

SEFTON AREA PARTNERSHIP OF LOCAL COUNCILS
Aintree Village-Formby-Hightown-Ince Blundell-Little Altcar
Lydiate-Maghull-Melling-Sefton-Thornton

Minutes of the Meeting of the Area Partnership held on Thursday 10th July, 2014 at Maghull Town Hall

PRESENT:

Cllrs M.Coles (Chair, Formby), G.Downey (Aintree Village), W.Honeyman (Aintree Village), G.Gaskin (Formby), D.Warren (Hightown), A.Ibbs (Little Altcar), R.Baker (Melling), G.Lee (Melling), C.White (Sefton), Matthew Connor (Environment Agency), David Skelton (Merseyside Local Access Forum), Graham Lymbery (SMBC), David Oakes (West Lancs NFU)

APOLOGIES:

Cllrs J.Colbert (Aintree Village), T.Asbury (Hightown), Ian Cowell (Clerk, Ince Blundell), T.Carr (Melling). T.Pryce

The Chair welcomed all our Guest Speakers to the meeting, and explained that Flood Plain Maintenance is an important issue affecting all our Parishes, since at some point the River Alt feeds into all our member areas.

He stressed the importance of knowing what other Agencies are doing in relation to this, and also about the upkeep of the Brooks; given that several of our member Councils are currently in the process of formulating Neighbourhood Plans. Cllr Coles expressed his concern about the vulnerability of the Formby area if these 2 things are not upgraded.

1. GUEST SPEAKERS

Matthew Connor – Environment Agency
Graham Lymbery – SMBC
David Oakes – West Lancs NFU

1.1 Alt Crossens Catchment Area

1.1.1 General Overview

Matthew Connor of the Environment Agency made reference to a map he had brought with him, and outlined the Alt Crossens Catchment Boundary which covers from Crossens through Southport, Ormskirk, Formby, Altmouth, and Maghull, into the Deysbrook and Tuebrook areas of Liverpool. This area runs adjacent to the Sefton Coastline. He also pointed out the flat low line pumped areas within this Catchment Boundary.

This area is low lying with a considerable area of high-grade farmland, and 28% of urbanised land. Much of the Catchment area is above or below sea level, with wide flood plains in the Crossens area, so there is heavy reliance on the Pumping Stations at Altmouth and Crossens, and also a 11 smaller Satellite Pumping Stations and a network of drains, modified watercourses and embanked rivers in farmland. There is no capacity for gravity drainage in the Crossens Catchment so this area is fully pumped, although there is some scope for this within the Alt Catchment. The Altmouth Pumping Station was renewed in the last few years, and work will soon start on the Crossens pumps, which are close to the end of their design life. Both Pumping Stations are owned by the Environment Agency.

In March 2012 a 2 year Pilot Scheme started whereby local Farmers in the Catchment area were given the opportunity to look after and clear their own watercourses in an environmentally sensitive way. This Pilot has been hugely successful, and the Government are hoping to use the results to help scale back red tape for Landowners wishing to maintain their own watercourses elsewhere.

1.1.2 Alt Crossens Catchment Flood Management Plan (CFMP)

This is a plan for sustainable Flood Risk Management for the Alt Crossens Catchment area for the next 50-100 years. It is just 1 of 77 CFMPs for England and Wales, and it will assist Key Partners to prepare for the impact of Climate Change. The need to safeguard the flood plains, the importance of flood risk management in urban areas, and also mitigating the impact of Climate Change feature highly in this document. This plan has been produced following wide scale Consultation with local residents and Partner Agencies.

It is an assessment of inland flood risk from rivers, groundwater, surface water, sewers, canals and tidal flooding is considered, but not coastal flooding since this is assessed in a separate study.

Historically Liverpool and Maghull have been most affected by fluvial flooding in the Alt Crossens Catchment area, with Formby and Ormskirk affected to a lesser degree.

