

Date: 22nd October 2020

To the Chair and Members of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Panel

Flood Recovery in Doncaster – partnership update

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Cllr Chris McGuinness, Portfolio holder for Communities, Voluntary Sector and the Environment	All	Yes

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update regarding recovery activity across the Borough of Doncaster following the November 2019 floods which directly affected 897 properties. In the main, the report reproduces material considered in public by Council Cabinet on 29th September 2020. The intention of the report is to help enable the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Panel scrutinise the actions that have been undertaken and are planned by the Council, the Environment Agency, Independent Drainage Boards and water companies to safeguard the residents and businesses of the Borough over the short, medium and longer term.
- 1.2 The report covers progress on six key areas:
- Humanitarian support given to Doncaster people in flood affected areas
 - Financial support for increased flood resilience at household level, including via community schemes
 - Engagement with DEFRA on household insurance
 - Measures being undertaken to bolster the Council’s response to any future flooding incidents
 - Remedial works undertaken by the Council and partnership organisations to date to reduce the likelihood and impact of further flooding
 - The “Section 19” report analysing the reasons for the flooding in November 2019 and what is required to address underlying issues to prevent future flooding events of the severity experienced by Doncaster people at that time.
- 1.3 The COVID emergency has caused delay with recovery activities but nevertheless a significant amount has been achieved. This provides a foundation for further activity being carried out over the next few months.
- 1.4 Flooding in the winter of 2019-20 had a significant effect on a number of areas but none more so than Doncaster. Flooding in our Borough was brought to national attention as a sizeable and escalating risk for many people and communities. The strong connection with global climate change and the need for an environment strategy also became clear. Doncaster’s Climate and Biodiversity Emergency Commission has recommended a clear focus on the importance of improving climate adaption and resilience across the Borough to address the significant impacts of flooding.

- 1.5 In July the government published its long-term plan for flood management ([here](#)) and described its commitment to funding:
- £5.2 billion to create around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties in England by 2027
 - £200 million for innovative projects such as sustainable drainage systems and nature-based solutions like temporary or permanent water storage areas which also boost wildlife (of which £50 million earmarked for Yorkshire and Humber)
 - Up to £170 million to accelerate work on “shovel-ready” flood defence schemes that will begin construction in 2020 or 2021.
- 1.6 In summary this report is intended to reassure the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Panel on the following points:
- Even in the midst of the COVID emergency the Council has retained focus on individuals and families badly affected by the November 2019 floods and has worked with Doncaster’s communities and a range of local, regional and national partners to help them recover.
 - A detailed investigation of the causes of the floods has been carried out in line with the Council’s legal responsibilities. This has been consulted upon with the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards and water companies. It will be shared and discussed with local communities so they understand how last November’s floods occurred at great speed across a complex catchment.
 - The investigation has taken time to conclude but the Council and key partners have been working hard in the meantime to make the Borough as safe as possible against adverse weather that might occur this winter and beyond. Measures undertaken are listed in the report and appendices.
 - Doncaster is at the forefront of the climate emergency and is particularly vulnerable to longer term flooding that links to changing impacts over time from rainfall, river levels and tides. Addressing these issues sustainably will require significant investment not just in the Borough but across the whole catchment of which we are a part. The Council is working very hard with partners to make the case to national government for the investment to support the improvements that we will need in years to come.

2. EXEMPT REPORT

- 2.1 This is not an exempt report.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To note and comment upon Flood Recovery actions that have been undertaken to date and are planned for the next period.

4. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

- 4.1 Continued focus on flood recovery is required over the short, medium and long term. In the short term there are a number of Doncaster residents still affected by the November 2019 floods. The upcoming anniversary of the floods is likely to be a difficult time for many. In the medium and long-term the renewal of Doncaster’s flood defences is required to mitigate the impact of climate change and to protect Doncaster households and businesses.

