



MEETING: SPECIAL COUNCIL

MEETING DATE: 18 JANUARY 2024

ITEM: 7 – FLOODING IN RUTLAND

Background

Storm Henk, which hit the UK on Tuesday 2nd January 2024, saw widespread flooding across Rutland resulting in damage to homes and the closure of significant routes across the county causing disruption that lasted several days and has required a significant and on - going clean-up operation.

Unfortunately, this is not the first storm this Autumn / Winter period to have caused significant flooding resulting in damage and disruption to residents. Storm Babet (October 21st 2023), saw roads closed and homes flooded. This prompted a question from Cllr. Karen Payne at the November Council, which the Leader of the Council answered. (<https://rutlandcounty.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=145&MId=2787>).

As a Lead Flood Authority, the Council has various statutory duties to fulfil to enable an evidence based and a proactive approach to the management of risk posed by flooding.

Likewise, the elected body has various mechanisms available to it to support the work of the Council such as Scrutiny or indeed calling a Special meeting of the Council to enable transparent and public debate to support the Cabinet (Executive) in its decision-making process.

Residents across the County have expressed their concerns about the flooding with many questions asked about recent events and their management. It is clear Storm Henk has caused considerable distress for those worst affected with an understandable need to know what happens next in terms of mitigations for emergency response but most importantly for the prevention of flooding.

This issue is of such importance for residents, it warrants a Full Council meeting to enable members of the public to ask questions and share their experiences and for all non – executive elected members to debate what needs to happen in terms of tangible actions to enable any future flooding to be managed as effectively as possible, with a focus on flood prevention.

Matters for Council to consider

- 1) To establish what actions were taken after Storm Babet.
 - a. What data was collected and which agencies was it shared with? Was this compliant with the statutory function as the Local Flood Authority?
 - b. Was there a lessons learned exercise after Storm Babet? If so, what form did this take and how did this inform the response to Storm Henk?
- 2) To establish a timeline of actions taken on January 2nd including communications.
- 3) To clarify which Council processes and mechanisms are in place to support strategy development, review and management. For example, the role Scrutiny plays, noting that the original flood management strategy was considered in 2017. Comments and feedback from public consultation were fed into the final Cabinet report approved in 2018 and refreshed in 2020. Rutland's Flood Risk Management

Strategy is currently marked as draft as of October 2023:

<https://www.rutland.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/Draft%20Rutland%20Level%201%20SFRA%20October%202023.pdf>

When will this be approved?

- 4) To deepen understanding of the agencies involved in flood management and what their roles and responsibilities are:
 - a. Environment Agency
 - b. Emergency Services
 - c. Highways Authority
 - d. Local Lead Flood Authority (Flood and Water Management Act 2010)
 - e. Resilience Forum
 - f. Anglian Water
- 5) To deepen understanding of the roles and responsibilities of:
 - a. Elected Executive (Leader and Cabinet)
 - b. Elected non – executive members
 - c. RCC elected representative on the Environment Northern Region Flood Defence Committee
 - d. Parish Forum (Parish Councils / Meetings, Town Councils)
 - e. Residents
 - f. Landowners

Proposed Resolution

That Council:

- 1) Notes the report.
- 2) Requests the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee to investigate the above matters guided by Council's debate and makes recommendations to Cabinet and Council regarding the role of Council as Local Lead Flood Authority.