

Report To: Full Council

Date of Meeting: 9th July 2013

Lead Member / Officer: Lead Member for Public Realm / Corporate Director:
Economic and Community Ambition

Report Author: Senior Engineer, Flood Risk Management

Title: Investigation into the November 2012 Floods

1. What is the report about?

An Investigation into the flooding events across Denbighshire in November 2012 has been underway since February 2013. The investigation is now complete, with the exception of Glasdir, where the complexity of the issues surrounding the flood event means that the investigation is ongoing.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To bring to Members attention the findings of the flood investigation, and to provide an update progress with the investigation into the Glasdir flood event.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That Members:

- Approve the implementation of the recommendations set out in Appendix 2.
- Actively support the Council and Natural Resources Wales in approaching the Welsh Government for funding to implement the recommendations.
- Support the establishment of a River Management Partnership, which will bring together all relevant partners to develop flood risk management plans.
- Agree to receive Part 2 of the Investigation Report, relating to Glasdir, at the Full Council meeting on 10th September 2013.

4. Report details.

4.1

Significant flooding occurred at a number of locations across Denbighshire on 26th and 27th November 2012. Around 500 properties, commercial and residential, were flooded at a total of 12 separate locations. Under the terms of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, the Council is undertaking an investigation into the causes of flooding. Natural Resources Wales (formerly Environment Agency Wales) is supporting the Council with the investigation. The sources of flooding were main rivers, for which Natural Resources Wales is the risk management authority, and ordinary watercourses, for which Denbighshire County Council is the risk management authority.

4.2

The investigation was formally launched in February 2013 and was due to report to Council in May. The report was delayed from May due the complexity and scale of the investigation of the two larger flooding incidents at St Asaph and Glasdir. The investigation of the St Asaph event is now complete and is summarised in Appendix 2. However, the full report of the Glasdir event will be delayed until September. The investigation Terms of Reference are attached for information (Appendix 1).

4.3

The purpose of the investigation is to clarify why the flooding happened, how likely it is to recur and what, if anything, needs to be done to manage flood risk appropriately in the future.

4.4

The criteria for agreeing a location for investigation are:

- One or more properties with internal flooding
- Disruption to critical infrastructure, e.g. roads or utilities
- A repeated 'near miss' of either of the above.

It was decided not to include the general flooding of agricultural land as part of the investigation, unless the flood event was unusual or unexpected. Discussions are taking place at a national level regarding the impact of flooding on agricultural land.

4.5

The investigation of flooding for the majority of locations is being carried out by the Council and Natural Resources Wales. Independent investigators have been commissioned to carry out the investigation into the flooding at Glasdir, Ruthin, however, due to the complexity of events at that location. The Independent Investigators, Dr Jean Venables and Clive Onions, were also asked to review the Council and Natural Resources Wales' findings for all other flood locations. The locations being investigated are:

- St Asaph, including Lower Denbigh Road
- Rhuddlan, including Sarn Lane
- Brookhouse, Denbigh
- Llanynys
- Gellifor
- Glasdir, Ruthin
- Park Place/Mwrog Street/Maes Ffynnon, Ruthin
- Llanbedr Dyffryn Clwyd
- Loggerheads
- Corwen
- Glyndyfrdwy

A report covering the findings of the investigation is enclosed (Appendix 2)

4.6

The flood investigation work is co-ordinated by a Flood Investigation Working Group comprising officers from the Council, Natural Resources Wales and the Trunk Road Authority. To date, three Stakeholder briefings have been issued and these are included for information (Appendix 3). Meetings have also been held with representatives of residents at the two larger flood locations at Glasdir and St Asaph.

4.7

The Council has given consideration to interim measures to reduce flood risk pending the conclusion of the investigation. As the result, the following work has been carried out:

- Fitting of anti-flood non return valves on surface water drains at Brookhouse, Denbigh.
- At Glasdir, the removal of the safety grilles on the 5 box culvert, the fitting of a temporary telemetry enabled water gauge in the culvert channel and the construction of a hardstanding above the culvert to enable access for the removal of debris during a flood.

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

Flooding has the potential to cause severe and prolonged disruption to the communities it affects. Understanding and managing local flood risk supports the Council's priority to develop the local economy.

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

The cost of implementing the recommendations set out by the investigation with respect to ordinary watercourse flooding could be up to £1 million. This cost cannot be accommodated within the Council's existing budget. However, the Welsh Government, which states its aim as reducing the risk to people by encouraging the provision of flood defence measures, has powers to award grant under the Land Drainage Act. With this in mind, it is important that the Council seeks Welsh Government funding support in respect of the recommendations.

Natural Resources Wales estimates that a scheme to reduce the risk of flooding in St Asaph to an acceptable level is likely to cost in excess of £5 million. The Council should seek assurance from the Welsh Government that sufficient priority will be given to the early funding of Natural Resources Wales' proposals with regard to St Asaph and any other recommendations coming from the investigation with respect to flooding from main rivers.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken on the decision?

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out.

8. What consultations have been carried out?

To date, three Stakeholder Briefings have been produced to share with all interested parties. Regular liaison meetings have taken place with representatives of the residents at Glasdir. Two meetings have taken place with representatives of the residents at St Asaph, with further meetings scheduled.

The interim findings of the investigation were discussed with Partnerships Scrutiny on 25th April 2013.

9. Power to make the Decision

Section 19 of the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 gives the Council as Lead Local Flood Authority, the responsibility to investigate incidents of flooding.

Section 10 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 places a duty on the Council to develop, maintain and monitor a local flood risk management strategy

Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 gives the Council the power to do anything which is likely to promote or improve the social, economic or environmental well being of the Council's area.