Understanding Flooding Risks will enable the Environment Agency to,

- * Enforce repairing duties
- * Work with Planning departments
- * Look at areas where risk can be reduced
- * Look at reducing the consequences of flooding through formulation of Emergency Plans

1.1.3 Issues

- o The Environment Agency will have to deal with a **reduced Revenue Fund** to cover running, staffing, and maintenance costs. As such they will struggle to carry out certain activities in future. A Partnership Working group including SMBC, the NFU and other Key Agencies has been set up to protect such future activity. This group first met in January 2013. A key priority of this group is Protecting People and Residential Properties.
- o Although an **Internal Drainage Board** is the Preferred Option, this Option is sadly not supported by all neighbouring Authorities. An Internal Drainage Board is a local public authority established in areas of special drainage need in England and Wales. They have permissive powers to manage water levels within their respective drainage districts. IDBs undertake works to reduce flood risk to people and property and manage water levels to meet local needs. To-date there are 114 Internal Drainage Boards in Great Britain.

The expenses of an IDB are predominantly funded by the local beneficiaries of the water level management work they provide. Each IDB sets a budget for its planned work in the forthcoming year and any investments it needs to make for future projects.

Although technically West Lancashire County Council does support this Option, they cannot afford to pay £350k/year of the £870k total running costs due to the percentage of the land in question, which falls within their area. It is unknown if this money could be requested under statutory obligation. They are however supportive of the Environment Agency continuing with their current programs of work. This Option would also require the support of 60-70% of local Landowners and Farmers. The Environment Agency cannot lobby MPs about this matter.

1.1.4 Properties & Planning Applications

Any Planning application for a residential development would be reviewed by the Environment

Agency. It would be expected that the development would not make any difference to run off rates, and that any urban drainage used would be sustainable. Open drainage systems would be preferred given they are easier to inspect and maintain than piped systems. A shared drainage system would be needed for 10+ houses, and SMBC would charge the developer at a later date for its' adoption.

1.1.5 ??Questions??

- (a) The removal of silt was queried.
It was agreed this is an important area of work, which is required to prevent the flooding of watercourses. Due to prioritisation it is only possible to carry out a certain amount of maintenance to rivers in this area. The law states that responsibility for the condition of a river sits with whoever owns the land on each side.
- (b) What happened to the Alt 2000 Project? The promised Tree Planting did not transpire.
This scheme came to an end.
- (c) Has there been any further funding from Government for such work, in view of the events in Somerset last winter?
This is very much on the Government's Agenda, and they are well aware of the Alt Crossens situation. There has been some discussion between Defra and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) about this. It is thought that some money may have been secured to assist with the maintenance and strengthening of coastal defences.
- (d) What are the potential implications for SMBC if this work is not carried out?
Areas around the Crossens Pumping Station could become permanently wet.
- (e) Are there other measures SMBC could take?
SMBC need to be aware of the implications in order to be able to prioritise these against risk across the Borough. The 16,000 properties most at risk within the Borough are located in Southport, Formby, Crosby, Seaforth and Maghull.
- (f) Is enough being done both upstream and downstream?
Links between SMBC and interested Bodies have increased greatly over the last few years. Jointly they are looking to identify schemes of work and appropriate funding for these. A Catchment Partnership has been established to look at the upstream area, incorporating representatives from United Utilities, the Environment Agency and local Councils.
- (g) Concern was raised over the apparent lack of maintenance to the River Alt in the Melling and Aintree areas, and about the strain this and future development could have on the River Alt in this area.
- (h) Shouldn't developers be made to contribute towards maintenance of the watercourse/infrastructure since additional development is certainly going to impact on the watercourse?
It was suggested that something could be built into the Neighbourhood and Local Plans in relation to this.
- (i) The suggestion of Co-operative Trusts was raised.
Although they may be able to secure funding for such work, there are concerns about co-operation given in the past some Farmers/Landowners have used them as a means of looking after their own land/interests.
- (j) Is it possible that United Utilities would ever take over Pumping Stations?
Unless there was a clear benefit for them this is most unlikely. The NFU and CLA are currently investigating whether organisations that get a benefit from the IDBs could be forced to pay in to these.

