

Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

Members of the Scrutiny Committee:

Cllr G Minshull (Chairman)
Cllr B Bernard
Cllr J Hornby
Cllr R Savage
Cllr J Wilby

Cllr V Clifford-Jackson (Vice Chairman)
Cllr B Duffin
Cllr J Rowe
Cllr T Spruce

Date & Time:

Wednesday 27 January 2021
9.30am

Place:

To be hosted remotely at: South Norfolk House, Cygnet Court, Long Stratton, Norwich, NR15 2XE

Contact:

Jessica Hammond tel (01508) 533706
Email: democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk
Website: www.south-norfolk.gov.uk

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE:

This meeting will be live streamed for public viewing via the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRImsTCIng>

If a member of the public would like to attend to speak on an agenda item, please email your request to democracy@s-norfolk.gov.uk, no later than 5.00pm on Monday 25 January 2021.

Large print version can be made available

If you have any special requirements in order to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance.

AGENDA

1. To report apologies for absence and to identify substitute members;
2. Any items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act, 1972. Urgent business may only be taken if, “by reason of special circumstances” (which will be recorded in the minutes), the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered as a matter of urgency;
3. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members;
(Please see guidance form and flow chart attached – page 4)
4. Minutes from the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 21 December 2020;
(attached at page 6)
5. Briefing report on recent flooding in South Norfolk;
(report attached – page 10)
6. Scrutiny Work Programme, Tracker and Cabinet Core Agenda;
(attached – page 21)

Working Style of the Scrutiny Committee and a protocol for those attending

Independence

Members of the Scrutiny Committee will not be subject to whipping arrangements by party groups.

Member leadership

Members of the Committee will take the lead in selecting topics for and in questioning witnesses. The Committee will expect members of Cabinet, rather than officers, to take the main responsibility for answering the Committee's questions about topics, which relate mainly to the Council's activities.

A constructive atmosphere

Meetings of the Committee will be constructive, and not judgmental, accepting that effective overview and scrutiny is best achieved through challenging and constructive enquiry. People giving evidence at the Committee should not feel under attack.

Respect and trust

Meetings will be conducted in a spirit of mutual respect and trust.

Openness and transparency

The Committee's business will be open and transparent, except where there are sound reasons for protecting confidentiality. In particular, the minutes of the Committee's meetings will explain the discussion and debate, so that it could be understood by those who were not present.

Consensus

Members of the Committee will work together and, while recognising political allegiances, will attempt to achieve consensus and agreed recommendations.

Impartial and independent officer advice

Officers who advise and support the Committee will give impartial and independent advice, recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Committee in the Council's arrangements for governance, as set out in the Constitution.

Regular review

There will be regular reviews of how the overview and scrutiny process is working, and a willingness to change if it is not working well.

Programming and planning

The Scrutiny Committee will have a programme of work. Members will agree the topics to be included in the work programme, the extent of the investigation to be undertaken in relation to resources, and the witnesses to be invited to give evidence.

Managing time

The Committee will attempt to conclude the business of each meeting in reasonable time. The order of business will be arranged as far as possible to minimise the demands on the time of witnesses.