5. BACKGROUND

Humanitarian support

- 5.1 1869 households across the Borough were given support and advice in the early weeks after flooding, with 689 of these given “see and solve” help to follow up on specific issues. Households with a range of complex needs have been receiving continuous support from the Council’s Community Teams since the flood event, with a small but significant number still requiring this. This is testament to the huge impact that flooding has, particularly on those with wider vulnerabilities.
- 5.2 There has been recent focus on a number of uninsured or underinsured owner-occupied properties whose householders have wider vulnerabilities and therefore have needed a significant amount of support with restoration. This has required painstaking attention. Almost all restoration work is now concluded having been driven by public and private partnership between the Council and locally based firms (Keepmoat Housing, John Hill Associates Ltd, Orchard Training and Education) as well as charitable organisations (notably St Peters Church in Bentley and the South Yorkshire Community Foundation). Local community members have also provided huge input in helping their neighbours recover from incredibly difficult circumstances.
- 5.3 Collaboration with South Yorkshire Community Foundation (SYCF) has largely enabled monies to be received by households most in need and to be focused on required housing restorations. SYCF are planning a third funding round and have asked for DMBC input on this. There is also further work to do with community organisations who received match funding for flood-affected residents to ensure it continues to be used for areas of need and encourage to people to access. There remains a store of donated goods, some of which will be required for restored properties.

Property Flood Resilience

- 5.4 Under the Property Flood Resilience (PFR) scheme, owners of flooded properties can claim up to £5,000 (including VAT) to fund flood resilience and resistance measures at their property. Appropriate measures are identified through a survey at the property and include measures such as replacing doors with flood doors, moving electrical sockets higher up, sealing access points and fitting air brick covers and non-return valves. Overall there are 810 Doncaster properties situated in 16 wards believed to be eligible for the PFR scheme operated by DEFRA. 360 of these are in Bentley and 192 in Norton & Askern. The next highest numbers are 50 in Roman Ridge, 42 in Wheatley & Intake and 41 in Conisbrough.
- 5.6 Survey work has been commissioned from RAB to determine how many areas could benefit from a community scheme incorporating a number of properties to increase collective resilience. Feasibility is being explored for three Bentley schemes, two Fishlake schemes and a scheme in Conisbrough. There is currently detailed focus on the Willow Bridge Caravan Park to firm up PFR measures and explore potential issues like planning consent.
- 5.7 The Council is working to raise awareness with homes and businesses that could benefit from claiming the grant and using the funding to adapt their properties. Letters are now being sent to properties that have not claimed to encourage maximum take-up within the window that the scheme is open. Take-up continues to grow.

Household and Business Insurance

- 5.8 DMBC have participated in survey work undertaken by DEFRA and have represented the perspectives of Doncaster people, using examples of significant insurance difficulties. DEFRA have used two approaches: a quantitative survey and more in-depth qualitative interviews. Further to this the Government has just announced specific changes to the Flood Re scheme that are subject to consultation. They are intended to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Flood Re scheme and encourage greater uptake of Property Flood Resilience among households at high risk of flooding. Measures include:
- The ability for Flood Re to offer discounted premiums to households that have fitted property flood resilience measures, such as airbrick covers or non-return valves.
 - Permitting the payment of claims to include an additional amount to build back better, in a more flood resilient way.
 - Speeding up resilient homes through working with Flood Re and the insurance industry to explore whether it would be beneficial for insurers to share more information with customers about their flood risk– encouraging everyone to take responsibility to encourage greater uptake.
 - Exploring whether there is more that the Flood Re scheme could do to accelerate uptake of Property Flood Resilience, including whether the scheme's currently available funding could contribute.
 - Technical changes to enable Flood Re to amend the amount of levy raised from UK insurers and the maximum amount that Flood Re are liable to pay out each financial year to deliver better value for money.
- 5.9 Access to sufficient and affordable insurance is essential for Doncaster's households and businesses. The Council will engage in consultation on the above proposals and publicise insurance options in further engagement with Doncaster communities.

