumstances the Council had to be mindful of providing advice directly to the affected individuals as the matter concerned civil law; the authority could advise individuals on which organisations they could contact to obtain the relevant advice.

- The Council's involvement in mitigating surface water flooding, as several of the group's members highlighted the issues faced by residents in recent years arising out of new developments.

In response, the Principal Planning Officer stated that any major developments on greenfield sites in recent years should not initially be directing surface water into public sewers, in accordance with the national SUDs hierarchy. The hierarchy was explained as surface water being directed into the ground in the first instance, then to a suitable body of water and then to the public sewer as a last resort. In relation to land levels, it was stated that they had previously discussed the impact of run off with Kent County Council acting as Lead local Flood Authority (KCC LLFA). KCC LLFA had advised that raising land levels wouldn't necessarily cause increased surface water flow.

Surface water drainage measures were only applicable to major schemes and the Principal Planning Officer confirmed that the definition of a major development was set nationally and was unable to be set by the Council.

In response to further questions on the involvement of the Council and other relevant parties, the Principal Planning Officer stated KCC LLFA was a statutory consultee (planning) on the surface water drainage and had its own guidance in addition to national guidance. The Group was advised that if the Council wished to develop and/or influence sustainable urban drainage on developments, there would need to be a hook through local policy which could be through the D&S DPD.

- The Council's involvement from a planning perspective in managing wastewater, particularly in relation to the briefing note provided as part of the information pack.

In response to questions on the Council's remit in managing wastewater, the Principal Planning Officer explained that national guidance generally advises that Development Management should not become heavily involved in wastewater management as part of an application's assessment, as developers had a right to connect to the public sewer which was dealt with under the Water Industry Act (1991). If there were evidenced concerns about capacity the developer can be asked

to clarify how they will manage wastewater but this would be at a high level. Development Management would not be able to get into the fine detail as this would be dealt with between the developer and Southern Water.

It was stated that Southern Water were not a statutory consultee for planning applications, but the Council does consult them. They usually advise there is sufficient capacity or that upgrades are required, which they can facilitate under the Water Industry Act.

Government guidance generally advises that Development Management should only become involved if there was a large-scale development where they may consider how new development can be phased, for example so it is not occupied until any necessary improvements to the public sewage system have been carried out, where reasonable. This would be the limit of Council involvement.

The Director of Regeneration and Place stated that attaching too detailed a set of conditions to a planning approval could lead to the production of extensive technical documents by the relevant parties, which could make the application's determination difficult; particularly when the Council's involvement should have been limited in the first instance to that advised within the government guidance.

- The importance of promoting and achieving behavioural change in relation to water usage.

Several Members of the group expressed concern at the likelihood of achieving behavioural change, with an example given of Southeast Water's target of reducing daily usage per person from 150 litre to 112, alongside Southern Water's 100 litre target.

The Interim Local Plan Review Director reiterated the Council's role to work with water companies in promoting behavioural change, including from a Communications perspective to jointly present the work undertaken. Another route was to promote behavioural change through schools, as children were likely to discuss these matters with their parents.

The Group felt that it would be beneficial to explore whether the Water Companies would sponsor and assist with delivering an educational campaign with the Council.

The Interim Local Plan Review Director also stated that the D&S DPD would likely contain further information on recycling water within properties, to reduce overall usage. The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that water capture methods, such as those that collected rainwater to appliances within the home, were being explored. However, the D&S DPD would have to be viability tested, and the implementation of the equipment

required to support water recycling within individual properties was costly. The Principal Planning Officer referenced Policy DM2 of the Local Plan which addressed water efficiencies and gave an example of Woodcut Farm which had a BREEAM condition placed upon its planning approval. The relevant Government guidance promoted rainwater harvesting in commercial developments where it was viewed as being of the greatest benefit.

The Group felt that it would be beneficial to further explore the use and range of mechanisms to recycle water, as this could be facilitated in small- and large-scale developments. The benefit of promoting these types of measures in the first instance, such as through Council policies, was highlighted as this would prevent retrofitting which could be time consuming and more expensive.

- The role of the Council's policies in positively affecting the Water Management Cycle.