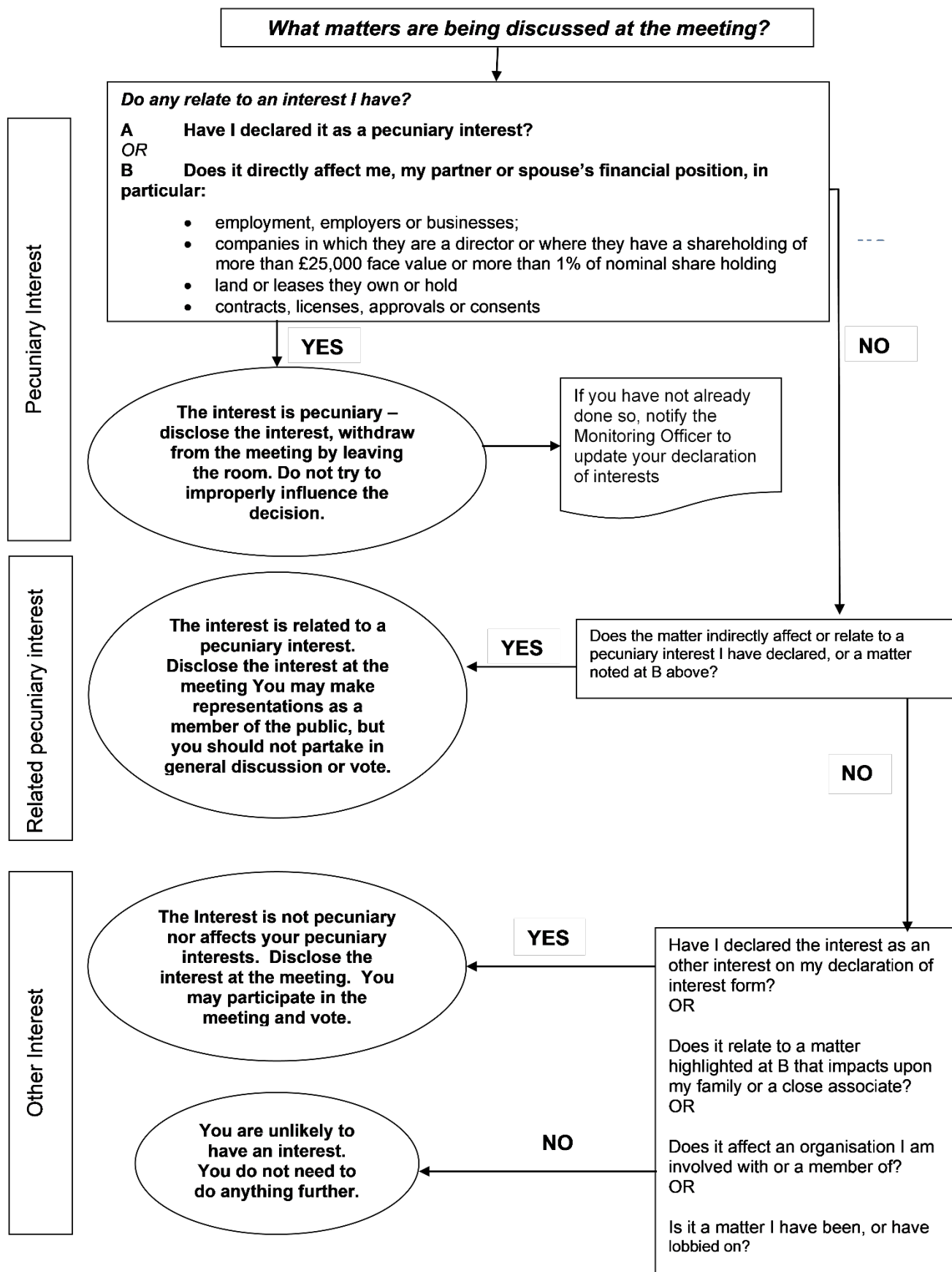
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AT MEETINGS

When declaring an interest at a meeting Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest. Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting. Members are also requested when appropriate to make any declarations under the Code of Practice on Planning and Judicial matters.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.
Does the interest directly: 1. affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position? 2. relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner? 3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council 4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own 5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary. Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.
Does the interest indirectly affect or relate any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above? If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but you should not partake in general discussion or vote.
Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be an other interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.
Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting, and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

**FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF.
PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST
INSTANCE**

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



Agenda Item: 4

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a remote meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council held on Monday 21 December 2020 at 9.30am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: G Minshull (Chairman), B Bernard, V Clifford-Jackson, B Duffin, J Hornby, J Rowe, R Savage, T Spruce and J Wilby

Cabinet Member Present: Councillor: Y Bendle

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor: D Bills, J Easter and T Laidlaw

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Resources (D Lorimer), the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families, (M Pursehouse), the Communities Senior Manager (K Gallagher) and the Senior Governance Officer (E Goddard)

1275 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 9 September 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

1276 MEMBER LED FUNDING

The Cabinet Member, Cllr Y Bendle, introduced the report which reviewed the operation of the member-led grant scheme, the spend from the member-led funding stream in accordance with the ground rules, and provided an update on the spend to date. Cllr Bendle explained that she welcomed any suggestions on how the scheme could work going forward.

