

**Transcript of Verbal Submission to WODC Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 23/6/2022 at 14:00**

**Re: Update from Witney Flood Mitigation Group**

**William Wareing**

**Update from Witney Flood Mitigation Group**

Dear Councillors and guests, thank you for allowing me to speak today.

I am one of the founders and spokesperson for Witney Flood Mitigation Group.

Firstly, I would like to welcome the newly appointed councillors to this committee, we look forward to working with you on the subject of flood prevention. I would like to thank WODC for the initiative taken to make this committee meeting part of the coordination of the recent Multi Agency collaboration following the actions highlighted in the 2020 Flood Report issued by WODC, which we of course had input to.

There are a number of matters I want to bring to your attention today.

**Good Maintenance leads to Flood Risk Prevention** - we have gained independent advice from an experienced and well-equipped river engineering contractor that better maintenance of the river is achievable (given the flood report stated the river is in poor condition) so the right solutions are simply about coordination and appropriate funding - but mostly about the drive to succeed in reversing past decisions.

**Multi Agency Meetings** - despite our flood group being a stakeholder, there has so far not been any engagement with us as party of the group - we ask that we are included in future meetings where we would hope to advise you and in turn communicate with the community on any progress made. We have had very good engagement and collaboration from the EA and expect the same from all other parties. So, what exactly is happening with the rest of the agencies? We certainly hope to find out today.

**Emergency Planning** - despite numerous requests and referring us WTC, we are yet to see any detail of a joined-up Emergency Plan for Witney, so that we can all play our part very effectively when the next flood event occurs. We have been advised that this is not publicly available however how can we work together and coordinate without that? Like all emergency plans, they are made up of joined up action at Town, District and County level along with the emergency services where everyone including us can play our parts. Once again, your engagement is requested. Working together, there are always numerous ways we can help our community such as joint communications and establishing a network of and training volunteer flood wardens.

**Maintenance** - once again I return to the subject of maintenance where after repeated requests for detail on maintenance, we have so far only received a broad list of areas maintained yet see little evidence of that so please provide those in detail. As highlighted to us by the Principal Structures Lead at OCC, de-silting under Witney Bridge at Bridge Street alone is pointless and needs to be part of a coordinated response to increase capacity of the channel, especially at the critical sections, working upstream from Farm Mill/the A40 underpass all the way to Bathing Place and beyond to New Mill.

**Councillor Engagement** - We of course are aware that a number of our councillors also hold positions at County level, and we ask that they continue to work on our behalf to best represent Witney's flood risk issues at County level and help us get more engagement and representation with the Lead Local Flood Authority, and of course OCC is ultimately responsible for Emergency Planning.

We are here today mostly to hear of progress being made of course however as you know we can only do that under participation of the public. Thank You.