As a result of the Group's questioning and sentiments expressed, the importance of the Council's policies contributing to the promotion and management of the water management cycle was highlighted throughout the meeting.

This included:

- Promoting the mechanisms available to recycle water and the importance of sustainable measures, including sustainable urban drainage;
- Reiterating previous references made to the above two aspects, including removing hard standings and vehicle standpoints;
- The inclusion of the points raised where possible in relation to the D&S DPD, to assist in the measures implementation; and
- The links to biodiversity, and the actions discussed with the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement as the groups previous two meetings (feasibility studies and access to funding).

In response, the Interim Local Plan Review highlighted the 20% biodiversity net gain included within the LPR, which was the same value being used by KCC and had been viability tested. There were no reasons to suggest that the level set would not be achieved. From a LPR perspective, it was assumed that the biodiversity net gain would be achieved through development. However, the LPR and D&S DPD could not achieve retrospective improvements.

The Interim Local Plan Review Director stated that it would be very useful for the Council to be able to identify areas where additional funding and/or the biodiversity net gain could be accessed to carry out priority projects. As such, the Interim Local Plan Review Director would discuss the feasibility studies

	<p>previously suggested with the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement to ascertain if a collaborative approach could be achieved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for improved communication on the importance of the water management cycle. <p>The group felt that further efforts should be made to improve the attention given to Water Management cycle and suggested the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For representatives of the Parish, District and County Councils, alongside the relevant officers as required, to meet on an annually or every-other-year, to discuss local issues and ensure that local knowledge is maintained in preventing negative effects such as flooding and property damage in the future; ○ For the group members to provide feedback to their respective political networks (such as specific environmental networks), to support continued attention to the matter; and ○ For the Council to proactively identify water management cycle related matters for inclusion at events such as the Local Government Association Conference and Rural and Urban Commission.
4. Any Other Business.	None.
5. Summary of Agreed Actions	<p>Actions: That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Democratic Services Officer ensure that the Officers that have attended both the 15 and 22 December 2022 group meetings receive the minutes of both meetings; 2. The Chairman research the appropriate method for the full Council to be presented with motions applicable to external stakeholders; and 3. The Interim Local Plan Review Director discuss the previously mentioned feasibility studies with the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement to ascertain if a collaborative approach could be achieved.
6. Duration of Meeting	11 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE WORKING GROUP - NOTES

FRIDAY 27 JANUARY 2023

10.30 A.M. – 2 P.M.

MAIDSTONE MUSEUM

Present:

Members

Councillor English (Chairman)
Councillor Harwood
Councillor Cleator
Councillor Brice
Councillor Jeffery

Officers

Director of Finance, Resources and Business
Improvement
Democratic Services Officer

Reserve Member

Councillor Springett

Other Members

Councillor Perry – Invited to attend as the Lead Member for Corporate Services.

External Attendees

Clerk to the Board, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board
Head of Science and Partnerships, Southeast Rivers Trust
Flood and Water Manager, Kent County Council

Item	Minute
1. Apologies	Apologies had been received from Councillor Garten. Councillor Brice informed the group that she would leave the meeting at 12.10 p.m. due to a pre-existing commitment.
2. Substitute Members	Councillor Springett was present as Substitute for Councillor Garten.
3. Evidence Collection	The Chairman welcomed the External Stakeholders to the meeting, with all attendees asked to introduce themselves, and outline their expertise and interest to the topic. The aims of the review were outlined, with the group's previous consultation meetings with the Council's officers highlighted to the external attendees. Each External Stakeholder was given 5 minutes to introduce themselves and their organisation, followed by 40 minutes of questioning from the Working Group (the group).

Oliver Pantrey, Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board (UMIDB/the Board)

Oliver Pantrey introduced themselves as the Clerk to the Board. Their responsibilities included managing the day-to-day operations of the UMIDB, staffing, ensuring compliance to regulations and providing advice on all policies against the overarching task of assisting the UMIDB in achieving its directives and securing outcomes.

The UMIDB was a quasi-government body, formed from the Land Drainage Act (1991) with 19 Members in total; 10 of the Members were levy paying authorities, including Maidstone Borough Council (the Council). The UMIDB was responsible for the drainage of primarily agricultural land, alongside a significant amount of development land through increased development affecting its area of responsibility.