The Communities Senior Manager highlighted the key considerations arising from her report and referred to statistics on the percentage of the funds spent, and the decision to extend the current year's member grant funding until 31 March 2021 and to roll over all underspend into the next financial year, in light of Covid-19. She also advised Members on the future plans for improving the website and online application form.

In response to figures showing the percentage of funding members had spent, one Member suggested that the overall percentage be reported on all Full Council meeting agendas, as a way of motivation, without shaming individual members. This was supported by the Committee and officers agreed to consider this further.

Some concern was expressed over whether those members not spending their available budgets, was an indication of a lack of connection with their local communities, and the Committee queried whether it was the same members failing to spend their funding each year. Officers explained that different members each year were failing to spend their funding allocation and that there were several different reasons for this; this required further investigation so that appropriate support could be provided by officers.

In response to a request for examples of how the scheme could help to reduce the demand on current or future services, the Communities Senior Manager advised Members of the Wymondham Community Kitchen, which had previously received funding through the scheme. She explained that the Kitchen helped families and individuals to receive food packages, help and advice, reducing the demand on the Council's own Help Hub service. She also advised Members that many of the community groups previously funded had provided group activities or sport, and that these had long-term impacts on physical wellbeing as well as reducing loneliness and isolation.

One Member queried whether, given the Covid-19 pandemic, additional funding could have been provided to Wymondham Community Kitchen, in addition to that already provided which had contributed to the costs of a van. The Communities Senior Manager advised members that, in accordance with the ground rules, the funding could only contribute towards specific projects, and not 'running costs'. She then highlighted the recent additional support provided to the Community Kitchen during the pandemic, which included the seconding of the Council's leisure centre staff, when its own volunteers needed to shield or self-isolate.

During the discussion, the Communities Senior Manager reminded Members of the Baby Bank Community Group, which had previously received funding through the scheme to offer advice and support to young families. Members noted that this was now a County-wide group offering an important service. The Communities Senior Manager added that this was an example of how a small amount of funding, along with member and officer guidance, could go a long way.

In response to a request to clarify the grant rule which stated "*the activity being funded: has not received funding over the past 2 years*" the Communities Senior Manager clarified that a community group could not

receive funding **for the same project** within the same two financial years; this included the year the funding was awarded and the following one.

Members questioned whether member discretion could be considered around the grant rule which stated that *“funding must not replace funding previously provided by other statutory agencies such as the County Council”* as there was a number of groups in the District such as the fire or police cadets which had received government funding, but required additional support. The Communities Senior Manager advised Members to seek advice from officers in such cases, as the way other organisations were funded was constantly changing. She agreed that such matters required further consideration for the future. The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families also agreed that this area required further thought, and stressed the importance of considering why a statutory body, such as the County Council, had chosen not to continue funding a particular group, and whether the group would continue to have the support of the local community going forward.

In response to a query regarding unspent funding at the end of the year, the Communities Senior Manager informed members that if the underspend was less than £10,000 it would be rolled into the next year's available funding, however, if the underspend was over £10,000 then the money would be transferred into the Community Action Fund to be spent. Cllr Y Bendle also reminded Members that for the current year only, in response to Covid-19, all the underspend would be rolled into the next financial year, regardless of the amount.

One Member queried whether it was possible for members who had spent their funding to put forward groups/projects for other members to fund, as this would reduce the time the group had to wait for funding. The Communities Senior Manager advised that members' funding should support projects benefiting residents of their own wards. She suggested that any departure from this would need to be looked at on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to whether there was more than one member in that ward, or whether the project would benefit residents across the District. She referred to the recent funding of the Wheelchair Rugby Group, which as the only group of that type in the District, would benefit residents across the whole of South Norfolk.

