



Report to: Cabinet Meeting: 23 July 2024

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Taylor, Public Protection and Community Relations

Director Lead: Matt Finch, Director of Communities and Environment

Lead Officer: Jenny Walker, Business Manager Public Protection

Report Summary	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open report, non-key decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Emergency Planning – Flooding and future preparedness
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To provide cabinet with an update following the flooding caused by Storm Babet and Henk, the creation of the Flood Partnership, the grants awarded to affected properties and to provide a proposal of actions to be requested of government.
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To note the activities undertaken since the two flooding incidents</li> <li>• To note the ongoing work of the Flood Partnership and the ongoing work to improve the response provided by NSDC</li> <li>• To endorse the provision of additional one-off support to our communities through the use of the stated reserves as part of the programme to create more resilient communities in the long term in accordance with the decision-making arrangements set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report</li> <li>• To note and implement the resolution made by Full Council in respect of the Motion put forward on 16 July 2024 regarding flooding requests to Government</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do nothing – If we did not seek improvements we would not operate in a way appropriate for a Category 1 Responder and to provide appropriate levels of support to our communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Reason for Recommendations</b>	The recommendations as set out above seek to make improvements both for an authority dealing with challenges caused by emergency events but also the impacts for our communities and relates to the following Community Plan objectives:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect and enhance the district’s natural environment and green spaces.</li><li>• Reduce the impact of Climate Change.</li><li>• Celebrate and invigorate community spirit, pride of place and a sense of belonging.</li></ul>
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**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The autumn and winter storm season of 23/24 was one of the wettest October to March periods on records for the UK. The storm season saw a higher-than-normal number of named storms and for NSDC we spent a number of consecutive weeks with flood alerts and warnings in place.
- 1.2 Storm Babet and Storm Henk caused significant issues for the communities within the district, many homes were flooded internally with some properties flooded internally in both storms. Businesses were impacted by flooding and some villages were completely cut off.
- 1.3 NSDC provided an emergency response for both storms, with officers taken from their normal duties to provide support, assistance and advice to communities during the immediate emergency phase, working around the clock and the internal recovery group assisted with the clean-up in the immediate aftermath and support for accessing relevant grants. During the clean-up of storm Henk alone over 18 tonnes of waste was collected from flood damaged areas, in addition to the clearing and cleaning of the roads removing debris, and mud washed down from the flood waters.
- 1.4 A number of public meetings have been held in the communities that were directly impacted by the floods with attendance from partner agencies and NSDC. From those meetings and the flood warden meeting held at Castle House, we have captured a number of issues raised by residents in relation to the flooding events and are working with our partners seek improvements moving forward.

**2.0 Flood Partnership**

- 2.1 Following both floods and the large number of properties affected a decision was taken to create a flood partnership group. Similar groups have been created in previous years following largescale flooding and the partnership seeks to review and consider the areas that were flooded, reasons as to why they were flooded, especially if it is not a usual occurrence, what flood mitigation schemes they have in place or are planned and how to access and update the flood wardens.
- 2.2 There has been two multi agency flood partnership meetings with attendees from the Environment Agency (EA), Nottinghamshire County Council Emergency Planning Team, Canals and River Trust, NSDC representatives and Severn Trent. At the same time as these meetings were taking place many of the agencies represented were also attending a number of public meetings held in affected areas to discuss location specific issues and concerns. The next meeting will take place on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2024.
- 2.3 As part of the flood partnership meetings, the EA has provided a list of all of their flood wardens, some of these may also be trained by NCC as Flood Wardens, which enables

them to place the road closure signs. NCC were unable to share their flood warden list with us due to GDPR.

- 2.4 NSDC has agreed to host an annual Flood Warden Training Session event at Castle House pre the winter season for NCC and EA to refresh the training for all of our local wardens. During these sessions, NSDC will also ensure that we have up to date contact information for all flood wardens operating across the district so that we can be in direct contact with them in advance, during and after any storm that is likely to cause flooding in the area. All Town and Parish Councils have been contacted to understand their emergency preparedness and the flood warden coverage that they currently have. We have received over 36 responses to date and this is enabling us to build a picture of where specific support may be required for further flood resilience stores, increased flood wardens or assistance in the localised emergency planning and safe spaces. From the response received to date it is clear that 14 areas do not currently have a resilience store, Gunthorpe has requested an addition resilience store be provided and support has also been requested towards the funding of a pump purchase by North Clifton.
- 2.5 Areas of concern or actions raised during the public meetings have also been pulled together and shared with all agencies on the group for their feedback and updates. This list is extensive and covers concerns raised around communication, policing or road closure signs, how quickly roads are closed, information contained within the EA flood warning notifications and requests for more resilience stores. It also includes more broader discussions with partners including the update of flood maps based on recent flooding incidents and to challenge flood risk calculations such as areas who are noted to be 1 in 100-year event that have already flooded more than 2 in a few years. This action list is being worked through and progressed across the partnership and is needed to ensure that the ongoing and planned work of the group can continue.

