



Community Scrutiny Group

Wednesday, 7 October 2020

Flooding and Drainage

Report of the Executive Manager - Neighbourhoods

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. In recent years flooding has had a significant impact on a number of Rushcliffe communities most notably from the recent storms of November 2019 and February 2020. This report seeks to provide an update on the current picture of flooding events in the borough. It will also outline the organisations involved in flood assessment and drainage work, their roles and responsibilities and how they respond to flooding incidents and work with communities. A presentation will also be given by three of the key organisations involved: Nottinghamshire County Council, Rushcliffe Borough Council and Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board.

2. Recommendation

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group notes the contents of the report, the responsibilities of those organisations involved in flood assessment and drainage work, and their roles in preparing and recovering from flood incidents.

3. Supporting Information

Flood risk within Rushcliffe

- 3.1. The Borough is at risk from both fluvial river flooding and pluvial surface water flooding. The rivers, classed as 'main' rivers, that run through the Borough are the Trent, Soar, Smite and Devon. All of these rivers have Environment Agency flood alerts and warnings available on them. The flood warning service was created for the public to sign up to it and have alerts and warnings directly text or phoned through to them 24/7. These rivers also have river gauge level readings available online via gov.uk. These give accurate daily readings and in the case of the river Trent and Soar also give a 24hr prediction of expected river levels.
- 3.2. The predominant source of flooding in the most recent flood events has been pluvial flooding. Surface water flooding is less easy to predict due to the nature of the weather systems that generally cause these events creating the heavy sudden down pours that can see a months' worth of rain fall in one day. Combined with often saturated catchments, this leaves the water with nowhere to go and excessive run off can occur in both urban and rural areas.

Although predicting where the rain will fall can't be accurate there are communities in Rushcliffe that we know from experience are prone to surface water flooding issues such as Gotham. This can be due to a number of reasons including topography and geology. Surface water maps are available at gov.uk which show the areas that are naturally susceptible to water collecting. The water often follows the natural flow path or low points in these areas.

Significant recent flood incidents

3.3. Over the last four years, there have been a number of flood events which have had a significant impact on local communities and they include the following;

a) June 2016 - After a period of wet weather, an extreme rainfall event occurred with 30.6mm of rain falling on saturated ground over Gotham in a very short period of time. 36 houses were affected by surface water flooding with a number internally flooded.

b) November 2019 - Storm conditions meant 40 houses were internally flooded during an event deemed a national emergency due to the scale of flooding across the country. The flooding was predominately by surface water. The main communities affected were:

- Tollerton (Tollerton Lane and Cotgrave Lane)
- Gotham
- Bingham
- West Bridgford
- Ruddington
- Sutton Bonington
- Radcliffe on Trent.

c) February 2020 Storm Dennis - over 100 houses internally flooded during an event again deemed a national emergency. The flooding was again predominantly by surface water. The main communities affected were:

- Tollerton (Tollerton Lane and Cotgrave Lane)
- Gotham
- Bingham
- Sutton Bonington
- Radcliffe on Trent
- Cropwell Butler
- East Leake
- Ruddington
- Rempstone
- Colston Bassett
- Cotgrave

Sadly, a number of houses that flooded in November also flooded for a second time during this flood incident.

Key stakeholders

- 3.4. The main risk management authorities involved in flood assessment and drainage work are as follows:
 - Nottinghamshire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)
 - Rushcliffe Borough Council
 - Environment Agency
 - Internal drainage board(s)
 - Severn Trent Water.
- 3.5. The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires these Risk Management Authorities to:
 - Co-operate with each other
 - Act in a manner that is consistent with the National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England and the local flood risk management strategies developed by Lead Local Flood Authorities
 - Exchange information.
- 3.6. During the meeting, presentations will be delivered by a number of the key agencies involved particularly with regard to surface water flooding; however, the following provides a brief summary of their roles and responsibilities.
- 3.7. **Nottinghamshire County Council** are the Lead Local Flood Authority. They have permissive powers and statutory duties to manage and co-ordinate local flood risk management activities in Nottinghamshire. Local flood risk means flooding from surface water, groundwater and smaller watercourses (known as Ordinary Watercourses).
- 3.8. Under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, they are required to publish a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy including an action plan and to report on flooding incidents under Section 19.
- 3.9. A Section 19 Report outlines what happened during a flooding incident and whether the relevant Risk Management Authorities have exercised or will exercise their responsibilities, but it does not identify specific measures to prevent future flooding. A Section 19 report is initiated when there have been five or more properties internally flooded in any one area
- 3.10. As the Highways Authority Nottinghamshire County Council also have responsibility for the public highways including highway drainage assets.
- 3.11. Nottinghamshire County Council are also a category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. This means they must have plans in place to respond

to emergencies, and control or reduce the impact of an emergency. They deliver this responsibility through their emergency planning team.

