

**Hampshire Flood Risk Management Partnership Event: 9 December 2013
Hampshire County Council Environment & Transportation Select Committee:
Request for Written Evidence**

Deadline for receipt of responses: 10 November 2013

The following questions are being addressed to the local flood risk management authorities operating in Hampshire and the relevant regional flood and coastal committees. Your organisation's response to as many of these questions as are relevant will assist the Select Committee in its investigations.

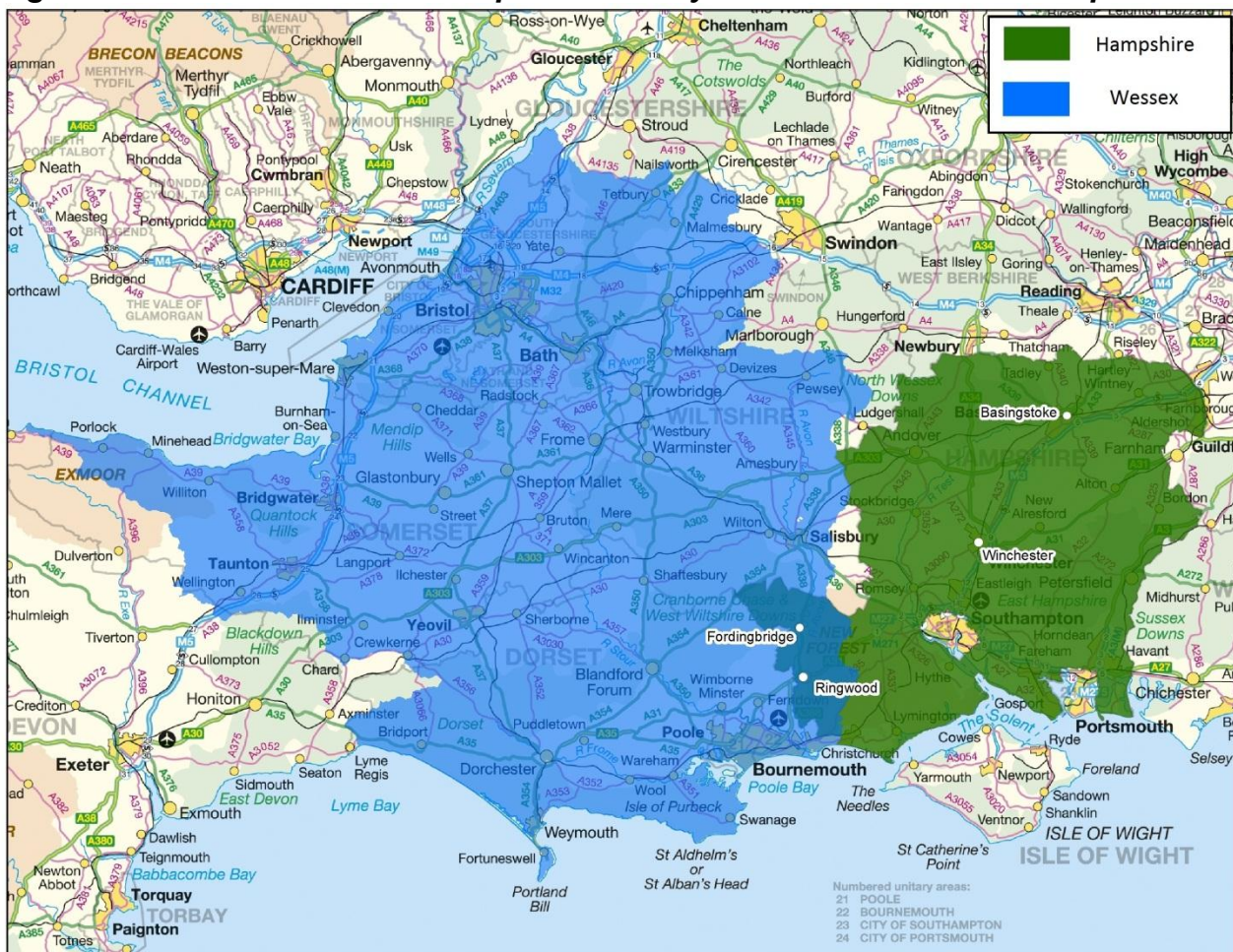
You are welcome to use this document as a basis for your response (please contact the scrutiny officer, see below, for an electronic copy), or submit a separate document if you prefer.

Name of Organisation Responding: Wessex Water

Contact Name and Contact Details: David Martin (david.martin@wessexwater.co.uk)

Wessex Water is responsible for c35,000 km of public sewers. This includes 225 km of public sewers in Hampshire around the conurbations of Ringwood and Fordingbridge.

Figure 1: Wessex Water and Hampshire County Council areas and overlap



Funding

1. What is Wessex Water's understanding of the key challenges in obtaining funding for flood risk management in Hampshire, and how might these be surmounted?

Understanding the flood risk, responsibilities for reducing the risk and then ensuring appropriate bodies work together to fund and deliver the investments required will be a challenge.

However, with good communication, partnership working and sufficient planning, funds will be obtained by Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to fulfil their duties under the Flood and Water Management Act and Water Industry Act.

2. What role, if any, can partnership working play in helping to attract funding for flood risk management in Hampshire?

Partnership working for flood risk reduction is being promoted by the Government because it should result in significant benefits for all.