During a discussion regarding parish councils, clarification was sought regarding which projects should be funded by the parishes, and which projects were more appropriate to receive District funding. The Communities Senior Manager advised that this needed to be considered on a case by case basis and that there were no hard and fast rules regarding what a parish should or should not spend its money on. She drew attention to the fact that during the last review of the ground rules, members were clear that the District Council should be stringent to not “double fund” projects where a parish

council was also providing funding. A suggestion was then made that in future, the scheme could support the match funding of contributions made by parish councils.

It was suggested that members would benefit from additional training throughout their term in office on the type of groups and projects their funding could be spent on. The Communities Senior Manager invited members to contact her for one-to-one training on member funding specific to their ward area.

The Committee expressed its support and approval of the member led funding scheme and it was,

RESOLVED

That

1. Members funding has been spent in accordance with the ground rules.
2. The scheme has been shown to have a positive impact on the local community and is reducing the demand on Council services as outlined by the examples given.

1277 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET CORE AGENDA

The Committee noted the Work Programme and Cabinet Core Agenda.

The Chairman confirmed to Members that a report considering the ground rules of Member led funding would be brought to the Scrutiny Committee in the new year.

(The meeting concluded at 10.39AM)

Chairman

BRIEFING REPORT ON RECENT FLOODING IN SOUTH NORFOLK

Report Author(s): Nick Howard
Assistant Director Regulatory
01508 533787
nhoward@s-norfolk.gov.uk

Portfolio: Leader and External Affairs

Ward(s) Affected: All wards

Purpose of the Report:

Cabinet on 11th January 2021 requested that the Scrutiny Committee consider the recent flooding across the District during the end of December 2020. This report offers background and briefing information to assist the Committee's initial considerations into recent flooding due to heavy rainfall, whilst an investigation is underway by the County Council acting as lead local flood authority.

Recommendations:

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To consider what further scrutiny input is required and make any recommendations as appropriate.

1. Summary

- 1.1 On 11th January 2021 Cabinet met and considered the recent flooding incidents as an urgent item. Cabinet requested that Scrutiny Committee consider the recent flooding in the context of what happened and possible reasons why, and also outline which bodies are responsible in this regard. The flooding during the Christmas period followed a heavy rainfall weather incident in December 2020 and corresponding surface water flooding which led to some river flooding. This report offers some structured initial briefing to assist the Committee. It focusses primarily on flash flooding because that caused the majority of adverse impacts during and following the rainfall incident.
- 1.2 South Norfolk witnessed flooded roads and property in December 2020. There was a high volume of calls for assistance, particularly in the supply of sandbags. Temporary accommodation was provided in some of the cases where homes were flooded. The ground remains saturated and there are elevated levels of groundwater in many places. This creates some a short-term residual surface water vulnerability to further rainfall or meltwater.
- 1.3 Whilst the facts of flooding locations and impacts are still emerging, verbal briefing to support this report will summarise the latest position as known by officers of South Norfolk Council. Norfolk County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is investigating formally what happened in the flooding incidents that our communities experienced. Their report will be published once completed but probably not until some months from now.

2. Background

- 2.1 A briefing note on flash flooding is provided in Appendix 1 to assist the committee.
- 2.2 The Land Drainage Act 1991 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 provide a system of statutory responsibilities and powers to local agencies. River catchments are managed by the Environment Agency. The system of watercourses feeding directly into rivers is managed by Internal Drainage Boards, which are responsible for about 22% of South Norfolk's watercourses including some land drains. Everywhere else, land drainage is the responsibility of riparian landowners. District councils have a discretionary power to carry out works to land drains only with the permission of riparian owners, and cannot recover the costs of doing so.
- 2.3 Surface water drainage systems involve complex networks of run-off and capture systems, pipes, drains and outfalls – some dating from Victorian times. These loose interconnecting arrangements were rarely designed to cope with the most exceptional rainfall events. Over the years, drainage infrastructure improvements will have been made locally. Some changes have been made to accommodate or compensate for individual new developments. The growth in the built environment and hard-surfaced areas has caused substantial increases in surface water drainage quantities needing to be managed.