Future Flood Response

- 5.10 Doncaster's multi agency flood plan has been reviewed by the Flood Risk and Emergency Planning teams. Strategic and operational actions are summarised below that incorporate learning from last November's floods.
- 5.11 There will be an increase in the number of community flood wardens along key areas of the Don catchment. For example, following the community engagement meetings that took place earlier in the year, the Emergency Planning team had several enquiries from interested residents to sign up to the flood warden scheme in Town End and Sykehouse. These enquiries have been followed up and expansion of the flood wardens scheme is being progressed with the Environment Agency. The EA have also developed online training for registered Flood Wardens which began on Wednesday 23rd September and will take place every Wednesday evening for five consecutive weeks.
- 5.12 The Flood Risk Team are being doubled in size (via the addition of 6 full time staff) to ensure that, alongside responding robustly to any future flooding events, they can also pursue the specification and funding of new flood protection schemes that will benefit Doncaster people in the future.
- 5.13 During late January and the majority of February 2020, the Flood Risk Team supported by Highway Operations coordinated a monitoring regime to capture river level data for comparison with the telemetry data published via the Environment Agency's website. Over the five occasions the teams mobilised in 2020, all data collected aligned with the data captured by the EA's telemetry. With the EA's data proving to be consistent there are no

immediate plans for the flood risk team to implement our own telemetry alongside the existing EA apparatus. However, improvements in the way the data is recorded and presented for Doncaster's wider catchment can be achieved and the team are working on a scheme to compliment the EA's data with our own telemetry data (Tickhill & Conisbrough) via geographical mapping (GIS). This presentation of data will provide a better "full picture" approach for decision making during future severe weather events.

5.14 Other key improvements include:

- The Emergency Planning rota has been expanded to include more experienced Forward Liaison Officers (FLOs) who have been issued with full personal protective equipment. This has added extra resilience to the rota.
- Sandbags will be deployed more quickly via a plan that details where they will be deployed based on weather and flood warnings. An additional 20,000 sandbags are in stock from two separate suppliers to increase resilience.
- All key roads that could flood have dry diversion routes pre-planned to enable residents to move around the borough.
- Nominated points of contact for Adult Social Care have been identified which will enable work with Emergency Planning to enhance plans and arrangements for Rest Centres, Crisis Support, Staff Training and access to social care information in emergencies to be carried out.

Progress on short and medium term remedial works

5.15 Following November's floods the Flood Risk team developed a plan for remedial works to focus resources on recovery and future flood mitigation. This plan was based initially on intelligence gathered to quickly gauge the scale of damage caused by the floods and to identify areas of risk requiring further investigation. Further intelligence gathered through stage one of the section 19 investigations will also influence the team's priorities around future flood mitigation works on the medium to long-term plan.

5.16 Key work being carried out is as follows:

- Culvert Replacement Programme - Replacing 101 culverts, funding secured for a 5 year period, year one designs currently in progress
- Gully Cleansing - 5 extra tankers contracted for 3 months to catch up with the cyclic program, the cleansing of over 40,000 gullies is now complete and the cleansing programme is back on track
- Routine Cleansing and Repair Works – ongoing various areas in Doncaster including root cutting works, collapses and blockages
- Critical List Routine Maintenance - Prior to bad weather forecasts the critical infrastructure list of over 100 assets, is checked and cleansed to reduce the risk of localised flooding, this action has taken place approximately 15 times since November's severe weather event.

5.17 DMBC have carried out over £800K in works in locations across the borough, combined with £250K in highways maintenance works carried out as a direct consequence of November's severe weather event. A full progress list of drainage recovery works can be found in Appendices 1 to 4.

5.18 The renewal and recovery of flood protection in the Borough will require considerable external investment. Medium term plan bids have been submitted to the Environment Agency for approval including funding for flood mitigation schemes in Bentley, Scawthorpe, Intake, Fishlake, Tickhill and Conisbrough. Bids were also made through the Sheffield City Region to assist with funding the medium term and long term flood

mitigation proposals in the areas worst affected by November's floods. Funding bids have been submitted in the region of £25m for schemes with a total cost of potentially over £50 million. The short fall is intended to be met via Sheffield City Region (growth funding and project development funding), local levy and private and public investment. The schemes that are dependent on external funding to progress are listed for each locality area in Appendices 1 to 4.

