



## River Medway Flood Storage Areas

Newsletter 3 - July 2016

Welcome to the River Medway Flood Storage Area newsletter. This newsletter will update you on our activities since December 2015.

### Background

Over 3,000 homes and businesses in Tonbridge, Hildenborough, Yalding and Collier Street and surrounding communities are at risk of flooding from the River Medway, the River Beult, and the River Teise. 2,060 of these properties are at significant risk of flooding. Communities in these areas have been affected by flooding in 1960, 1963, 1968, 1974, 1979, 2000/01 and Winter 2013/14.

The Environment Agency is working with Kent County Council (KCC), Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to develop options to reduce the risk of flooding to communities. The scheme is known as the River Medway Flood Storage Areas (FSAs) project.

### What have we done?

Since the last newsletter we have completed the Initial Assessment for the Medway Flood Storage Areas (FSA) project. It considered the costs and benefits of:

- increasing the capacity of the Leigh FSA
- flood storage in two locations on the River Teise
- flood storage on the River Beult
- walls around Yalding
- increasing the channel capacity by dredging the River Medway between Yalding and Maidstone

We presented the findings to the partnership in February 2016, describing the options their costs and benefits and the government funding available.

### What are the findings?

#### Increasing the capacity of the Leigh FSA

This appears to be feasible and will improve the level of protection to Tonbridge and to a lesser extent other communities downstream. Improvements to benefit Hildenborough will be included in this project, works in Hildenborough will need to occur at the same time as those at Leigh.

#### Flood storage on the Rivers Beult and Teise

Although the flood storage options for the Rivers Beult and Teise will help to reduce flood levels in communities around the Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford area, unfortunately these schemes would cost a great deal but would not provide the benefits that were originally envisaged. They would only protect some of the properties currently at a low risk of flooding. These will not be promoted.

#### Walls around Yalding and dredging

Yalding walls and dredging were both eliminated on technical and economic grounds.

The Environment Agency and KCC consider that the communities at risk in these areas would be better served by more localised flood defences and property and community level resilience measures which can be targeted to the properties at greater risk.

## What will we do?

The Environment Agency will lead work with the communities around Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford on community and property resilience options for these areas. They will be able to bid for government contributions when they have developed a feasible scheme. The partners have also agreed to contribute to this, with KCC contributing £1.5million.

A bid for funding to improve the Leigh FSA and defences for Hildenborough will be prepared. Assuming this is approved this will be funded by government, KCC and TMBC together with private sector contributions. There is also a bid to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for £4.5 million, which, if successful, will contribute to this scheme and a separate flood alleviation scheme for East Peckham.

We aim to brief communities at three poster exhibitions to be held in:

- Collier Street on 6 - 8 October at the church between 14.00 and 20.00 on weekdays, and 10.00 and 16.00 on Saturday.
- Yalding on 13 - 15 October at the church between 14.00 and 20.00 on weekdays and 10.00 and 16.00 on Saturday.
- Tonbridge on 20 - 22 October at the Angel Centre between 14.00 and 20.00 on weekdays and 1000 and 1600 on Saturday. Note the start time on Friday will be slightly later at 1500.

This will be followed by whole day community workshops in Yalding and Collier Street. The aim of these workshops will be to explain what property and community resilience are and to ask the communities to help identify the specific steps to make homes and communities more resilient to flooding. The dates for these workshops will be advertised soon.

## Timescales

The approval process requires the business case to be worked up in increasing levels of detail. Having completed the initial assessment we are now working on the outline business case which will lead to the full business case being submitted to Defra in 2018. Once approved, we will then move to the detailed design phase in 2018-2019. Currently, our indicative funding programme shows construction between 2019 and 2022.

Time	Activity
July 2016	Environment Agency submit Stage 1 of the business case to Defra
July 2016	Start Outline Business Case (Stage 2)
October 2016	Poster exhibitions
November 2016	Community resilience workshops in Yalding and Collier Street
October 2017	Present the Outline Business Case to the project board to decide next steps
November 2017	Approval to spend money on and start Full Business Case (Stage 3)
March 2018	Submit Full Business Case to Defra to obtain approval to spend money on the scheme
November 2018	Start detailed design process
2020 - 2022	Construction

## Find out more

If you want any more information on the project or have any questions, please call Neil Gunn on 03708 506 506 or email us at: [MedwayFSA@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:MedwayFSA@environment-agency.gov.uk)