

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Communities Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> October 2021</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Cllr Brian Jones: Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment / Tony Ward: Head of Highways &amp; Environmental Services</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Wayne Hope</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup> January 2021 Flood Event – Section 19 Flood Investigation Report</b>

## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1. On the 20th of January 2021, extensive flooding occurred across Denbighshire as a result of Storm Christoph. 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 examine the findings, actions and recommendations emanating from the investigation into the flooding incidents that occurred in the county in January 2021

## **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.

## 4. Report details

- 4.1. Between 18th and 20th January 2021, Storm Christoph brought strong winds, heavy rain and snow, with the most intense rainfall occurring over North Wales and northern England, bringing localised flooding to many areas. The Met Office reported that 50 to 100mm of rain fell widely across Wales and north-west England, with over 100mm across upland areas of Wales. Denbighshire experienced the effects of this Storm, with heavy and prolonged rain flooding around 67 homes and 6 businesses on the 20th January. The majority of the flooding was from main river sources. Natural Resources Wales, as the relevant flood risk management authority for main rivers, has carried out its own flood investigations. Natural Resources Wales' flood investigation reports are included as appendices to this overarching investigation report.
- 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 most significant sources of flooding during the January 2021 event, in terms of numbers of properties affected, were the River Clwyd at Ruthin and River Ystrad at Brookhouse, Denbigh. 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 was also main river flooding at Llandyrnog (River Clwyd), Loggerheads (River Alyn) and Corwen (River Dee).
- 4.5. Whilst the main sources of flooding were main rivers, the impacts of Storm Christoph were felt across much of Denbighshire
- 4.6. The Council's overarching flood investigation report is included as Appendix 1 to this report. The investigations of flooding at each of the main river locations are included as appendices to the overarching report.

## **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 doesn't refer to a particular project, so a Well-being Impact Assessment hasn't 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.