- 5.19 Natural Flood Management schemes are being reviewed in both Conisbrough and Tickhill as the watercourses in these two areas have the potential to quickly flood due to their topography and catchment size. Funding applications have been approved by the Environment Agency for hydraulic modelling and feasibility studies to assess suitable areas for attenuation on their respective upper catchments, with further funding applications submitted for the physical construction. The feasibility and hydraulic modelling will be carried out over the next few months with the funding for construction expected in April 2021.
- 5.20 A whole catchment approach is being undertaken via both the Sheffield City Region and through the South Yorkshire Flood Partnership, focusing on collaboration around hard engineering proposals and nature based solutions. DMBC is well represented on both groups. In addition the Yorkshire Regional Flood and Coastal Committee environmental sub group is investigating a source to sea approach, evaluating a package of Natural Flood Management and hard engineering options.

Section 19 investigation

- 5.21 Following the widespread and serious flooding in England during June and July 2007, an independent review was carried out. Following this the Flood and Water Management Act was implemented and Councils took on additional duties as Lead Local Flood Authorities. The Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority must prepare and maintain a flood risk management strategy. The Council has a duty to investigate (under Section 19 of the Floods and Water Management Act 2010) on becoming aware of a flood in its area.
- 5.22 The scope of the investigation should cover:
- a. Which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
 - b. Whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood
- 5.23 The Council is required to:
- a. Publish the results of its investigation, and
 - b. Notify any relevant risk management authorities
- 5.24 The Council has commissioned a consultant to carry out the investigation and Appendix Five contains the full draft report. The report covers flooding in Bentley, Fishlake, Tickhill, Conisbrough, Scawthorpe, Clay Lane, Intake and Warmsworth.
- 5.25 Council officers have engaged with key partners with flood management responsibilities: the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, Highway Authorities and Water Companies to produce a final version of the Section 19 report. This avoids any subsequent confusion or contradiction that would delay or compromise further actions to support Doncaster people.

5.26 Community engagement is now taking place with involved parties, including local residents and businesses. Ward Councillors play an absolutely crucial role and will be fully included in engagement. Engagement formats and approaches will be developed that avoid jargon and enable understanding. Engagement will take place during October 2020 with the intention of being concluded before the anniversary of the floods, a time that will be traumatic for many. Engagement will need to be mindful of continued Covid 19 circulation in Doncaster communities.

5.27 The Section 19 report and the publicity it will bring should provide a strong opportunity to engage with both regional authorities and national government on the financial and wider support that Doncaster will need to fully implement improvements. Even with funding secured it should be noted that considerable time and energy will be required on implementation activity, for example feasibility studies, modelling, detailed design works and procurement of contractors. The Council and its partners will be required to work at scale and pace for a significant period of time to deliver the comprehensive works required.

6. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 The Council is required to carry out a Section 19 investigation following a flooding event but has discretion in terms of the depth of investigation undertaken and the degree of follow up. The Council could have chosen to carry out a relatively limited investigation without detailed follow up.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

7.1 The option set out in 6.1 is not recommended. The recommended approach has been to commission a detailed report and to follow up accordingly in order to provide the best opportunity to address future flood protection risks in the Borough, including by strongly advocating Doncaster's needs as part of a whole catchment approach to regional and national authorities.

8. IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY OUTCOMES

	Outcomes	Implications
1.	<p>Doncaster Working: Our vision is for more people to be able to pursue their ambitions through work that gives them and Doncaster a brighter and prosperous future;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to good fulfilling work • Doncaster businesses are supported to flourish • Inward Investment 	<p>Flood recovery and renewal is vital for the continuing operation and confidence of Doncaster businesses, and for the future economic prospects of Doncaster employees</p>
2.	<p>Doncaster Living: Our vision is for Doncaster's people to live in a borough that is vibrant and full of opportunity, where people enjoy spending time;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The town centres are the beating heart of Doncaster • More people can live in a good quality, affordable home • Healthy and Vibrant Communities through 	<p>Flood recovery and renewal are essential not only for the security of Doncaster housing but also the accessibility of communal spaces. There is also a very strong connection with wider work to improve environmental sustainability in locally addressing climate change.</p>

