

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	1st July 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Brian Jones: Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment / Tony Ward: Head of Highways and Environmental Services
Report author	Wayne Hope
Title	9th February 2020 Flood Event – Section 19 Flood Investigation Report

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. On the 9th of February 2020, extensive flooding occurred across Denbighshire as a result of Storm Ciara. Council officers, as well as officers from Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, have since carried out investigations into the flooding to understand the reason why the flooding occurred, the likelihood of it happening again and to assess whether measures can be put in place to reduce flooding in future

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act requires that the Council investigates instances of flooding in the county and subsequently publishes a report of the investigation’s findings. The purpose of this report is to introduce the Section 19 flood investigation report and its findings to members of the Committee and to seek their views and comments.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Council seeks assurance from Natural Resources Wales that the recommendations identified in Natural Resources Wales’ flood investigation reports will be carried out, and for anticipated timescales to be confirmed.
- 3.2. That the Council seeks assurance from Natural Resources Wales that flood risk from main rivers in Denbighshire is being appropriately managed.

4. Report details

- 4.1. According to Natural Resources Wales, “February 2020 was one of the wettest on record for parts of North and Mid Wales. A series of successive weather fronts

including storms Ciara, Dennis and Jorge, as well as heavy rainfall over the weekend of 22nd February, saw most rain gauges recording over 200% of their February Long Term Average (LTA). Several rain gauges recorded in excess of 350% of their LTA, with Bala recording 407% of its LTA (extract from “Post flood event analysis North & Mid Wales February 2020” – Natural Resources Wales, see Appendix (A) of overarching flood investigation report). It is in this context that the flooding that affected communities in Denbighshire on 9th February must be viewed.

4.2. Denbighshire County Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority, has a duty under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act to investigate flooding in its area. The Act states:

- (1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate:
 - (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
- (2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must:
 - (a) publish the results of its investigation, and
 - (b) notify any relevant risk management authorities.

4.3. The purpose of this investigation report is to address the following key questions:

- Why did the flooding happen?
- How likely it is for that scale of flooding to happen again?
- What improvement actions are needed to ensure flood risk in the County is appropriately managed in future?

4.4. The main sources of flooding during the February 2020 event were the River Elwy, River Ceidiog, River Ystrad and River Clwyd. These are classified as main rivers and the responsibility for the detailed investigation of each flood location rests with Natural Resources Wales, as the risk management authority with flood risk management functions in relation to main rivers. There were four separate locations affected by main river flooding. These ranged from large communities, such as St Asaph and Llandrillo, to individual isolated properties.

4.5. The Council’s overarching flood investigation report is included as Appendix 1 to this report. The investigation of flooding at each of the main river locations is included as appendices to the overarching report, with the exception of Llanynys, which was not the subject of a separate flood investigation, but is a matter of ongoing discussions between the Council, Natural Resources Wales and the residents affected by flooding at this location.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1. One of the Council's corporate priorities for 2017 to 2022 is to provide an attractive and protected environment, supporting wellbeing and economic prosperity. One of the measures identified in the Corporate Plan to enable this is to reduce the number of properties at risk of flooding in Denbighshire. The flood investigation report has highlighted opportunities to help achieve this measure, some of which will involve working in close collaboration with Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. The costs to the Council of carrying out flood investigation work are met within existing revenue budgets.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. This report does not refer to a particular project, so a Well-being Impact Assessment has not been carried out. However, should the Council have any future proposals to carry out a scheme or project as a result of the flood investigation report, a Well-being Impact Assessment will be carried out.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. The flood investigation has involved discussions, meetings and exchanges of correspondence with County Councillors and members of the communities that were flooded. Numerous meetings have taken place with officers from Natural Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1 As noted in Section 6 the costs to the Council of carrying out flood investigation work are met within existing revenue budgets. Any additional works will be subject to normal Council approval procedures if required.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. The Flood and Water Management Act places a responsibility on the Council to investigate flood events in the county and an implied duty to improve its

understanding of flood risk. If the Council fails in this, there is a risk of reputational damage and flooded communities will continue to be at risk.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. The Council has powers in relation of flood risk and drainage matters under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) and the Land Drainage Act (1991).

11.2. The Committee's powers in relation to policy development and review and scrutinising the Council and other public bodies' performance are outlined in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7.4 of the Council's Constitution.