

Report of:	Meeting	Date	Item no.
Cllr Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder and Corporate Director of People and Places, Michael Ryan	Council	21 January 2016	9

Floods in East Wyre

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide information on the impact of the recent flooding in parts of Wyre and the actions taken by the Council.

2. December Flooding Events

- 2.1 On the evening of Saturday 5 December the River Wyre and River Brock rose to extremely high levels following a period of intense rainfall. Both Catterall and Garstang flood basins were opened. Rainfall over the December period has been the wettest on record with 2015 being the warmest on record, levels of over 100mm were noted within the catchment on the 5 December.
<http://blog.metoffice.gov.uk/2015/12/>
- 2.2 A Flood Advisory Service teleconference was called for 0630 and 0900 on Saturday 5 December, the severe weather officer dialled in. Concerns were initially raised around the upper catchment with a flood warning being issued at 1138 for the River Wyre at Six Arches Lane Scorton. Contact was made with the caravan site at this location where their emergency response plan was deployed. Further flood warnings followed between 1536 and 1723 for Garstang, Bonds, Tarnacre, Churchtown and St Michael's South. A Strategic Command Group meeting was called at Hutton for 1700 and the Chief Exec attended; the main concern at this stage was thought to be Cumbria.
- 2.3 The severe weather officer mobilised the emergency response team on receipt of the flood warning at Garstang. Operatives were employed filling sandbags which were deployed in accordance with the plan to Garstang, sandbags were also delivered to the Grapes Hotel, St Michael's.

2.4 A call was received from the Cornmill Nursing Home and notification was received that vulnerable people housed within the Moorings Garstang were being evacuated. The emergency response team deployed to the nursing home with pumps and sandbags and through their actions severe flooding to the nursing home was prevented and the requirement to move over 40 residents by ambulance to the rest centre was avoided.

The team worked until 03:45 on Sunday morning.

2.5 Further teams were deployed on Sunday morning to restock sandbag stocks and provide flood assistance where required. At 13:52 on the Sunday a flood warning was received for St Michael's South identifying a breach in the River Brock defences at Hall Lane causing flooding to properties.

2.6 At 1653 a severe flood warning was issued at St Michael's South triggering the opening of the Garstang Leisure centre as a rest centre for evacuated people. The police and fire brigade subsequently advised 48 properties at risk to evacuate their properties. Only one family chose to evacuate to the rest centre and subsequently stayed with relations.

2.7 Pumps were subsequently deployed by the Environment Agency to St Michael's to assist in draining flood water from properties and allowing a safe route to effect a temporary repair on the breach. The A586 was severely flooded preventing access to St Michaels by this route and remained closed until 1650 on 15 December. The Council cleared 20 tonnes of material over 3 days as part of the recovery process.

2.8 Wyre teams assisted partners by the provision of sandbags until 2200 when the rest centre closed and the team were stood down.

2.9 The Environment Agency instigated temporary repairs to the breach which were completed by Friday 11 December. Assistance was provided throughout by the army. The EA also deployed large pumps and officers drawn from around the country and continued pumping throughout the period until 15 December. Wyre officers continued to assist partners and residents during this period.

2.10 Due to the rising flood waters around the electricity north west sub-station at the rear of St Michaels village hall over 120 properties were disconnected on 8 December and remained without power until the afternoon of the 10 December.

2.11 The council deployed the Information bus to the Grapes car park St Michaels on Monday 7 December, the I bus and the Grapes (the landlord of the Grapes should be commended for his generosity throughout the event) were to become the main focal points for community liaison throughout the event and were essential to disseminate information, acting as a single point of contact for the affected community and providing early resolution of issues faced.

- 2.12** A community meeting was arranged by the police for the evening of 10 December which was attended by the Head of Engineering and Cllr Susan Pimbley. The meeting clearly demonstrated that the partner organisations and the council were working together cohesively and that future actions would be taken jointly between the Environment Agency and the council to build resilience within the community. At the same time positive action would be taken to reduce flood risk in the short term through the reinstatement of the bank by March with a longer term vision to look at the whole land drainage system in the area. It was pleasing to see the close working relationships engendered through working together in partnership and through the Wyre Flood forum, the Making Space for Water Group together with the emergency planning groups allowed this cohesion of action.
- 2.13** Following periods of moderately heavy rainfall on Thursday 10 and Saturday 12 December further severe flood warnings were issued by the Environment Agency following concerns over the stability of the temporary embankment. These concerns continued throughout the Christmas period with officers being employed through Christmas day and Boxing day following further periods of heavy rainfall and concerns about significant overtopping of the River Brock.
- 2.14** On the 13 December the emergency phase of the operation moved from response to recovery phase with responsibility officially passing to the County and Districts. The council's recovery efforts included assistance with clearing flood damaged properties, help with pumping out water, ensuring payments were made to flood victims and identifying and assisting vulnerable people. This process is ongoing. In total 68 properties were flooded internally during the event and 17 businesses were significantly affected. Further assistance being offered to these properties includes the offer of resilience grants of up to £5,000.
- 2.15** Officers removed 55 tonnes of flood damaged foods from 41 properties. This included the entire contents of 3 bungalows. Over 8 tonnes of damaged animal feed was sent for green recycling. Staff worked in a stressful environment particularly the small number of instances where people had no insurance cover, and those cases where residents personal effects were put into the back of a bin wagon for disposal.
- 2.16** Officers are currently working to identify and assist a number of businesses in St Michaels, Churchtown, Garstang and other outlying rural areas to access emergency government funding following the flooding. It is also intended to mount a sustained publicity campaign on local radio networks and via press releases to encourage customers to return to businesses in these areas.
- 2.17** May I at this time thank our partners in particular the police and fire and rescue service for their professionalism and rapid response throughout the incident. I would also like to thank the Environment Agency and army for their resolve in tackling the breach repairs day and night in terrible conditions. Finally I would like to thank all the officers who assisted and continue to assist residents in these difficult times who worked through the night throughout December to ensure the right actions were taken to safeguard our communities.

Financial and legal implications	
Finance	None arising directly from this report.
Legal	None arising directly from this report.

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

risks/implications	✓ / x
community safety	x
equality and diversity	x
sustainability	x
health and safety	x

risks/implications	✓ / x
asset management	x
climate change	x
data protection	x

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List of background papers:		
name of document	date	where available for inspection
None	-	-

List of appendices

None

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