We are committed to partnership working and are proactively engaging with our risk management partners. David Martin, our Sewerage Planning Manager, has attended several meetings and workshops with Hampshire County Council and is the designated key Wessex Water contact for the Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFA).

We wrote to you in 2012 to explain our funding process and again in 2013 to highlight the issue of infiltration in private sewers that can cause flooding downstream.

We will consider contributing to flooding schemes that others are delivering where it is agreed that our assets are contributing to the risk. Similarly we would look for contributions to be reciprocated when we are delivering schemes where others share responsibility.

2. What can Wessex Water do to help maximise investment in Hampshire's flood risk management?

Wessex Water has an established flooding prioritisation process for schemes related to our assets that is applied across our entire region. This is based on assessed risk and the costs and benefits of investment. We will invest in our assets according to this prioritisation process.

Under-reporting of flooding can result in underinvestment. We welcome data sharing and will continue to provide annual copies of our flooding data. We will continue to attend public 'flood' meetings to gain evidence of the causes of flooding, and assist Hampshire Council in the event of a reportable event.

We will also try to be flexible to allow alignment of investment with any partnership funded scheme.

Overlapping Responsibilities

4. The Flood and Water Management Act has made major changes in the division of responsibilities for flood risk management. However, the duties conferred upon the various agencies by the legislation interact and overlap, as do the sources of flooding themselves. What are the key areas of overlap in the opinion of Wessex Water and what challenges do these pose to flood risk management in Hampshire?

The F&WMA clarified but did not simplify flooding responsibilities. All flood risk partners will therefore need to continue working together.

Water and sewerage companies have statutory duties on flood risk management. We will maintain and increase our commitments to co-operate with other RMAs.

Challenges arise when flooding risk is evident but ownership of the problem does not sit within one organisations/individuals responsibility.

For example, the impact of watercourses and groundwater on the ability of sewers to drain property is a key area of overlap, and one where continued data gathering and sharing and dialogue will enable responsibilities to be established and solutions to be funded.

5. How can these challenges be managed, and what are the key actions that must be taken to improve flood risk management partnership working in Hampshire?

We need to continue the regular meetings to review flood risk management and share data. The key action is partnership working.

Sustainable Drainage

6. Once the Flood and Water Management Act has been fully enabled, the County Council will be responsible for approving and adopting all drainage systems on new developments. What impacts will this have upon Wessex Water and its operations?

Wessex Water will be a statutory consultee on all Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) applications where discharges to the public sewer are proposed. We support the use of SuDS to achieve reductions in flood risk and secure improvements in water quality. We attended your recent SuDS Approval Body workshop and hope you valued our contribution to your imminent duties.

We attach a draft policy that Wessex Water is developing on sustainable drainage, which provides further information. Please note this is subject to further consultation and is not for publication.

7. In what ways can the County Council use this new responsibility to complement the work of other flood risk management authorities – especially, but not exclusively in relation to flood risk management?

Developing appropriate planning policies with district Local Planning Authorities for managing development occurring in areas of flood risk unless adequate provision is made to reduce the risk to acceptable levels.

Provision of adequate resources to maximise opportunities for more robust building control checks to ensure foul flows are not connected into surface water systems, or vice versa.

8. In what ways, if any, can Wessex Water support the delivery of the sustainable drainage approval body function?

We would welcome the opportunity to comment on pre-planning enquiries that affect property drainage, to provide our local knowledge to influence decisions.

There could be synergies in working together, for example having a 'shared' resource to inspect the SuDs and the downstream adoptable sewer. However the majority of surface water sewers are likely to discharge directly to watercourses, so may not be offered for adoption.

We would consider including the SUDs and private drains assets to our Geographical Information System (GIS). This could be extended to include adding your known gullies and highway drains - to have one source of drainage records.

To enable this, we are working on allowing LLFAs to be able to view our 'live' sewer records on your GIS.

Maintenance

9. Please provide details of any relevant maintenance programme/s your organisation undertakes which is beneficial to flood risk management?

Our sewer maintenance programme is too complex to include here, but we would be happy to share our processes for inspection and operational maintenance of our assets where they may influence flood risk.

10. What is the biggest issue in terms of effective maintenance of flood risk management infrastructure/water courses, and what would help address this?

Many areas of Hampshire have high groundwater levels at certain times of the year. This can have a significant impact on the capacity of sewers and therefore their ability to drain properties effectively. Groundwater level management therefore could be deemed to be an important maintenance issue.

Highway gully maintenance can also be a key factor increasing flood risk. Having local flood wardens could assist in clearing these blockages to reduce the flood risk.

Other

Are there any other comments with regard to flood risk management that you would like to make to the Select Committee?

Thank you for taking the time to respond to the Committee's request, your responses will help Members identify areas for improvement in flood risk management. Please note, as evidence to a Select Committee inquiry, your responses will be published unless you specify that the content is not for publication (see guidance notes).

Please return your responses to:

Marie Mannveille, Scrutiny Officer (Environment & Transportation Select Committee)
Hampshire County Council, Corporate Services, Elizabeth II Court South, The Castle,
Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 8UJ

Email: marie.mannveille@hants.gov.uk

Telephone: 01962 845018

It will assist the committee's preparations for the event on 9 December if you can submit your written evidence by 10th November 2013.