

Chard Flooding Update

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report is to update the Area West Committee on the contents of the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report produced by the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) at Somerset County Council (SCC) following the extreme weather event in and around Chard on 28 June 2021. The Strategic Manager at Somerset County Council has provided this report.

Public Interest

2. Flooding took place in Chard in June 2021. As a result of the flooding a Section 19 investigation commenced by the Lead Local Flood Authority.
3. A number of agencies are involved in the flood risk management in Somerset and these are listed in the Section 19 report as Appendix 5. The role and responsibility for South Somerset District Council is to assist with the planning of local flood risk management and carry out works on minor watercourses (outside of Internal Drainage Board (IDB) areas).

Recommendations

4. That the Committee note and provide comment upon the draft Section 19 investigation report into the flooding in and around the Chard area during June 2021. In particular drawing Members attention to:-
 - a. The recommendations for improving the communication flow between the public and multi-agencies in an event such as this to avoid duplication of effort as set out on page 34;
 - b. The work that is required on the culverts, gullies and other assets as set out on page 35;
 - c. The future local planning policy standards for flood risk on page 36 will need to be factored in to future Strategic Flood Risk Assessments and the Somerset-wide Local Plan and;
 - d. That South Somerset District Council will continue to provide support to the LLFA regarding on-going investigations and any associated actions not mentioned above.

5. That the public are encouraged to comment on the draft Section 19 report directly to LLFA@somerset.gov.uk by 15th July 2022.

Background

6. Flooding occurred in Chard on the 28th June 2021.
7. The Strategic Duty Officer at South Somerset District Council received the initial call and liaised with the relevant services to provide a response to the residents of Chard. Sand bags were distributed to residents where possible from the Guild Hall in Chard.
8. The function of a Section 19 report is to gather information on the happenings during a particular flood event. They are known as a Section 19 report because they are required under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.
9. The legislation says:

Section 19: Local authorities: investigations

(1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate—

- (a) which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
- (b) whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.

(2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must—

- (a) publish the results of its investigation, and
- (b) notify any relevant risk management authorities.

Section 19 Update

10. The Flooding was widespread across Chard and surrounding villages on 28 June 2021. Chard itself was extensively flooded, especially across the centre of the town, the Furnham Road area, Glynswood, and roads on the western side of the town. The flood waters were deep enough to prevent traffic moving around the town, especially in the High Street and around Furnham Road, and many houses and businesses were flooded internally. Elsewhere Forton,



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Tatworth, Wambrook and Higher Wambrook, Wadeford, Coombe St Nicholas, and Scrapton Lane were all affected by property flooding. Whitestaunton also suffered road damage, as did Scrapton lane.

11. The effect on many has been devastating. Homes and businesses have seen property damaged and belongings destroyed. Businesses have been prevented from trading and are now finding insurance hard to secure. Some people found themselves in life threatening situations or in fear of personal harm. Many were recovering when another flood incident occurred the following October (this will be covered in a separate report).
12. The overarching problem was the sheer volume of rainfall. This was well beyond what any residents of the area had seen in their lifetimes. This combined with the topography of Chard to funnel large volumes of water across Chard and down through many villages and hamlets at great speed and depth.
13. The attached report examines the response of the Risk Management Authorities and the sources and causes of the flooding, how the infrastructure coped with the exceptional volume of rainfall and provides recommendations for what can be done to reduce the effects of extremely high rainfall events in future.

Financial Implications

14. There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

Council Plan Implications

15. The report supports the Council Plan Priority 1 Environment through proposed collective actions included in the draft Section 19 report as recommendations.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

16. The draft Section 19 report aims to help improve flood resilience and reduce flood risk through the various recommendations included across multi-agencies.

Equality and Diversity Implications

17. As this report is for information and no decisions are being asked from Members an equality impact assessment is not required.

Background Papers

18. Section 19 Investigation Report.