

**Councillor Peter Jones Convener – Local
Flood Risk Management
Scrutiny Working Group**

Please ask for: Councillor Mark Thomas
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Our Ref: MT/KH
Your Ref:
Date: 16th May 2019

Dear Councillor Jones

Thank you for your letter from the Scrutiny working Group held on 4th April 2019.

Firstly, I am pleased to hear that the working group is keen to visit the example of a Natural Flood Risk Management site in Neath Port Talbot. To increase our awareness into the opportunities which can arise in using nature based solutions will allow the Authority to consider where appropriate similar flood mitigation measures in Swansea. I will confirm a date for a site visit and will seek interest from the working group on who wishes to attend.

With regard to the setting up of new staff structure to support the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body, you were informed that whilst there is staff in place to deal with current number of SAB enquiries, staff numbers will increase throughout the year as the demand for resources is needed. I hope the working group were satisfied to hear that the new legislation will not only help in reducing flood risk but also will ensure that all new developments over a 100m2 will be able to provide benefits for our Environment and provide better Well Being for our residents in Swansea.

I agree that an update about the Green Infrastructure project and I will seek assurances that an update can be made to the group at the next working group meeting.

In terms for the Authority providing a more advisory role and moving away from legislative basis. I do appreciate your comments regarding more of an advisory role and whilst this does go on between officers and members of public during site visits, the advice can somewhat be limited as to ensure that the Authority is not accountable for any liability. Consequently, the current obligation is to fulfil the statutory requirements but I agree that there is scope to improve the information available by providing general advice on our website to minimize the effects of flooding and to promote best practice and prevention.

I refer to the point raised to having 'live' information on local flooding on the website. I wish to confirm that the Authority currently uses social media such as twitter and facebook as a mechanism to inform the residents of Swansea should major issues be encountered. Consequently, I wish to confirm that if appropriate, significant flooding

events, which cause disruption, will be communicated in the same way, but within normal working hours. Outside of normal working hours the use of live information becomes more difficult to convey, and will rely on the out of hours emergency teams to deliver messages to the local areas affected by flooding. Noting reference to third party updates, I understand that National Media e.g. Wales Online, has the capacity to deal with live updates on flooding and I will enquire if appropriate links to these pages can be set up. Web links to severe weather warnings are currently shown on the flooding advice pages on the council's website to allow residents to prepare for flooding. I would also like to confirm that Natural Resources Wales are equipped to provide advanced flood warnings to areas which are considered to be susceptible to high flood risk from main rivers and sea with residents being encouraged sign up to this free 24hr a day service via their website.

I agree that the flooding advice pages should be amended to reflect that Swansea Council Advice is given priority.

I support your recommendation on using ward members to assist in advertising and disseminating information on work related to reducing flood risk in order to get positive messages out in the ward. I would expect that members are contacted as a matter of course on any potential scheme, which will have a positive impact in their ward.

I will ask for an update at the next meeting on the local Flood Risk Management Plan.

To conclude, I would suggest that the next meeting should be arranged on an annual as opposed to a twice- yearly basis due to limited resources. I also consider that the working group would be provided with a more comprehensive update session into both how the Suds and Flood Risk Management Plan are progressing at the end of a 12month period.

Hope that I have responded to the points you have raised and look forward to meeting up again for the annual update.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR MARK THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT SERVICES