The Clerk to the Board stated that the water that interacted with urban areas was managed by the Environment Agency on the UMIDB's behalf, with the latter paying an annual precept for the services provided. It was stated however that the UMIDB's remit had shifted over time, and that it was more appropriate to view the organisation as a water management authority due to its increased involvement in consultation with and management of catchment flooding.

The UMIDB wished to start considering how it could manage catchment flooding as an organisation; this could be achieved through looking at actions to be taken both inside and outside of its district, such as improved drainage of flood plains. It was stated that the UMIDB was in a unique position to allow for a more collective effort with the relevant authorities, as opposed to the independent working shown in previous years. The UMIDB was able to contribute both strategically and practically to various elements of the Water Management Cycle.

The area covered by the UMIDB was of a fluvial nature, as it received waterflows from the major and minor watercourses from the catch ways of the River Medway in a downward direction. The difference between waterflows of the UMIDB and the Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board was briefly outlined.

During the interview process, the group raised the following points:

- The UMIDB's adaptation to the changing elements of the Water Management Cycle, with reference to natural flood mechanisms such as flood plains and wetlands.

In response to questions, the Clerk to the Board stated that the UMIDB had shown an increased interest in conservation and improving biodiversity across the past three years, which coincided with flood management. The UMIDB had been working closely with the Southeast Rivers Trust (SERT) and Kent County Council (KCC), to improve the perception of the Board amongst others. The Board had been actively trying to assess where it could work and impact upon areas outside of its primary district, with the mechanisms for this contained within the Environment Act (2021), to align more closely with the

work of the Environment Agency. The reconnection of flood plains was given as an example.

The importance of joint working was strongly reiterated, as this would enable the UMIDB to consider funding schemes that would slow the water-flow outside of the district. The districts still required appropriate drainage and water management, especially where a quick response to alleviate immediate pressures was required, but the emphasis increasingly needed to be on water management.

- The UMIDB's role and work in the Local Area

The Group questioned the Clerk to the Board on the UMIB's remit, with several members having provided examples of issues within their local area. Specific reference was made to Riparian rights, SUDS, use of ditches and drainage networks and natural flood management mechanisms.

In response, the Clerk to the Board stated that the UMIDB adopted a water course slightly outside of its district in November 2023 for the first time. The UMIDB would like to assume responsibility for areas affected the Water Management Cycle if this was not in contradiction to the landowners' views. It was stated that Riparian rights needed to be reassessed, as whilst landowners were undertaking the work required – to move the water without impediment to the next person – there were no considerations as to whether the landowners had the means to hold or store the water, and whether they could be financially compensated. SUD schemes were expensive, and until they were designed to cope with increased rainfall, issues could continue to arise.

The Clerk to the Board stated that ditch networks should be viewed as drainage, and not necessarily as a mechanism to support the holding of excess water. If a ditch network was performing well, the water held would subside quickly. The UMIDB faced challenges if the volume of water was such that the main rivers began to join. A recent pilot scheme carried out by the UMIDB was outlined.

The Clerk to the Board stated that the UMIDB did not deal with sewage or treated foul pollution. The limited resources available to the UMIDB and the Environment Agency in both highlighting and prosecuting against those issues respectively, contributed to the issue's increasingly prevalence.

It was confirmed that Beavers had been used in some areas to hold water and had recently been classified as a protected species in October 2022. Further considerations were needed, as whilst beneficial, there were instances where the holding of water could have unintended impacts. The Environment Agency was continuing to work on this.

- The UMIDB's funding and future ambitions

In response to questions from the Group arising out of the UMIDB's remit and work undertaken, the Clerk to the Board stated that the UMIDB had created a Resilience Fund; the first created by an Internal Drainage Board. The aim of the reserve was to ensure that the excess reserves held by the Board were directed towards the achievement of suitable projects, either through direct funding or support in its delivery. This would ensure a 'mosaic' approach, whereby the number of measures provided would increase, joining over time to create a suitable defence around the UMIDB district.