- 2.4 The legal classifications of individual watercourses including some land drains have also reviewed periodically and, in some cases, upgraded or downgraded. This has had a bearing on applicable controls and responsibilities.
- 2.5 South Norfolk, like many areas of the country, is prone to river flooding in low-lying areas. Equally, the district is prone to flash flooding following exceptionally heavy rainfall which happens on occasion. A range of flood prevention and protection measures have been taken over the years, often practical measures responding to previous incidents and known vulnerabilities. The council's Environmental Quality team maintains maps of known surface water and river flooding incidents. This historical knowledge provides a valuable knowledgebase and forms the basis for consultation advice to inform planning decisions on proposed new developments.
- 2.6 South Norfolk Council has an emergency plan in place and its mechanisms were implemented during severe weather and flooding incidents in late December when the emergency planning team formed a key part of the council's response. The council has facilitated a range of local community emergency plans and some local representatives were active during the December incidents. The council operates to a tried and tested countywide emergency Multi-Agency Flood Plan.
- 2.7 In an area from south west England to Norfolk, significant flash flooding on 23rd December 2020 caused flooding. There were hundreds of emergency service calls in Norfolk. In South Norfolk, significant flash flooding in particular caused some serious property impacts. There was a high demand for assistance, particularly in the supply of sandbags, and temporary accommodation was provided in some cases where homes were flooded.

3. Current position/findings

- 3.1 Members of the Committee will be well aware of recent rainfall and flooding incidents. It may be helpful to have a common shared summary to assist the Committee's considerations.
- a) Intense local rainfall on 23rd December 2020 persisted for some hours, producing high totals across wide Norfolk. This led to hundreds of surface water flash flooding incidents simultaneously at one point for the Fire & Rescue emergency service.
 - b) Whilst many places saw local accumulations and minor impacts, at Long Stratton the rainfall total reached around 60mm and caused a serious incident. The A140 in the village centre was impassable to most vehicles for a time. A number of businesses were affected, several seriously so - water damage, stock loss and likely month-long closures. Small numbers of homes, notably in Long Stratton but also in several other locations, required self-evacuation or assisted evacuation on the night of 23rd – 24th December.
 - c) Various other locations were subject to reports of localised surface water accumulation with a potential to threaten property.

- d) Immediately during and after the rainfall on 23rd December there were isolated reports of people stranded in cars and Ambulance service responses to deal with mild hypothermia. There was a wider issue of cars being abandoned overnight on highways.
 - e) Emergency services, council staff and 4X4 volunteers worked long and hard to support local communities with coordinated help late on 23rd December through 24th December and into 25th December.
 - f) On 24th December, the Environment Agency issued flood alerts and warnings for various locations in South Norfolk due to a high volume of surface water leading to swollen rivers. The River Waveney was one subject to flood warnings. Contact received from Police advised of householders at Ditchingham Dam who were reporting water levels rising and concern about an imminent risk. At the same time, a key road near Diss was flooded and a low-lying care home also near Diss was reporting serious concern about rising water levels. Sandbags were supplied as an emergency measure to both locations on 24th-25th December.
 - g) On 26th December the Environment Agency advised of a tidal lock giving rise to fresh flood warnings for the lower River Waveney and the River Yare. Fortunately, South Norfolk residents and businesses appear to have escaped significant impacts and the tidal lock eased several days later.
- 3.2 Norfolk County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is investigating what happened in the flooding incidents our communities experienced. The LLFA's investigation and preparation of a report of findings, including attempts to identify the causes and lessons that can be learned, will likely take many weeks or months to complete. These findings will be presented to Norfolk County Council's members in due course.
- 3.3 Meanwhile, Scrutiny Committee is offered in the present report some background briefing and an outline of responsibilities and functions for flooding, enabling it to open its focus on flooding. A list of flooding locations, impacts and identified vulnerabilities is being compiled by officers for South Norfolk Council in consultation with the Local Lead Flood Authority.
- 3.4 Officers are still dealing with the surface water impacts of the recent incident in some places. They are providing advice and support to many enquiring residents and businesses who were affected or are concerned. The facts as to who was affected, where, and with what severity are still emerging. This is quite normal after such a widespread high rainfall incident.
- 3.5 The Council's emergency response and recovery work dealing with the recent incident will each be subject to a structured debrief. It is too early at this stage to pre-empt those. Two early learning points, however, can be noted:
- a) Over 150 emergency calls were received over 23rd - 28th December, many asking for sandbags. This was despite the council's policy to place its entire stock on sandbags at local self-serve collection points. The Council does not

have a logistical supply chain to meet out-of-hours emergency demand for sandbags. Emergency calls for sandbags were difficult to deal with.

