

## **Iminster Flooding Update**

Strategic Director:	Nicola Hix, Support, Strategy & Environmental Services
Assistant Director:	James Divall, Support, Strategy & Environmental Services
Service Manager:	Jess Power, Lead Specialist Strategic Planning
Contact Details:	jessica.power@southsomerset.gov.uk or 01935 462300
Lead Local Flooding Authority Contact:	Jon Doyle, Strategic Manager – Somerset County Council jydoyle@somerset.gov.uk

## **Purpose of the Report**

1. This report is to update the Area West Committee on the contents of the **draft** 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 Iminster on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The Strategic Manager at Somerset County Council has provided this report.
2. The provision of this report to this Committee is part of the consultation process to ensure the accuracy of the contents and to provide feedback upon the Recommendations contained therein.

## **Public Interest**

3. Flooding took place in Iminster in October 2021. As a result of the flooding a Section 19 investigation commenced by the Lead Local Flood Authority.
4. A number of agencies are involved in the flood risk management in Somerset and these are listed in the Section 19 report as the Risk Management Authority Responsibilities. 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**

5. That the Committee note and provide comment upon the **draft** Section 19 investigation report into the flooding in and around the Iminster area during October 2021. In particular drawing Members attention to:-
  - a. The recommendations as set out on page 47; and
  - b. That South Somerset District Council will continue to provide support to the LLFA regarding on-going investigations and any associated actions not mentioned above.
6. That the public are encouraged to comment on the draft Section 19 report directly to LLFA@somerset.gov.uk by Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2022.

## Background

7. Flooding occurred in Ilminster on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
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. Severe flooding took place in Ilminster and Sea on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2021. High rainfall on the back of previous wet weather created high river flows and overland surface water flows in the area.
11. The effect on many has been devastating. Homes and businesses have seen property damaged and belongings destroyed. The residential park home developments on the west of town were particularly hard hit. Residents, many elderly, had to be evacuated, and some have lost everything. Some people found themselves in life threatening situations or in fear of personal harm.
12. The overarching problem was a combination of the very high rainfall and the already wet ground conditions following recent rain in the preceding period, making October a very wet month overall. This is combined with a relatively impermeable underlying geology and soils, which would have had very little moisture deficit to absorb more rain. Hence the Isle experienced it's highest water level in 30 years gauge history.



13. The resultant flooding was well beyond what any residents of the area had seen in their lifetimes and flows on the river Isle were the highest recorded. This created two issues – the Isle coming out of its bank and flooding areas to the west of town, and rainwater accumulating in North Street, Ditton Street and Shudrick Lane.
14. This report examines how the infrastructure and stakeholders coped with this very high volume of rainfall, examines the response of the Risk Management Authorities, the sources and causes of the flooding and provides recommendations for what can be done to reduce the effects of extremely high rainfall events in future

### **Financial Implications**

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

### **Council Plan Implications**

16. 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**

17. 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**

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

### **Background Papers**

19. Section 19 Investigation Report.