

English Severn and Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)

Meeting date: 9 October 2012

Information item no. 13

Paper by: Regional Flood Forecasting Team Leader

Subject: Flood and Drought Report – July to Sept 2012

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note:

The content of this report.

1.0 Flood Summary Report

- 1.1 On Thursday 28th June there was an extreme rainfall event over the West Midlands area, including Shropshire and Herefordshire. Holme Lacy raingauge in Herefordshire received 27mm in 1 hour. This is a rainfall return period of approximately 1 in 25 years. During the entire event several gauges received between 25mm and 30mm in just 2 hours.
- 1.2 Due to the rapid river level rises experienced during this rainfall event, unfortunately one fatality was reported. A man was swept into a stream, whilst walking nearby a small tributary of the R. Teme, near Ludlow, Shropshire.
- 1.3 In addition, there were up to 80 properties reported flooded in the West Midlands, Shropshire and Herefordshire areas. There was significant disruption to roads and railways.
- 1.4 On Friday 6th July there was widespread rainfall across the region. This resulted in up to 40mm rain over high ground and 25-30mm widespread elsewhere. There were 2 Flood Warnings, and several Flood Alerts issued in West Area. There were reports of 34 properties flooding in West Area, predominantly surface water flooding in Rhos on Wye.
- 1.5 There was a small heavy rainfall event on the evening of Monday 9th July. This meant 36mm of rain was recorded near Shrewsbury. This resulted in 4 Flood Alerts for West area, on the Rea Brook, R. Lugg, R. Tern & Perry and U. Teme.
- 1.6 On the evening of Friday 13th July there was a localised heavy rainfall event over Shropshire, this resulted in up to 60mm rainfall being recorded in the River Teme catchment. This led to the issue of 5 Flood Warnings on the River Teme and 2 Flood Warnings in the lower reaches of the River Severn. The new defences and gate at Upton were also used for the first time since completion, and new pumps used at Kempsey. Local runoff in this event caused the Severn at Bewdley to rise rapidly, rising 1.5m in just 8 hours. There were no tidal issues experienced as the tides were low at the time. During this event the R. Rea in Shropshire (tributary of River Teme) recorded its highest ever level at 4.1m.

- 1.7 By the end of August almost twice the average rainfall for the entire summer period (June, July and August) had fallen, throughout the Midlands region. Meteogroup (Press Association) reported it was the wettest summer in Britain for 100 years, and the wettest June since 1860.
- 1.8 In West Area there were 12 Flood Warnings issued in total over the summer (between 1st June and 11th September). These were on the R. Teme and lower reaches of the R. Severn. All Flood Warnings were issued before mid-July, since then weather conditions have improved.
- 1.9 September so far has been drier with only 2% long-term average rainfall falling, in the Severn basin.

2.0 Drought Report

- 2.1 The Shropshire Groundwater alert was stood down due to the unsettled weather on 9th July. The scheme is now in non-operational status and is unlikely to be required for River Severn Regulation this season.
- 2.2 There have not yet been any River Severn Regulation releases, although the river levels are dropping, they have not yet reached levels low enough to require additional support of releases from Clywedog reservoir.
- 2.3 Flows in the River Wye at Redbrook remained above the regulation threshold of 1209 Ml/d. Therefore, no regulation releases have been made by EA Wales, from the Elan reservoir during this period.
- 2.4 Reservoir stores and river flows are healthy for the time of year, and soil moisture deficits are fairly low (soils are unusually wet) for the end of summer.
- 2.5 There is still concern that slower reacting Sandstone aquifers (central and north midlands) are abnormally low. Heathlanes borehole is recording 'exceptionally low' water levels. These types of aquifer typically take up to 3 years to recover from a dry period.

3.0 Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report.

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September 2012