

# CABINET MEETING

25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

## EMERGENCY FLOOD RESPONSE – STORM EVENT ARRANGEMENTS

### **Purpose:**

To set out and endorse how the Council deals with and responds to storm events that cause widespread flooding. The report sets out the actions that can be expected of the Council.

### **Recommendations / key decisions required:**

To receive, consider and endorse the principles set out in the report for responding to flood events during the emergency response phase as follows:

- a. That the primary Council response in a storm event must be prioritised with respect to risk to life, risk of injury and risk to strategic assets, taking into account its obligations with respect to Council owned assets and wider statutory responsibilities pertaining to the circumstances.
- b. The Council will work with Dyfed-Powys Local Resilience Forum (LRF) partners and across the range of Council services to determine its response through setting out its objectives, overall strategy and priorities as appropriate.
- c. Incidents of internal flooding will take priority over flooding of gardens and outbuildings, particularly where Council assets are believed to be contributory factors. It should be noted that watercourses are not generally owned by the Authority nor by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Such watercourses are normally the responsibility of the riparian landowners.
- d. Homeowners and businesses alike who have experienced flooding in the past will be encouraged to make preparations in advance of storm events in order to mitigate the extent of flood damage to their own property.
- e. Whilst the Council is content to provide businesses with a warning of impending storms based on the forecasts it receives when it can, the Council cannot be relied upon in this regard as the primary source of information as the Council cannot provide a formal flood warning service. Businesses and householders are encouraged to sign up to NRW warning systems where available.
- f. Households and Businesses - the degree of physical help provided immediately after a flood event, if appropriate, will be determined based on the scale, nature and severity of such an event. This will be determined by the Council's Gold group or the Corporate Management Team as appropriate for the most severe events.

- g. Financial help – the extent of financial help that may be appropriate will be determined by the Gold group or Corporate Management Team after taking into account the prevailing circumstances. Support of this nature is very much the exception and will only be considered in extreme events. In certain circumstances after severe flooding, Welsh Government may provide grant aid which may be administered through the Council. However, this will not be the case for every storm.

**Reason:**

To be aware of, consider and endorse how flood emergencies are dealt with by the Council. The range and scale of response will depend on the nature of the event. The priorities will be determined as set out, but protection of life, safeguarding key Council owned assets and infrastructure and discharging our statutory responsibilities will be prioritised.

**Relevant Scrutiny Committee Consulted: YES:-**

Environmental and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Cabinet Decision Required	YES
Council Decision Required	NO

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-**

Cllr. Hazel Evans – Cabinet Member for Environment

<b>Directorate:</b> Environment	Designations:	Tel: Email addresses:
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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## CABINET MEETING 25<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2021

### EMERGENCY FLOOD RESPONSE – STORM EVENT ARRANGEMENTS

#### 1. Background

The report sets out how emergencies are dealt both from within the Council organisation and in the context of when the Council operates as a Category 1 responder as part of a multi-agency approach to managing an emergency alongside other partner agencies.

The focus of the report is within the context of a flood related event, although the principles can apply to other types of emergencies.

The interaction between other partner organisations is briefly explained, but the main aspect focuses on the County Council response and the range of departments and divisions involved to provide an insight into how flood events are managed.

#### 2. Response Arrangements

For a storm event that may result in incidents of significant flooding, there are several different responses that may be required, depending on the circumstances. There are distinct phases to managing the response to such an event as follows:

- The **pre-storm planning** phase.
- Reactive **immediate response** phase during a flood event and:
- a **recovery response** phase immediately following the event.

The external multi-agency partners are identified in the detailed report. The main agencies are:

- Dyfed Powys Police (DPP),
- Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service (MWWFRS)
- Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust (WAST)
- Local authorities in the Dyfed Powys area (Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Powys and Pembrokeshire)
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW),
- Hywel Dda University Health Board and Powys Teaching Health Board
- Military.
- Occasionally Welsh Government (depending on scale).

Collectively (with the exception of Welsh Government), these make up the Dyfed Powys Local Resilience Forum or LRF. Any of the primary responders (including the county councils) can declare an emergency and trigger a multi-agency briefing meeting or a formal coordination meeting. There are clear agreed protocols and procedures for initiating and managing an emergency event. There can be up to three tiers: a Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG), a Tactical Coordinating (TCG) group and an Operational Group (Bronze).

The structure is mirrored internally within the Council (e.g., Gold, Silver and Bronze groups as appropriate) and operates in parallel to the multi-agency structure. A chosen representative from the Council Gold or Silver groups usually sits on the multi-agency SCG or TCG groups. There are a number of internal emergency planning operational and process documents available to officers.

Carmarthenshire's internal teams involved in an emergency response include:

- a. Civil Contingency Unit (formerly known as Emergency Planning)
- b. Transportation and Highways Team
- c. Flood & Coastal Defence Team.
- d. Property Maintenance Team.
- e. Waste, Grounds & Cleansing Services (operational) Team.
- f. Communities – specifically temporary accommodation, and rest centre operation and management.
- g. Llesiant Delta Wellbeing.
- h. Communications Team.
- i. Regeneration Team.
- j. Finance.
- k. Legal and Risk Management Units.
- l. Business Support Units.