The Clerk to the Board emphasised the importance of working flexibly and achieving outcomes, as opposed to discussions only, to improve the districts resilience.

- Member and Local Knowledge of the UMIDB's role

Several Members of the Group felt that further information on the UMIDB and its role should be disseminated to Members and included within the Group's final report, to increase the understanding of the Board's role. This would also encourage greater interaction with the Council's Ward Members that had local knowledge of the areas affected by the Water Management Cycle.

The Clerk to the Board expressed support for the suggestion, highlighting that the UMIDB was focusing on promoting its presence on social media, which would be complemented by additional information being presented to the Council's Members.

- The impact of Climate Change, as several members of the Group questioned how the UMIDB intended to manage any affects to the Water Management Cycle.

The Clerk to the Board stated that Climate Change was not a specific area for the UMIDB to consider; its approach was to accept that flooding would occur, that it will likely worsen through Climate Change, and that consideration would be given to facilitating as much flood plain re-connection as possible to prevent the excess water reaching the main water courses. The importance of viewing the UMIDB's remit as a catchment and water management authority was reiterated.

- The UMIDB's 'wish-list' of actions for the Group to consider as part of the review, as the group felt that this would support the review being solution driven and outcome focused.

In response, the Clerk to the Board outlined the following requests:

- *That both the Council and Kent County Council should be involved in the modelling and delivery of projects*

- *To lobby central government for the secondary and tertiary legislation required to allow IDBs to actively work within the catchment areas and to levy those within the catchment to support the work's completion.*
- *For further opportunities for Joint Working, through Public Sector Collaboration Agreements.*

For example, the UMIDB would like to be able to offer cost aid or partnership working to KCC in managing water courses where the authority was unable to deal with water course maintenance. The group were informed that the Clerk to the Board and the Council's Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement had recently discussed opportunities for joint working, including through contracted means. The importance of an acknowledgement from other authorities that the UMIDB would be welcomed in working across the areas was highlighted.

- *In addition to the above point, the acknowledgement from other authorities, such as District and County Councils, that the UMIDB should be and could be doing more.*

For example, the UMIDB would usually have to work to its boundaries, however there were instances where an issue could be resolved by extending out of the boundaries by short distances, to the betterment of the area.

- *From a flood management perspective, funding would be welcomed with emphasis given to joint projects.*
- *For the UMIDB was consulted as a non-statutory consultee on planning applications submitted within flood plains.* Developers no longer viewed flood plains as inappropriate areas for building, and instead invested in mechanisms to overcome any initial water management concerns, such as building on stilts with drainage underneath and SUDS schemes. However, the schemes had a shelf-life, with many residents left to maintain the schemes once the original maintenance companies had left. This had cost implications. The Clerk to the Board emphasised that whilst the National Policy Planning Framework accounted for drainage/water control measures, further input from Local Authorities (as Local Planning Authorities) could be beneficial in ensuring these measures were suitable.

The group were informed that the UMIDB had the capacity to take on community networks as a result, with this being an option for future consideration for the organisation.

The Group expressed support for engaging with the UMIDB on planning applications, with the Chairman highlighting that they had recently spoken to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council's Planning Committee and the Head of Development Management on SUDS maintenance, landscaping and biodiversity and the types of actions that the Council could take in relation to those considerations.

The Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement questioned the Clerk to the Board on the UMIDB's proposed approach to increasing the levy payable by the relevant authorities within the UMIDB catchment area. In response, the Clerk to the Board stated that whilst they understood the financial limitations placed on Councils, the previous 5% increase in the levy payment was required to support the Board's progression.

The Clerk to the Board stated that the Board was working to strengthen the position of its general finances, with the aim of looking to reduce levy increases to up to 3% increases in the future where possible. The UMIDB intended to reduce the burden upon special levy paying authorities.

Further explanation was provided on the Board's financial situation and proposed measures across the next five years, including the agreement to accept a loss to the budget across the 2022/23 financial year to use the excess funds available and achieve the growth desired by the organisation. A portion of the excess funding had been ring-fenced for specific projects.

