

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 1 MARCH 2016**

**WEATHER AND FLOODING EVENTS, DECEMBER 2015 AND JANUARY 2016**

**REPORT BY HEAD OF TECHNICAL AND PROPERTY SERVICES**

**ABSTRACT**

This report informs the Committee of the weather and flooding events in Angus during December 2015 to January 2016 and the consequential impact on services and finance.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Notes the events and actions;
- (ii) Notes the on-going consequential impact and workload;
- (iii) Agrees to apply for funding under the Bellwin Scheme and from Scottish Government's additional allocation for flooding;
- (iv) Notes the position regarding the grants for residents and businesses impacted by flooding.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our communities are prosperous and fair
- Our communities are safe and strong
- Our communities are sustainable

**3. BACKGROUND**

During December 2015, relentless heavy rainfall impacted on Angus, the worst of which was experienced on 30 December 2015 as part of Storm Frank, 4 January 2016 and 7 January 2016. The rainfall created significant issues over a number of weeks, with saturated ground, surface water flooding and rivers reacting to the volume of water.

During this period of significant disruption, the Met Office and SEPA issued regular alerts and warnings, updated warnings and participated in teleconferences to give the most up to date picture. This information was integral and vital to the decision making process within the Council and to that of partners.

The response to the impact of flooding was a multidisciplinary team led by Police Scotland and including SEPA, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Council's resilience team, Technical and Property Services, ACCESSLine, Housing and rest centre staff. A major incident for the area was declared by Police Scotland on both 30 December 2015 and 7 January 2016. The Council resources were deployed throughout the period to a wide number

of properties across Angus to provide assistance on a prioritised basis as resources permitted.

#### **4. DETAILS**

The flooding in Angus was extensive across the area and impacted a range of sites although mainly in the rural areas. Whilst the Council is not necessarily aware of all the areas and property that flooded a summary of the known sites is included in the Appendix which has been placed in the Members' Information Hub.

The following details of flooding are highlighted:

##### **4.1 River Levels**

The River South Esk reached unprecedented and record levels on the 30 December 2015 and 4 January 2016. The river level was approximately 350mm higher than the 2002 record on 30 December. The flood prevention works that are under construction in River Street, Brechin, protected the vast majority of properties in the Brechin catchment despite being several months from completion. The most significant impact came from the surge of water at The Inch, caused by a large tree demolishing a wall, which flooded Brechin Leisure Centre and properties along the south of River Street. In addition, breaches of the under-construction flood embankments at the Caravan Park and at East Mill Industrial Estate were experienced, which caused localised flooding.

Emergency repairs were carried out to the flood defences over the period to the 4 January 2016 and additional works are being considered as part of the project. The flow down the river is estimated to be equivalent to a 1 in 50 year event or 0.02% risk. Had the flood prevention scheme not been partially completed the impact would have been significantly worse and up to an estimated 300 properties may have been impacted. The site was visited by Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and Environment, on 6 January 2016.

The B957 road at Justinhaugh was undermined by the river bursting its banks. Further downstream at Finavon roads were flooded.

Similarly the North Esk water levels exceeded those previously recorded. Properties at Lower Logie suffered inundation partially as a result of the failure of part of the river embankment.

The Barry Burn and Brothock Burn both peaked but were contained within the watercourses.

The Dighty at Monifieth breached its banks flooding adjacent gardens.

The Wishart Burn in Edzell triggered the local alarm and the community resilience team put in place their plan to limit property damage. The partially complete flood improvements and notably the upgraded culvert was effective.

##### **4.2 Transport Impact**

The roads infrastructure was impacted during the event as parts of the network became inaccessible, suffered damage due the water impact and continues to suffer damage from the saturation of the road structure.

At the height of the storms some 30 routes were closed and another 20 were only passable with care or for 4x4 vehicles. At certain times the A90, operated by BEAR Scotland on behalf of Transport Scotland, was closed in both directions; the A92 in Angus was closed both North of Montrose and South of Arbroath; the A94 in Perth and Kinross all had to be closed on safety grounds due to the level of flooding, along with a number of more minor roads. In particular the roads around Balkerie and Newtyle and Inchbare caused concerns for the transport of school children which required police assistance.

As well as Justinhaugh noted above the network suffered damage in a number of areas including Glen Esk, Glen Prosen, Dunnechin, Emmock, Aberlemno and Newtyle where emergency and longer term repairs are required.

Post the flooding there has been further damage where saturated roads have deteriorated under the weight of traffic or as a result of frost thaw action. There has been a marked increase in damaged road reports and additional resources have been deployed to address these as far as the weather permits.

There are also a number of drainage issues which need to be resolved from gullies and culverts blocked by flood debris to collapsed drains.

During the event some 3800 sandbags were deployed by council staff and residents collecting from Forfar depot.

The A90, managed by BEAR Scotland on behalf of Transport Scotland, was blocked both north and southbound for some hours on the evening of 7 January 2016.

The North East rail line was closed from the evening of 7 January 2016 until the next morning.

#### **4.3 Repairs**

As a consequence of the flooding Technical and Property Services have compiled a list of repairs and sites where further investigations are required. The damage at Brechin Flood Prevention Scheme and adjacent Brechin Leisure Centre are the largest single areas of repair. An embankment within the Brechin Cathedral grounds also suffered subsidence and required emergency repair. There are some 120 other sites where road repairs, drainage repairs or flood issues are now being processed. There were also repairs to 50 properties consisting of leaks, wind damage and drainage issues.

#### **4.4 Council Contact**

During the period of the worse weather, the level of calls to ACCESSline was unprecedented, with additional opening times of ACCESSLine as follows –

30 December 2015	-	Between 6pm and 11pm
4 January 2016	-	Between 12 noon and 6 pm
7 January 2016	-	Between 6pm and 9pm

There were some 2,540 calls to the council via ACCESSLine and a further 140 calls to the out of hours emergency contact for Roads during this period. On 7 January the call centre received 1,745 calls, a record number of calls since opening in 1999.

Due to the flooding there were three presentations to the council as homeless and two offered and provided with temporary accommodation with the third being assisted. Two other needs were assisted. A number of families were accommodated in the rest centre in Montrose, two further families were accommodated in the rest centre in Brechin and seven housing association residents were accommodated in a residential care home.

Mutual assistance was provided to Perth and Kinross and Aberdeenshire Councils. Mutual aid was offered by BEAR Scotland.

#### **4.5 Grant assistance**

On Saturday 9 January 2016 the Scottish Government announced that grants of £1500 and up to £3000 were available for residents and businesses respectively which have been impacted by flooding. The grant scheme is administered by local authorities and an on-line process was launched in Angus on 18 January 2016. At the time of drafting this report 37 applications had been received and paid with a further 21 being processed.

## 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current estimate of the emergency response, clean up and repair is provisionally estimated at some £1.4m. These costs cannot be contained within existing Technical and Property Services budgets.

Some, but not all of the expenditure, qualifies under the Scottish Government's Bellwin Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to Local Authorities. The Council must meet the first £485,000 of any claim (0.2% of total council revenue budget). It is anticipated that the council's expenditure which qualifies under this scheme may be £200-400k in excess of this figure at this time.

Scottish Government also announced £5m of funding to assist local authorities impacted by the flooding and the council is to retain the remainder of the £900,000 allocation for the flood grant.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

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