	<p>Physical Activity and Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone takes responsibility for keeping Doncaster Clean • Building on our cultural, artistic and sporting heritage 	
3.	<p>Doncaster Learning: Our vision is for learning that prepares all children, young people and adults for a life that is fulfilling;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every child has life-changing learning experiences within and beyond school • Many more great teachers work in Doncaster Schools that are good or better • Learning in Doncaster prepares young people for the world of work 	Flood recovery and renewal is essential to make our Borough fit for future generations
4.	<p>Doncaster Caring: Our vision is for a borough that cares together for its most vulnerable residents;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have the best start in life • Vulnerable families and individuals have support from someone they trust • Older people can live well and independently in their own homes 	The floods of November 2019 had a disproportionate impact on some of Doncaster's most vulnerable families and individuals. Some still need support with continued recovery and all need future security from renewal of Doncaster's flood defences
5.	<p>Connected Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A modern, efficient and flexible workforce • Modern, accessible customer interactions • Operating within our resources and delivering value for money • A co-ordinated, whole person, whole life focus on the needs and aspirations of residents • Building community and self-reliance by connecting community assets and strengths • Working with our partners and residents to provide effective leadership and governance 	Continued flood recovery and renewal will not be effective unless the Council connects with local communities, but also operates in a joined up way itself. The scope of recovery set out within this report has required intensive involvement from teams across every Directorate, and partnership engagement from each with a large number of local, regional and national organisations.

9. RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

9.1 Risks and assumptions are picked up in the main body of the report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer SF Initials Date 09.09.20]

10.1 The Council has a number of powers and duties in relation to the matters considered within this report, including the requirements specified within Section 19 of the Floods and Water Management Act 2010. Further specific legal advice can be provided as required as these matters develop

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials CA Date 08.09.20]

- 11.1 As this is an update report on activity undertaken so far, there are no direct financial implications as a result of the recommendations. External funding is still to be approved for the works listed as future proposed flood alleviation schemes (Appendices 1-4).

12. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials AT Date 09.09.20]

- 12.1 There are no Human Resources implications.

13. TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS [Officer PW Initials Date 09.09.20]

- 13.1 There are no specific technology implications in relation to this report. A case management system has been developed in house by the Digital Solutions team to assist in the management of the Property Flood Resilience Scheme and any future flood response.

14. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS [Officer Initials RS Date 08.09.20]

- 14.1 Flooding has a significant impact on public health. The November floods generated a number of physical risks for people, from the life-and-limb risk of the incident itself to the contamination risks that attended the clean-up work. These risks were exacerbated by financial hardship, and by the considerable impact on the emotional wellbeing of affected people, families and communities. The above implications were compounded for people who were already vulnerable.

- 14.2 Therefore continued focus on flood recovery, and in particular pursuing future flood protection to minimise the risks of significant future flooding are essential in securing health and wellbeing of Doncaster people.

15. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS [Officer initials PH Date 08.09.20]

- 15.1 Flooding in Doncaster has severely affected people from a range of communities, ages and backgrounds. However long-term impacts are exacerbated by pre-existing disadvantages, for example health problems, isolation and poverty. A strong focus on continued flood recovery and renewal in Doncaster by its very nature seeks to protect our most vulnerable populations from the disproportionate impact of future flooding on their wellbeing and life chances.

16. CONSULTATION

- 16.1 All aspects of flood recovery activity will require continued engagement with local communities and wider stakeholders. The report already outlines how this must proceed with regard to the Section 19 investigation which will provide the foundation for future dialogue on all flood-related matters.

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 17.1 Appendix One: Central Area Flood Works
Appendix Two: North Area Flood Works
Appendix Three: South Area Flood Works
Appendix Four: East Area Flood Works
Appendix Five: Section 19 Report

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