Chris Gardner, Southeast Rivers Trust (SERT)

Chris Gardner introduced themselves as the Head of Science and Partnerships and outlined their educational and professional background. The SERT's founding and history was also outlined, with the organisation's aim being to provide healthy rivers for individuals and wildlife. The SERT hosted a catchment-based approach, with 12 stakeholder partnership across its area to deliver projects with multiple benefits. The UMIDB was one of the SERTs partners.

It was stated that the national rivers trust movement, of which SERT was a part of, had been very effective at drawing attention to rivers and the water classification scheme. The group were informed that 90% of water bodies within the Southeast were classified as having 'failing' water quality, whereas only 10% were seen as having 'good' water quality. The SERT had drawn attention to the impacts of sewage distribution in clean water courses.

The Head of Science and Partnerships briefly outlined a range of projects that the SERT were delivering, including the Pro-water project, the Stage Zero Project and the delivery of wetlands and flood plain connections. The SERT aimed to facilitate improvements to rivers through partnership, education and engagement.

During the interview process, the group raised the following points:

- The condition of rivers within the Kent area

Several Members of the group strongly emphasised the poor condition of some of the rivers within the Kent area, such as the River Len, and the resulting impacts to local wildlife. The importance of implementing projects to improve river quality within the Maidstone area was highlighted.

In response, the Head of Science and Partnerships stated that the River Len had been heavily modified through milling, having been a chalk stream that emanated from natural springs. To improve the quality of the River Len, the damage caused had to be reversed through the re-establishment of nature-based solutions, as many rivers had lost their natural function and connection to nature.

The Head of Science and Partnerships stated that the conditions of rivers were worsening, in part due to a lack of Environment Agency funding and resources that would provide for continued prosecutions where appropriate.

Several Members of the Group expressed concerns on the prevalence of surface and foul water, with further information outlined below.

- The negative impacts of foul water mixing with clean and/or surface water, following the concern expressed by several members of the group on the issue's prevalence.

The examples given by the group included the mixing of surface and foul water in Staplehurst and the associated impact to the River Beult, and the discharge of foul water into the clean water or urban areas.

In response, the Head of Science and Partnerships stated the public sector's ability to actively enforce against the mixing of surface and clean water with foul water had reduced steadily in recent years. This was in part due to a reduction in funding. For example, the Environment Agency had a significantly higher number of staff during the 1990s and was able to take proactive measures to reduce pollution, such as by producing industry specific Pollution Prevention Guidance.

However, as the resources available had reduced there had been instances of Water Companies experiencing spillages that had been neglected, with no action taken.

The group strongly felt that effective preventative measures were needed against the mixing of surface and clean water with foul water. This extended to ensuring proactive enforcement where issues had been identified. In response, the Head of Science and Partnerships stated that where a developer did not

comply with any planning application conditions, such as the use of SUD schemes, enforcement action needed to take place as a follow-up. The Chairman stated that this issue had been raised with the Council's Development Management service area for further consideration.

- The importance and delivery of education, as several members of the group questioned how this could be improved.

In response, the Head of Science and Partnerships stated that the best method to improve education delivery was to educate children, in part as children would then discuss these matters with adults. The Clerk to the Board (UMIDB) stated that the Association of Drainage Authorities had begun writing a syllabus for school children, *with the group advised to consult the organisation for further information.*

- The SERT's 'wish-list' of actions for the Group to consider as part of the review, as the group felt that this would support the review being solution driven and outcome focused; particular reference was made to the funding available to the SERT.

In response, the Head of Science and Partnerships outlined the following requests:

- *Increased funding and resource provision.*

The group were informed that following the country's departure from the European Union (EU), the funding previously provided to work collaboratively with EU partners, had not been replaced.

Whilst the SERT could access grant funding, such as the Water Environment Grant, the funding had been significantly reduced in recent years; from £14 million previously, to £8 million this year, £5 million next year and then £4 million from then on.

The importance of partnership working to deliver diverse funding projects to deliver the schemes needed was reiterated.

- *To lobby central government on the funding available to replace the funding previously provided by the EU, to support project delivery.*

The Head of Science and Partnerships gave an example of how improvement projects to the River Len, such as through a River Restoration Strategy, would help to engage with the local community, providing an opportunity to promote increased education on the subject of river restoration and the work conducted by the SERT.

