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STRATEGIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	
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Environment Agency

Peter Nears
 Strategic Planning Director
 Peel Holdings Limited
 Peel Dome
 Trafford Centre
 Manchester
 M17 8PL

Date: 21 December 2010

Dear Peter,

MANCHESTER SHIP CANAL FLOOD RISK MAPPING

As part of our ongoing discussions on managing flood risk in relation to the Manchester Ship Canal we have been reviewing our approach to producing flood maps. Over the last few months we have considered the views and evidence you have put to us and involved colleagues throughout the organisation including our Director of Flood Risk Management, David Rooke. I can now confirm the approach we intend to take to producing a Flood Map for the Manchester Ship Canal.

Our Flood Map shows "Flood Zones" and "Areas Benefiting from Defences". As elsewhere, the Flood Zones for the Manchester Ship Canal will show the predicted extent of flooding ignoring the presence of defences. In addition to their navigation function, the sluice gates adjacent to the lock systems along the canal play an important part in managing water levels in potential flooding situations. As such they function as "defences". The Flood Zones will therefore show the area that would be at risk of flooding if the sluice gates were closed and did not function. The Areas Benefiting from Defences outline will show the areas that benefit from the operation of the sluice gates within the area at risk in a 1% flood or a 1 in 100 year flood event. This approach to the Flood Map is consistent with the Government's Planning Policy Guidance (PPS25) and Environment Agency national processes.

We plan to finalise these flood maps during December and publish them on our website in early February. We will send you a copy of the draft maps shortly and would welcome comments on the details.

The Flood Zone map is an initial, screening tool depicting possible flood risk. As such, the Flood Zone map represents the beginning of the process of understanding flood risk and forms only one input to planning decisions. The work you have been undertaking over the summer and autumn is aimed at producing compelling evidence regarding the actual risks of the sluice gates on the ship canal. The Water Level Management Protocol, once finalised will form an important source of evidence that we will take into account in our advice to local planning authorities and developers regarding flood risk.

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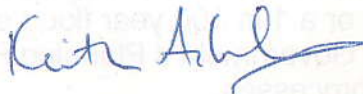


I hope that the partnership approach we have been able to apply in developing our understanding of flood risk from the Manchester Ship Canal will continue specifically in terms of the risk to existing communities and to future development in the area. Over the next few months our part in this partnership will include the following:

- We will work with you and with local planning authorities to devise a suitable communications plan to accompany the publication of the Flood Map for the Manchester Ship Canal.
- We will incorporate our understanding of the likelihood of flooding into our "National Flood Risk Assessment" (NaFRA). This NaFRA assessment is used to provide an indication of the level of flood risk when visitors to our website click on the Flood Map.
- We will update the guidance note and advice we provide to Local Planning Authorities and developers to reflect our understanding of the real risks using the evidence in the "Manchester Ship Canal Water Level Protocol", once it is complete.
- We will consider with the local planning authorities in Manchester, Trafford and Salford the case for updating the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to take into account the new evidence you have developed, as well as further improvements to the flood model of the canal you have been working on.
- We will update the flood forecasting and warning service that we provide to the Manchester Ship Canal Company in consultation with them and offer bespoke messages to the company relating to actual and predicted flood levels on the Rivers Irwell, Mersey and Weaver.
- We will work with you and with the local resilience forums to develop emergency plans, including a flood warning service where appropriate.

I look forward to continuing to work closely with you to manage flood risk from the Manchester Ship Canal and to support sustainable development along the canal corridor.

Yours sincerely



KEITH ASHCROFT
Area Manager

Cc Chris Findley Salford
Colin Moss Trafford
Andrew Shorts Manchester