The functions of the internal teams are set out in the detailed report.

### **3. Summary:**

The paper has set out the wider responsibilities of the Council and partner organisations, together with the process and actions that are put in place when a rainfall event is forecast. The emergency response arrangements are well defined.

The frequency and intensity of storm events seem to be increasing from recent experience.

Expectation management is paramount during a storm event. The response must be prioritised on a risk basis with respect to the Council's statutory functions, taking into account the resources it has available.

Homeowners and businesses alike who have experienced flooding in the past will be encouraged to mitigate those risks as best they can when storms are expected by making their own arrangements to reduce the potential for flood damage where possible. Whilst the Council will do its utmost to help, it must work with the resources available taking account of the prevailing circumstances.

The primary focus of a storm response phase must be prioritised according to risk to life, risk of injury and risk to strategic assets. Objectives and priorities will be determined at the Gold and Silver command levels for the larger events, or by duty officers/operational officers for smaller events. This command structure and operating framework must be adhered to in a storm event, otherwise the situation could quickly become out of control causing confusion and priorities could be misaligned.

It is often difficult to obtain contemporaneous accurate information during such events and the priority must be saving lives and property and safeguarding our infrastructure. This often means that requests for information from media organisations and the public should be managed carefully. Nonetheless we must also strive to maintain and increase community confidence after an event. Our communications in this respect are paramount.

#### **4. Summary of Principles of Storm Event Response and Management:**

- a. That the primary Council response in a storm event must be prioritised with respect to risk to life, risk of injury and risk to strategic assets, taking into account its resources, its obligations with respect to Council owned assets and wider statutory responsibilities pertaining to the circumstances.
- b. The Council will work with LRF partners and across the range of Council services to determine its response through setting out its objectives, overall strategy and priorities as appropriate.
- c. Incidents of internal flooding will take priority over flooding of gardens and outbuildings, particularly where Council assets are believed to be contributory factors. It should be noted that watercourses are not generally owned by the Authority (nor NRW). Such watercourses are normally the responsibility of the riparian landowners.
- d. Homeowners and businesses alike who have experienced flooding in the past will be encouraged to make their own preparations in advance of storm events in order to mitigate the extent of flood damage to their own property.
- e. Whilst the Council is content to provide businesses with a warning of impending storms based on the forecasts it receives, the Council cannot be relied upon in this regard as the primary source of information as the Council cannot provide a formal flood warning service. Businesses and householders are encouraged to sign up to NRW warning systems where available.
- f. Households and Businesses - the degree of physical help provided immediately after a flood event in the recovery phase, if appropriate, will be determined based on the scale, nature and severity of such an event. This will be determined by the Council's Gold group or the Corporate Management Team as appropriate for the most severe events.

- g. Financial help – the extent of financial help that may be appropriate will be determined by the Gold group or Corporate Management Team after taking into account the prevailing circumstances. Support of this nature is very much the exception and will only be considered in extreme events. In certain circumstances after severe flooding, Welsh Government may provide grant aid which may be administered through the Council. However, this will not be the case for every storm.

**DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?**

**YES**

# IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: **A WILLIAMS**

**Head of Waste & Environmental Services**

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>

## Legal:

Discussions with the legal team will be undertaken as necessary and views sought depending on the circumstances.

## Finance

No set emergency response revenue funding currently exists in the form of a specific budget. The response is usually funded through the annual revenue service budgets on a reactive basis. This in turn can place further pressure on normal maintenance budgets.

Funding will be considered at two levels:

1. Internal funding – a review of funding requirements as a result of a storm event will be undertaken as soon as possible to determine if the provision of financial help to householders and businesses is appropriate and affordable. In addition, an assessment of the cost of repairing damage to assets will be undertaken and an assessment of internal funding provision is then undertaken.
2. Welsh Government funding; depending on the scale and nature of the damage caused by a storm event, application for funding from Welsh Government will be investigated and pursued as appropriate. Some aspects of emergency funding will only apply above a predetermined threshold of spend.

## Risk Management Issues

Risk management considerations will form part of the deliberations of the Gold/Silver command groups.

### **Staffing Implications**

One of the key considerations in an emergency response will be the resource available to respond. The forward look in terms of planning the resource required to deal with the anticipated duration and geographical extent of a storm event will be important. In addition, immediately post event, our key services must also continue to be delivered as normal, so inevitably there is a significant expectation of our workforce and management team.

Clearly resource is limited, so management of organisational and public expectation is crucial.

### **Physical Assets**

The integrity and functionality of our physical assets is a key consideration in the immediate recovery phase of an emergency. Restoring and safeguarding our infrastructure is key for community confidence. We aim to restore the full functionality of our assets as soon as is practicable, but there will be occasions when this takes time, depending on the extent of damage incurred.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: **A WILLIAMS**

**Head of Waste & Environmental Services**

**1. Scrutiny Committee:**

Principles presented to the Environment and Public Protection Scrutiny Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

**2. Local Member(s) NA**

**2.Community / Town Council - NA**

**3.Relevant Partners - NA**

**4.Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations - NA**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD PORTFOLIO  
HOLDER AWARE/CONSULTED**

Yes – Cllr Hazel Evans. Agreement with the principles and practices set out.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THERE ARE NONE**