The Head of Science and Partnerships stated that they would further consider the above requests and provide further information as required by Friday 3 February 2023.

Max Tant, Kent County Council (KCC)

Max Tant introduced himself as the Flood and Water Manager at KCC, with his team predominantly providing services for KCC's role as the Lead Local Flooding Authority (LLFA). This included working on flood-related matters, particularly surface water, and the Flood and Water Manager had recently taken on the additional role of co-ordinating nutrient neutrality within the River Stour.

As the LLFA, KCC has additional powers and duties relating to Flood Risk Management for local flooding, including the preparation of Local Flood Risk Management Strategy that outlined how local flood risks would be managed. As LLFA, KCC investigated flooding across the county, maintaining a register of structures and features that could impact flood risk. KCC has the power to regulate ordinary water courses, but not where these sat within the district of an Internal Drainage Board.

KCC is a statutory consultee to the planning process, providing advice concerning drainage measures in major planning applications where consulted.

During the interview process, the group raised the following points:

- The role of the team managed by the Flood and Water Manager

Several members of the group questioned the Flood and Water Manager on their team's role, remit and resource allocation.

In response, the Flood and Water Manager stated that the team contained 10 staff members, with two long-standing vacancies. The sector was experiencing difficulty in recruiting, particularly for experienced individuals, with other authorities in a similar position.

The Flood and Water Manager stated that whilst additional funding could support additional work, they had adequate financial resources to support the team's current work with the number of staff members available. The team consulted upon a monthly average of 150 planning applications, but he did not have the specific figures for Maidstone available. This involved conducting an assessment of the drainage proposals put forward by the applicant, against the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs' non-statutory standards and KCCs standards; the level of assessment would depend on the stage of the planning application.

In response to questions on flooding from sewerage, the Flood and Water Manager stated that their team was not responsible for the matter; overflowing sewers were the responsibility of Southern Water. The team had minimal involvement in minerals and waste considerations, but there was a significant overlap

between the team and highways drainage, including knowledge exchange.

- The input and assistance that the Council could provide to KCC, as the group felt that they should be aware of any areas for improvement and/or joint working opportunities as part of its review.

In response, the Flood and Water Manager stated that there were areas for improvement including:

- *The promotion of robust policies concerning sustainable drainage.*

The Flood and Water Manager explained that in KCC's role as a statutory planning consultee, there were requests that they would like to make concerning sustainable drainage, but as this was generally governed by non-statutory technical standards, the Council having robust policies in place would assist in KCC being able to make those requests.

- *An increase in proactive (planning) enforcement.* The example given concerned unsuitable drainage having been fitted by developers, with KCC unable to address the issue as it did not have the powers to. It was stated that KCC had offered assistance, but that this was not often accepted.
- The Council had a small but effective budget in discharging its function to maintain water courses and culverts within the borough, which KCC administered on their behalf. This has been useful to KCC. This was a good example of joint working. It was stated that it would be helpful if other authorities discharged this function in a similar manner.

The Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement outlined the interest expressed by the UMIDB in undertaking additional responsibilities. *In response, the Flood and Water Manager confirmed that as KCC facilitated the work's undertaking on the Council's behalf, the UMIDB could be tasked with the role provided that the UMIDB had the means and equipment to conduct the work.* For example, a culvert in Yalding was being investigated by CCTV, which the UMIDB may not be able to deal with. It was noted that this could provide greater opportunities, especially if the site requiring maintenance was close to the UMIDB's district and they may charge a lower fee.

- Nutrient neutrality, in response to questions concerning the legalities of, and improvement to, nutrient neutrality in Maidstone.

In response, the Flood and Water Manager stated that they were unable to give a general national picture of Nutrient Neutrality, but that nutrient neutrality was a consideration for the River Stour due to its connection to Stodmarsh. Stodmarsh had been classified as a 'Special Area of Conservation' amongst other designations.

The Flood and Water Manager believed that Natural England would be assessing the Medway Estuary and Pegwell Bay. Water companies had been asked to meet the Water Framework Directive Targets; however, these were much less stringent than the Habitat Directive.