The Chair said he was keen to see an informed, co-ordinated and managed plan with regards Flood Plain Management, and stressed that each of our areas have their own specific issues. He spoke in favour of the work undertaken at the Altmouth Pumping Station, although he expressed concern about the Satellite Pumping Stations and was keen to know if they are to be maintained as they are or improved? In conclusion the Chair commented on a useful presentation.

Matthew invited all present to the Public Events planned for later in the year, and promised to keep us informed of any developments via our Clerk.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (05/06/14)

Cllr Warren proposed that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the previous Meeting and Cllr Lee seconded this. The group was in agreement.

3. MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising from the previous Minutes.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 6/6/14
 - Presentation from Mark Long, SMBC - "Liverpool City Region"
 - Advising that Steve Kermod back representing Maghull Town Council
- * Cllr Hounsell, Thornton Parish Council - 6/6/14
 - Summary about position with The Crescent developments + new Tesco Express site
- * Cllr Geoff Gaskin, Formby Parish Council - 9/6/14
 - Reply from SMBC to his letter+email re:Licensing
- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 10/6/14
 - Revised Sefton Charter version 4.1
- * Navigus Planning - 11/6/14
 - Summer 2014 Journal of Local Planning, 'Evidence of growing power, for Parish & Town Councils
- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 16/6/14
 - Sefton's Monthly Tracker May 2014
 - Email from Brian Goodwin, SMBC Senior Assistant Engineer for PRow & Cycling re:Local Access Forums
 - Email from Ian Cowell re:Proposed Hive Energy Solar Park development in Ince Blundell (Orrell Hill)
 - (* A number of Councillors have visited the Orrell Hill site**
 - Local Plan : Consultation on 'Additional Sites'
 - (* These sites have not been proposed by SMBC. Comments requested 8/8/14**
- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 19/6/14
 - Daily Telegraph article: NALC advising Parish Councils not to talk to local press, whereas Government Minister Eric Pickles has advising the opposite
- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 20/6/14
 - Comment to The Champion re:Daily Telegraph article

- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 23/6/14
- Email forwarded from Steve Shaw of Local Works re:Empowering Parish Councils to sell electricity. Originally sent to Thornton PC.
- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 28/6/14
- Daily Telegraph article
- * Lesley Smith, SMBC - 2/7/14
- Advising Health & Wellbeing Board Event on 18/7/14 cancelled
- * Ian Cowell, Clerk – Ince Blundell Parish Council - 4/7/14
- Letter sent to Mr Pontefract re:Protection of Hightown Roundabout & War Memorial from advertisements
(In Formby 1 x board has been erected on Chapel Lane & 1 x board by the Library. Many of these boards are also in situ in the Bootle area. The Chair has written to Graham Bayliss and 4 of these unsightly boards have since been removed. He will be meeting with him next Tuesday about the lack of consultation about these boards. It is thought that the boards placed on the 40 roundabouts throughout the Borough will generate just £15k/p.a. and it is not known how long the Contract is for. Notably it is not a local company who has been appointed.*
- * Cllr Coles, Chair - 6/7/14
- Email to Margie Kirk suggesting topics for meeting with Andrea Watts on 21/7/14
- * Gary Berwick, SMBC - 9/7/14
- Feedback : New brown wheelie bin Recycling Scheme

5. FUTURE SPEAKERS

- * Andrea Watts, SMBC - 21/7/14
(Parish Charter)
- * Mark Long, SMBC Economics Officer - To be rearranged
(Handling Liverpool City Region Work)

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No items of Any Other Business were raised.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Special Meeting of the group with Andrea Watts of SMBC will be held on **MONDAY 21st July, 2014** in the Council Chamber at Maghull Town Hall commencing at 7pm to discuss the Parish Charter Review, the management structure and responsibilities of the Sefton Neighbourhood Team and other community issues. The Chair urged everyone to attend this important meeting.

The next ordinary meeting will take place on **Thursday 11th September, 2014** in the Council Chamber at Maghull Town Hall commencing at 7.30pm.