

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Partnerships Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> November 2024</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Councillor Barry Mellor: Lead Member for Transport and the Environment / Paul Jackson: Head of Highways and Environment</b>
<b>Report author</b>	<b>Andy Raynor: Highways Asset and Risk Manager</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Section 19 Flood Investigation Report into Storm Babet event on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023</b>

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

1.1. On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023, a period of very heavy rainfall led to the surface water flooding of a significant number of properties in the north of the county, both residential and commercial. Council officers, as well as officers from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) 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 Committee considers whether the Council requires to implement or revise working practices with a view to mitigating against the future risk of flooding in the county.

### **4. Report details**

4.1 The arrival of Storm Babet on 20 October 2023 marked the first named storm to affect Wales during this winter season. It was one of the most severe storms to hit the UK in recent years, causing widespread flooding and damage. Denbighshire experienced the effects of this Storm by being subject to heavy and prolonged rainfall that flooded around 62 homes and 6 businesses. There was also a large number of 'near misses' and significant damage caused to highway infrastructure. These last two points however do not form part of the report as they fall outside the legislative framework for Section 19 Flood Investigations.

4.2 Following the flood event, Denbighshire County Council (DCC) carried out a door knocking exercise to properties which were reported to have been flooded. This exercise identified that 62 homes had experienced internal flooding to living space, and 7 businesses had to close temporarily as a result of internal flooding.

The source of the flooding originated from the heavy rainfall of the Storm Event of the 20<sup>th</sup>, with this causing fluvial and surface water flooding. The Maes y Gôg Drain in Rhyl and the Afon Ffyddion in Dyserth overtopped causing a number of properties to be flooded; surface water and sewerage systems were overwhelmed and surcharged causing flooding to properties in Rhyl, Prestatyn and St.Asaph. Other factors included blockages to highway drainage systems, causing systems to back-up and flood properties.

4.3 With the cause of the flooding involving main rivers, surface water and sewage systems and the highway drainage systems much of the flood investigation work has involved working in close partnership with the other Risk Management Authorities (RMA's) Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales, building on the close working relationships developed over the past decade.

4.4 The Council's Section 19 report is included as Appendix 1. This report is very detailed, containing a large amount of technical data with regards to catchment areas. Section 7 of the report focuses on the flood event of the 20<sup>th</sup> October with Section 8 providing a summary of the improvements identified as required to ensure flood risk is appropriately managed in the future at the locations of reported flooding.

## **5 How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

5.1 As this is an investigation, it does not need to link to Corporate Priorities, although recommendations seek to mitigate future flooding, which is in-line with the Corporate Plan's aim to mitigate and cope with the impacts of climate change by delivering schemes to reduce coastal and in-land flood risk.

## **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. No additional costs.

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

7.1 No decision is sought from this report, so no Well-Being Impact Assessment has been undertaken. The report is a flood investigation as detailed within section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. A section 19 flood investigation report is a public statement of the circumstances of a flood event and what roles each party have in managing the risks.

## **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 of the other RMA's, Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales.

## **9 Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1 As set out within the report the cost of preparing the investigation and report is met from existing budgets. The Section 19 flood investigation report details improvements and actions needed to mitigate against future events for all involved including securing funding for any necessary works.

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

10.1 The Council has a responsibility to investigate flood events in the county and an implied duty under the Flood and Water Management Act 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 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7.2.3 of the Council's Constitution states that Scrutiny may "consider any matter which affects the Council's area or its inhabitants."