The group briefly considered whether the government should be lobbied on applying the principle of nutrient neutrality across all water courses.

- The possibilities for and requirements of surface water drainage schemes within Maidstone

The group felt that it would be beneficial to examine whether any surface water drainage schemes and/or pilot scheme could be introduced to Maidstone, given recent pilots elsewhere across Kent. Specific reference was made to changing weather patterns, and the shift to increased surface water flooding.

In response, the Flood and Water Manager stated that the flooding risks to Maidstone were generally within the southern and rural areas of the borough. The legacy impact of historic land drainage systems not having been maintained, coupled with an increased density of development, placed increased pressure on the remaining land drainage. A scheme to address these issue would be beneficial, although there may be difficulty in determining the type of scheme required. The preferred approach would be to locate the appropriate areas and produce a work programme demonstrating its significant benefit through a cost-benefit ratio; the likely required ratio would be a 5:1 ratio and would have to be demonstrable to the Environment Agency.

Hybrid schemes such as Environmental Land Management Schemes could be explored.

The Flood and Water Manager referenced the ongoing Pathfinder projects being conducted by Southern Water, that reduced surface water in the combined sewer, including separating highway run-off. There were three projects within Kent, in Margate, Deal and Whitstable. Included within the pilots were Smart Water Butts across three streets of each area. It was stated that positive data had been received so far,

and it was hoped that Southern Water would begin rolling out the same and/or similar measures across its area of responsibility.

The Flood and Water Manager stated that separating roof water from the sewer system would be beneficial, and that the group may wish to consider if they could influence any of the Council's partners to do so. *The group expressed support for this action, alongside lobbying Southern Water to introduce a pilot scheme into the Maidstone area.*

- The upcoming work of the Flood and Water Manager

In response to questions, the Flood and Water Manager stated that KCC's Adaptation Plan was being drafted. The document would focus on the actions that KCC could pragmatically achieve as a local authority. Partnership working and/or influencing partners organisations would be considered, with an example given of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy that KCC would use to influence others.

- Any matters that the Flood and Water Manager would like to raise for the group to consider as part of its future consultation with Southeast and Southern Water.

In response, the Flood and Water Manager stated they were keen to promote efficient water use at the development level, including the use of 'grey water' (treated domestic wastewater). The water's re-use would conserve a significant amount of water, with the example given that toilet flushing accounted for 25% of water usage within the home.

This required a concerted effort from multiple parties, which was made more difficult in areas such as Maidstone where the supply of water and wastewater were managed by different companies; it would likely require strong policies to encourage grey water use but would be much easier for the relevant Water Companies to facilitate. It was stated that this would likely fit well with those companies' future plans, despite not necessarily being something that they would do.

The Group expressed strong support for the suggestion made.

At the conclusion of the interviews, each stakeholder was invited to provide any further comments for the Group to consider by Friday 3 February 2023. This included questions and comments for the group to raise with Southeast Water and Southern Water.

The group thanked the external stakeholders for their attendance and for the information gathered during the course of the meeting. An update was provided on the next steps of the review.

4. Summary of discussion and any other points to raise for the next meeting.	Given that the meeting was due to end by 2.30, and the amount of information gathered from the meeting, the group requested that the Democratic Services Officer produce the minutes and compile the actions highlighted by the group during the meeting. The minutes and actions would be circulated ahead of the 7 February 2023 external consultation meeting.
5. Any Other Business.	None.
6. Summary of Agreed Actions	<p>Actions: That</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Democratic Services Officer produce the minutes, highlighting the actions suggested by the working group (see italicised text), for the group to consider as part of formulating its recommendations; 2. The Democratic Services Officer contact the representatives from the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board and the Southeast Rivers Trust, to ask if they had any comments for the Working Group to raise with Southeast Water and Southern Water at its next external consultation meeting; and 3. The (second) External Attendee expected from Kent County Council be requested to provide a written introduction, including their 'wish-list' for the group to consider, for circulation to the working group for questions and comments, in lieu of their absence.
7. Duration of Meeting	<p>10.30 a.m. to 2 p.m.</p> <p>The Group had a brief break between 12:20-12:45.</p>