- b) The Council's emergency call routing and staffing needs to be made more sustainable. This was a serious concern over the Christmas period and links with a lack of provision for out-of-hours emergency incident coordination.

4. Proposed action

- 4.1 An update on the emerging impacts caused by the incident and a further report will be provided.

5. Other options

- 5.1 No proposals or options are presented in this briefing report.

6. Issues and risks

- 6.1 This report offers background and context to support Scrutiny Committee's initial considerations. Subject to the scoping of this scrutiny focus, specific issues and risks concerning flooding, emergency planning and the impacts of the recent flooding incidents will be identified for consideration.
- 6.2 **Resource Implications** – this briefing report does not make any proposals or detail any issues or risks with specific resource implications.
- 6.3 **Legal Implications** – this briefing report does not make any proposals or detail any issues or risks with specific legal implications.
- 6.4 **Equality Implications** – this briefing report does not make any proposals raising equality implications.
- 6.5 **Environmental Impact** – this briefing report addresses environmental considerations but does not contain any proposals.
- 6.6 **Crime and Disorder** – no specific crime and disorder implications have been identified.
- 6.7 **Risks** – this briefing report does not in itself give rise to any specific risks. It should be noted that Scrutiny Committee may, if they identify any personal details and circumstances, including individual properties, have GDPR implications.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 That this report and the accompanying verbal briefing be noted.

8. Recommendations

For Scrutiny Committee to:

- 8.1 Note the contents of the report.
- 8.2 Consider what further scrutiny input is required and make any recommendations as appropriate.

Severe weather leading to flash flooding

A briefing note for elected members

This briefing note:

- offers some context for local flash flooding risks and impacts
- outlines the roles of the key agencies with responsibilities for flood prevention and protection (please note that South Norfolk Council is not one of them)
- lists this council's responsibilities and what we can do to assist others to cater for flash flooding
- does not deal with river and tidal flooding, which is covered elsewhere.

Ready-reference guides are attached summarising 'who does what' in relation to flooding and published contact numbers for each agency.

Introduction

Most of the U.K.'s surface and land drainage infrastructure is designed to accommodate commonly experienced levels of received water. There are relatively few oversized storm drainage systems that could deal with exceptionally intense rainfall occurring in a short time. More modern drainage system installations tend to offer increased capacity and we are encouraging this wherever we can. However, the UK has a legacy of drainage infrastructure that cannot prevent flash flooding. It is also an uncomfortable fact of life that in extreme rainfall any drainage system is likely to be overwhelmed.

Severe weather in the form of substantial rainfall or snowfall has the potential to cause flash flooding almost anywhere in the district, just like any other part of the country.

Rainfall or meltwater from snow will, when it exceeds local surface water drainage capacity, produce surface accumulations on roads and public/private land. Surface water drainage systems may be overwhelmed at some locations that are foreseeable (based on experience) and some that are unexpected. Surface run-off from open land, hard surfaced or compacted ground has a high potential to impact on lower lying land. Roads are often see the first flash flooding but impacts on property and occupants can be expected, even where not low-lying or sloping land.

It is important to emphasise that the primary responsibility for preparing for and dealing with risks and impacts of flooding rest with land and property owners / occupiers. This is readily understandable by most people located in areas of widely recognised flood risk, and a great deal of effort goes into informing and advising them. It can be much more challenging to explain in the event of flash flooding, for which many people fail to prepare even when, for example, land slows down towards their property.

Weather and flooding forecast and warnings

Weather warnings are issued by the Met Office and monitored by the council's emergency planning officer.