- 3.12. **Rushcliffe Borough Council** carry out flood risk management works on minor watercourses in their ownership (outside of Internal Drainage Board areas). They work in partnership with Lead Local Flood Authorities and other Risk Management Authorities to ensure risks are managed effectively. This also includes taking decisions on development in their area. Rushcliffe, as with the County Council, has an emergency planning responsibility under the Civil Contingencies Act. This is delivered under a service level agreement with the County Council. The most obvious example of this activity is the targeted delivery of sandbags to home owners at risk of flooding and the provision of temporary accommodation for those made homeless.
- 3.13. The **Environment Agency** are responsible for flood and coastal erosion risk management activities on main rivers and the coast, regulating reservoir safety, and working in partnership with the Meteorological Office to provide flood forecasts and warnings.
- 3.14. The **Internal Drainage Board** operate within a defined area, which is known as a drainage district. They are responsible for managing water levels in low-lying areas. They are the land drainage authority within their districts and their functions include supervising land drainage and flood defense works on ordinary watercourses.
- 3.15. **Seven Trent Water** manage the risk of flooding to water supply and sewerage facilities and flood risks from the failure of their infrastructure.

Partnership working

- 3.16. All these organisations work together through the Local Resilience Forum and, during the planning phase of flooding, they sit on a formal Flood Group which is chaired by the Environment Agency. Specific flood plans are in place, including for high risk locations such as reservoirs. There is a Rushcliffe Local Flood response plan which is an operational document that focuses on the details of flood risk communities.
- 3.17. In the stage before flooding occurs, all partner agencies receive Meteorological Office weather updates, flood guidance statements and flood alerts and warnings as well as having access to the river gauge level readings. This data allows all agencies to have accurate information and be in a position to effectively plan and prime resources to be ready to tackle any flooding. If an alert is issued at amber level, then the Environment Agency hold a flood advisory service teleconference to update partner agencies on the situation and to facilitate the exchange of information. The Borough Council is represented on this through the Nottinghamshire County Council emergency planning team.
- 3.18. In may become necessary, due to the scale or impact of the flooding, for the police to chair a multi-agency Tactical Coordinating Group. This facilitates

information exchange and provides access to multi agency support and resources.

- 3.19. Unfortunately, in the case of surface water flooding, it is often the problem that heavy rain is predicted for the region but the certainty of where it will occur is low. As a result the flooding event can happen rapidly in a very isolated and concentrated manner with little time for communities to prepare as they would for fluvial events.

Working with Communities

- 3.20. For those communities at risk of flooding there are several engagement projects undertaken by partner agencies to help communities prepare and be resilient.
- 3.21. Nottinghamshire County Council and the Environment Agency run a Flood Warden Scheme for communities in both main river and surface water communities at risk of flooding. This scheme also links into a community road closure initiative that allows communities under permission to close designated roads in times of flood to help protect properties from further damage from bow waves from passing traffic.
- 3.22. Nottinghamshire County Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council emergency planning staff work with communities to encourage them to have community emergency plans in place for their highest risks. This allows for key community representatives to be identified, along with resources and those who are vulnerable and more likely to require support.
- 3.23. Rushcliffe Borough Council administer a grant scheme, created in 2015, to assist communities to have flood resources directly in their communities. The flood resilience store grant allows for up to £1050 to pay for a suitable store and flood protection equipment. Allowing the community to self-help and deploy flood equipment quickly when needed.

Recovery

- 3.24. After a flooding event has occurred and subsided there is often a significant clean-up operation of public infrastructure which the Borough Council leads on. In more severe cases, the agencies will work together in the recovery phase with Nottinghamshire County Council leading on the Section 19 flood investigations where internal flooding of five or more properties has occurred.
- 3.25. Practically, on the ground, Rushcliffe Borough Council have also created a team of staff who are able to go door to door to speak to affected residents and offer further help, guidance and support.

4. Implications

4.1. Financial Implications

4.1.1. The Council has a Service Level Agreement with Nottinghamshire County Council for a shared Emergency Planning Officer (27k per annum) who deals with and coordinates the council's response to such events.

4.1.2. Due to the unknown nature of flood events, the Council does not provide specific budgets for flood recovery activity. Staffing, temporary accommodation and equipment costs incurred during flood recovery are generally contained within existing budgets. In some circumstances if the Government activates the Bellwin Scheme, the Council could recover 100% of eligible costs above a set threshold. The scheme was activated in November 2019 however, the costs incurred did not meet the threshold and were therefore not recoverable in this case.

4.2. Legal Implications

4.2.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

4.3. Equalities Implications

4.3.1. There are no specific implications arising from this report.

4.4. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Implications

4.4.1. The Council will work closely with the Police through the Local Resilience Forum to ensure any community safety issues are addressed before, during and after a flooding event.

5. Link to Corporate Priorities

Quality of Life	The creation of flood resilient communities is an important factor which underpins the maintenance of a high quality of life within the Borough
Efficient Services	A number of services contribute to the delivery of flood prevention and response services and it is important that each are delivered in an efficient and effective manner
Sustainable Growth	Provision of effective drainage is an important requirement through the planning and building control regulatory frameworks
The Environment	It is widely acknowledged that climate change is having an impact on the frequency and nature of weather events that can cause flooding. It is therefore vital that we continue to support the development of flood resilient communities through the work of all key agencies

6. Recommendations

It is RECOMMENDED that the Communities Scrutiny Group notes the contents of the report, the responsibilities of those organisations involved in flood assessment and drainage work, and their roles in preparing and recovering from flood incidents.

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Background papers available for Inspection:	None.
List of appendices:	None.