## **2.6 Flood mitigation schemes ongoing and planned**

- 2.7 As part of the flood partnership meeting the EA and NCC updated on current and pending flood mitigation schemes alongside discussing options for further areas to have additional mitigation measures.
- 2.8 NSDC has in recent years supported a number of major flood alleviation schemes in several locations. Lowdham is currently being constructed after a number of years of planning and previous projects such as the scheme at Southwell have been delivered. Flood alleviations schemes are incredibly expensive and require significant planning and resources to deliver and can take many years to complete. Future flood alleviation schemes may be considered if deemed financially viable by the delivering agencies.
- 2.9 Although NSDC has no statutory role in relation to flooding, where possible the council will continue to support our communities to become more resilient to flooding. It is widely acknowledged that resilience is best when developed locally for the communities. It may be appropriate for some initial support to be provided to communities with one off funding for resilience stores, basic equipment and training support. In supporting communities to become more resilient and to determine what other measures they may require; they may determine the need for future and ongoing funding to be provided via the precept.

2.10 The flood partnership is looking at ways of providing other options for flood alleviation that does not require a large-scale scheme to be developed this may include how natural flood alleviation measures can be used to assist in the mitigation.

2.11 Through the partnership discussions, a number of wider considerations were identified that may benefit our communities if addressed nationally and regionally. These proposals were shared with the partnership and discussed and refined. A motion was made at Full Council on 17<sup>th</sup> July by Councillor Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Community Relations. A recommendation for this report relates to this motion and any Cabinet decision being subject to Full Council adopting the motion at Full Council on 17<sup>th</sup> July.

### 2.11 Flood grants

2.12 As part of the recovery process for both storms, NSDC facilitated the provision of the Community Recovery Grant and Business Recovery Grant. Premises that were impacted by flooding internally were able to apply for a grant. The community recovery grant provided £500 per property and the business recovery grant is up to £2,500. This scheme was available for both storms and officers visited the properties of the affected to ascertain eligibility in advance of payment. The table below details the total amount of grant funding issued:

<b>Storm Babet</b>	<b>Number of grants paid</b>	<b>Total paid</b>		
Community Recovery Grant	278	£139,000.00		
Business Recovery Grant	16	£40,000.00		
<b>Storm Henk</b>			Central Government Funded	Notts County Council Funded
Community Recovery Grant	113	£70,060.00	£56,500.00	£13,560.00
Business Recovery Grant	24	£67,200.00	£60,000.00	£7,200.00
<b>Property Flood Resilience Scheme</b>				
Total expressions received	123			
Total referred to NCC	71			

2.13 The Property Flood Resilience Scheme (PFR) enables occupiers to install flooding resilience measures once a survey has been completed. This scheme is being administered by NCC. All expressions of interest received by NSDC that then wished to continue through the scheme were submitted to NCC to process. NCC have provided an update advising that of the 71 referrals received all continue to express an interest in

the scheme and are at various stages with some choosing to the required survey and works themselves and others requiring more assistance.

## **2.14 NSDC Emergency Planning Review**

2.15 Following Storm Babet and Storm Henk officers who were involved in both emergency response events met to debrief and discuss the response to both storms and to consider what went well and what could be improved.

2.16 Due to the close proximity of both storms and the emergency response that was required there was no time to deliver on suggested improvements after Storm Babet before Storm Henk impacted on the services again. Following the debriefs an internal group has been set up to work through a number of actions with wider colleagues to improve the NSDC management of emergency incidents.

2.17 A delivery plan is in place and includes a number of actions such as:

- A review of the training provided to officers to ensure that they are trained on the specific emergency response role they are delivering.
- The creation of specific job roles and requirements that will enable HR to include these roles onto a person's file so that there is an easy way to seek support from trained officers.
- Review the risk assessments and related PPE for all staff working on emergency responses, ensuring officers working have the appropriate PPE at all times and trained in any required use.
- Streamline the process for accessing council owned vehicle fleet for officers attending incidents.
- Ensuring that there are suitable numbers of appropriately trained officers to cover all roles to ensure a suitable rota pattern to prevent officers working continuously without a break.

2.18 Specific training for officers on emergency responses roles is being developed now in the hope that during the summer many will be trained or have completed refresher training in advance of the winter period.

## **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding, Sustainability, and Crime and Disorder and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **3.1 Finance FIN24-25/2331**

The October flooding cost NSDC circa. £126,200 in additional overtime and emergency supplies and services.

The January flooding cost NSDC circa. £11,600 in additional overtime and emergency supplies and services.

Conversations continue with Government for reimbursement of these costs under the Bellwin Scheme, however; NSDC have had no success so far, and have been advised that nothing further will be considered until after the General Election in July.

Public Protection hold two reserves; one for Severe Weather Recovery of £22,500 and another for Emergency Planning/Flood Mitigation of £60,000. These reserves are available to use for additional resilience and would require approval for the drawdown via the Director of Communities and Environment and the S151 Officer up to £50,000 and the Finance Portfolio Holder and S151 Officer for over £50,000.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.