A yellow weather warning, the lowest level, may indicate a low likelihood of either low or medium impacts. It is not uncommon for surface water ponding to happen under conditions covered by a yellow weather warning. Due to the limitations of weather forecasting, occasionally under a yellow weather warning there may be local flash flooding.

An amber or red weather warning will less frequently be issued in relation to rainfall or snowfall and will generally indicate larger scale or more serious impact.

Flood alerts and warnings are issued by the Environment Agency. These may coincide with weather warnings from the Met office although more commonly they are issued subsequently once levels of rainfall or snowfall meltwater that are likely to exceed drainage capacity become quantifiable.

The east of England tends to be the driest part of the country on average and we tend to experience relatively few rainfall-related weather or flood warnings.

Flash flooding in our locality

Norfolk has witnessed various flash flooding incidents over recent years and, as in many other parts of the U.K., they appear to be happening with increasing frequency and severity.

South Norfolk is no stranger to experiencing flash flooding and the lead local flood authority has carried out a number of post-incident investigations as part of its duties under the Land Drainage Act 2010.

Flooding lead agencies and their respective roles

These are the primary flooding lead roles:

- *The Environment Agency* – responsible for flood warning and informing, managing flood risks and impacts arising in main rivers, maintaining associated flood defence and alleviation measures.
- *Internal drainage boards* – oversees the riparian maintenance of land drainage / watercourses feeding into main rivers (covering just over 20% of land drainage areas in South Norfolk District).
- *Norfolk County Council as the lead local flood authority* – responsible for regulating the maintenance and enforcement of riparian land drainage responsibilities in all other locations. Statutory consultee on major planning applications.
- *Norfolk County Council as the highways authority* – maintaining highway drainage and responding to flooding of roads under county council control

- *Anglian Water* – responsible for managing, maintaining and improving public drainage systems and regulating private sewers. Dealing with impacts arising from systems under their management.

Emergency planning and flash flooding

Emergency planning specifically concerning flooding falls primarily to Norfolk County Council, which maintains the Flood Plan, and to the countywide Norfolk Resilience Forum of which South Norfolk Council is a member. The resilience forum maintains joint plans and guidance. The district council maintains a district emergency plan and good district-level local knowledge about a range of foreseeable threats of emergency incidents including flooding.

Our regular council services cater for a range of incident scenarios in accordance with the council's policies and resources. The council's emergency plan then sets out our local arrangements for dealing with a major emergency incident. Please note that where and when flash flooding might happen can be highly unpredictable. It can also be widespread. There is limited scope for emergency planning on flash flooding specifically, which would be addressed in line with activation of the council's emergency plan to deal with a formally declared major incident.

Responsibilities of this South Norfolk Council connected with flooding

Given the lead roles and responsibilities rest with other organisations as outlined above, this council's responsibilities are:

1. Maintaining local planning policies and dealing with new development proposals, considering flooding risks and including appropriate controls in planning and building control permissions under the district council's control (subject to limitations of the planning and building control regulatory systems). For further information contact the Planning service.
2. Offering flooding advice routinely to our residents and businesses (daytime service in office hours). For further information contact the Environmental Protection team.
3. Providing and replenishing sandbag stocks at pre-arranged locations for self-service use by residents (daytime service in office hours). The details of these locations are published on the council's website.
4. Providing help and support to vulnerable people within the remit of our discretionary Help Hub services (during Help Hub opening hours). For further information contact the Help Hub team.
5. Meeting local people's unmet needs for temporary accommodation in certain circumstances (at any time, including a limited emergency accommodation response outside office hours). For further information contact the Housing Options team.

6. Emergency planning and business continuity planning as a primary agency under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This includes working with local flood forums and with local people to establish local community emergency plans, often in association with parish councils. These are daytime services in office hours. For further information contact the council's emergency planning officer.
7. Providing the council's services, pre-agreed resources and knowledge as appropriate to assist emergency responses, as a Category 1 Responder organisation. The council's emergency planning officer and other relevant officers have endeavoured to support major incidents outside office hours. Whilst fortunately these are not frequent, it should be noted that the council does not offer any guaranteed emergency incident response outside daytime working hours in relation to flooding except for meeting any qualifying needs for emergency temporary accommodation.

A cautionary note about sandbags

Substantial numbers of sandbag requests were received by the council in December 2020 during flash flooding in South Norfolk. This contrasts with little or no expectation being reported in numbers of enquiries to other district councils in Norfolk.

Sandbags are a poor substitute for taking proactive preventative measures such as:

- inspecting and maintaining drains and ditches in good free-flowing condition
- anticipating potential run-off from roads etc. onto downward sloping driveways and gardens, and putting measures in to divert any water away from buildings
- installing flood gates and airbrick protection from water ingress, which can be fitted and removed in seconds.

As mentioned previously, occupants of local property known to be at highest risk of flooding have been the subject of advice, warnings and offers of assistance over a long period of time to minimise flooding risks and impacts, and to promote self-reliance.

Sandbags are of limited, short-term use. When exposed to sunlight or water they deteriorate in a matter of weeks and they are difficult to dispose of as waste. There are better, more environmentally friendly alternatives such as lightweight flood sacks that people can purchase online at low cost.

Despite all this, when heavy rain is falling or an imminent threat of local flooding is expected there can be a high public demand for Sandbags. In flash flooding events this demand can arise at any time and be quite widespread. The council has no formal role and very limited resources, including no planned capability or out-of-hours service, to deliver sandbags to individual properties on request. Instead, the council's policy is to provide and replenish limited stocks of sandbags at pre-arranged locations for self-service use by residents. Stock re-ordering is done by daytime services during office hours.

Where sandbags have been delivered in rare and extreme cases this has tended to involve unpaid volunteers who can neither be expected to do so in future incidents nor coordinated by council services.

End.

CABINET CORE AGENDA 2021

Date	Key	Title of Report	Responsible Officer	Portfolio Holder	Exempt?
8 Feb	N	Revenue Budget 21/22, Capital Budget 21/22, Treasury Management Strategy 21/22	Rodney Fincham	Josh Worley	N
	Y	Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/2022	Richard Dunsire/ Louise Tiernan	Josh Worley	N
	N	Delivery Plan	Sinead Carey	John Fuller	N
	Y	Greater Norwich 5-Year Infrastructure Investment Plan and Annual Growth Programme 2021/22	Paul Harris	John Fuller	N
	Y	Norfolk Strategic Fund	Tig Armstrong	John Fuller	Y
	N	Building Lease Proposal	Tig Armstrong	Lisa Neal	Y
	N	Leisure Pricing Review	Simon Phelan	Alison Thomas	Y
	Y	Contract for the IT Infrastructure to Support the One Network	Debbie Lorimer	Josh Worley	Y
	Y	Poringland Neighbourhood Plan	Richard Squires	Lisa Neal	N
Council Meeting 24 February 2020					
15 Mar	N	Q3 Strategic Performance/Finance and Risks	Mel Wiles/ Sinead Carey	Josh Worley	N
	K	Review of Bawburgh Temporary Stopping Place for Gypsies and Travellers	Kevin Philcox/ Leigh Booth	Yvonne Bendle	N
	N	Procurement Options	Rodney Fincham	Josh Worley	N
	N	Council Tax Support – COVID Hardship Fund	Richard Dunsire/ Lindsay Sayer	Josh Worley	N
	K	Review of SNC NDR Discretionary Relief Policy	Simon Quilter	Josh Worley	N
	K	Long Stratton Neighbourhood Plan	Richard Squires	Lisa Neal	N
	N	Eligibility for Affordable Home Ownership	Keith Mitchell/ K Oglieve-Chan	Yvonne Bendle	N
19 Apr					
Council AGM 17 May 2020					

Key decisions are those which result in income, expenditure or savings with a gross full year effect of £100,000 or 10% of the Council's net portfolio budget whichever is the greater which has not been included in the relevant portfolio budget, or are significant (e.g. in environmental, physical, social or economic) in terms of its effect on the communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the area of the local authority.