

Residents Survey Report

The consultation questions were posed to respondents residents in West Berkshire in order to help identify potential areas for improvement in the way the Council responds to emergencies, to gauge how residents viewed the response of the Council and other agencies and to assess what residents did for themselves or their community this time and would consider doing in the future. A number of questions were set in order to determine these points. All the responses were inputted into the online survey either directly by responders or by officers on receipt of hard copies in the office.

A total of 229 residents completed the survey from a 65,000 homes therefore assuming one person responded per household 3.5% of households responded. Of those that responded to the survey the majority were in areas particularly affected by the floods. NB Columns c, d & e below from Civil Contingencies Team

Community (a)	No of responders (b)	Community Emergency Plan (C)	Flood Wardens (d)	No of Properties flooded 2013/14 (e)
Aldermaston	0	YES		1
Bagnor	2			
Bucklebury	6	YES	YES	
Burghfield Bridge	1			2
Calcot	1			
Compton	10		YES	3
East Garston	6		YES	9
East Ilsley	3		YES - DURING FLOODS	4
Eastbury	25		YES	7
Great Shefford	19	YES	YES	24
Hampstead Marshall	0			1
Hampstead Norreys	3		YES - DURING FLOODS	3
Lambourn	6		YES	11
Lower Denford	1			
Newbury - Northcroft	1		YES	
Newbury - Shaw	21			30
Newbury - Wash Common	1			
Newbury - Westfield	1			
Padworth	1			3
Pangbourne	5	YES	YES	3
Pingewood	2			3
Purley	14	YES	YES	28
Streatley	9			11
Sulham	2		YES	
Sulhampstead	2	DRAFT		
Thatcham	1		YES	
Theale/Sheffield Bottom	2	YES		3
Upper Lambourn	5		YES - DURING FLOODS	3

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Weston	1			
Winterbourne	1		YES	1
West Ilsley	41		YES - DURING FLOODS	3

The majority of responders 87.9% were owner occupiers with 10.1% being in private rented properties and only 2% being in shared ownership or social housing. This compares to the census figures of 70% owner occupiers, ~13.5% private rented and ~14% shared owner or social housing. The impact on the Council with respect to the response and recovery of those responding imply that they are more able to look after themselves where as the impact on the Council would be higher if more social housing properties were affected.

2. FINDINGS

The key findings from the survey are set out below. For ease of reference these have been arranged around the objectives the survey was seeking to achieve.

To what extent were the residents affected by the flooding and know why they flooded?

1. Respondents were asked to confirm **what caused the flooding in their area** from a choice of options. They could choose more than one option.

Answer Options	%	No of responders
Don't know	2.6%	6
Groundwater (when the water table rises)	84.6%	193
River water (when the river bursts its banks)	50.4%	115
Surface water (when rainwater is unable to drain away)	55.3%	126
Sewage	32.0%	73
Other (please specify)	1.3%	3

The responses indicates that the flooding for some was a combination of more than one type of flooding.

The greatest number of responders reported that the cause of the flooding in their area was due to groundwater (84.6%) this is also reflected in the where the respondents come from in that 175 or the 229 responders (76%) are from areas known to be at risk of groundwater flooding.

The next highest response was in relation to surface water – rainwater unable to drain away (55.3%) which suggests that the drains/gulleys or other water systems such as rivers were unable to cope with the amount of water or were obstructed in some way thus restricting the flow.

River flooding was the third highest reported cause of flooding (50.4%). Since 3 of the rivers in the area are groundwater fed this no doubt contributed to the amount of river related flooding.

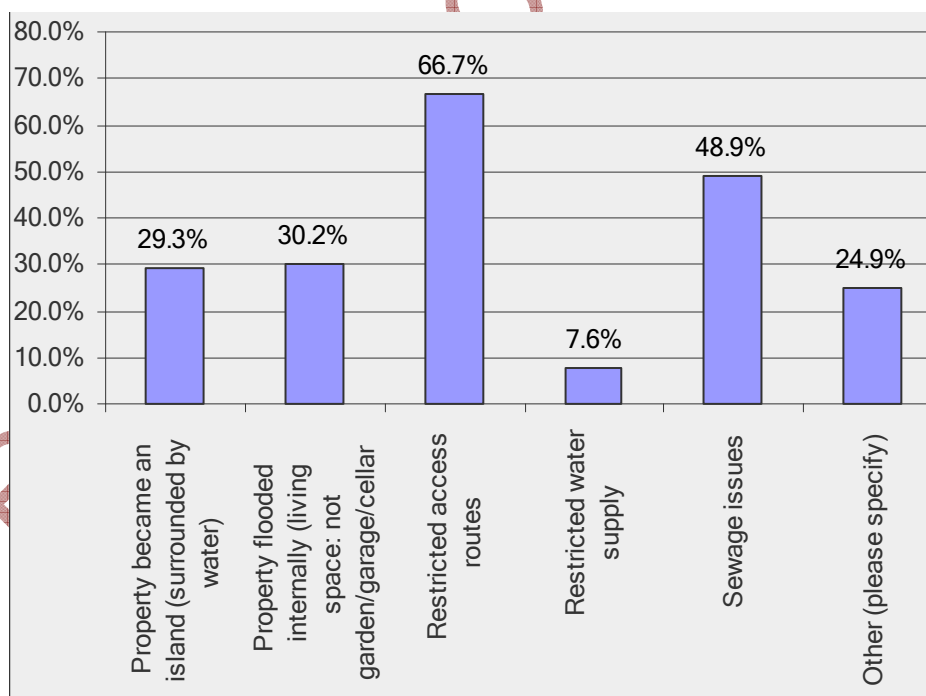
Sewage flooding was reported as the next most common cause of flooding (32%). This too is likely to be linked to the groundwater flooding situation since groundwater can infiltrate the sewer system which results in sewer flooding.

The results also show that the area was affected by different flooding types the knock of which to the Council and the residents is the different response and preparations necessary. Thus showing the complexity of flooding in West Berkshire and the apparent understanding of those affected.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 1:

- Whilst groundwater was the highest reported cause of flooding in the area the knock on effect of groundwater flooding is other flooding, river and sewage in particular.
- Different types of flooding require different responses from agencies and different preparation for residents, particularly for property level protection.

2. On asked what the **effects of the flooding** was on the responders again a number of choices were provided with respondents able to choose more than one option.



The greatest number of the 225 respondents to this question, 67%, were affected by restricted access routes. In addition 29% of responders advised their properties became islands surrounded by water. This result indicated that even if a responded was not flooded internally the flooding around the properties or on roads does restrict access and therefore affect normal life. Consideration should be given to how access for communities could be improved.

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Next was the impact of sewage (49%). This is not directly a Council related issue instead Thames Water are the sewage undertakers and therefore should review their systems to alleviate the problems. Where it can become a Council issue is if there is a Public health related outbreak or indeed properties cannot use their facilities and therefore become unfit for habitation under Housing legislation.

30% of responders flooded internally in their home the cause of this flooding may have been answered in Q1 above however the Flood & Water Management Act 2010, S19 reports being undertaken by Highways & Transport Service will provide more details on the causes and therefore the recommendations for flood alleviation.

Of the 24.9% providing details of other effects of the flooding raised included:

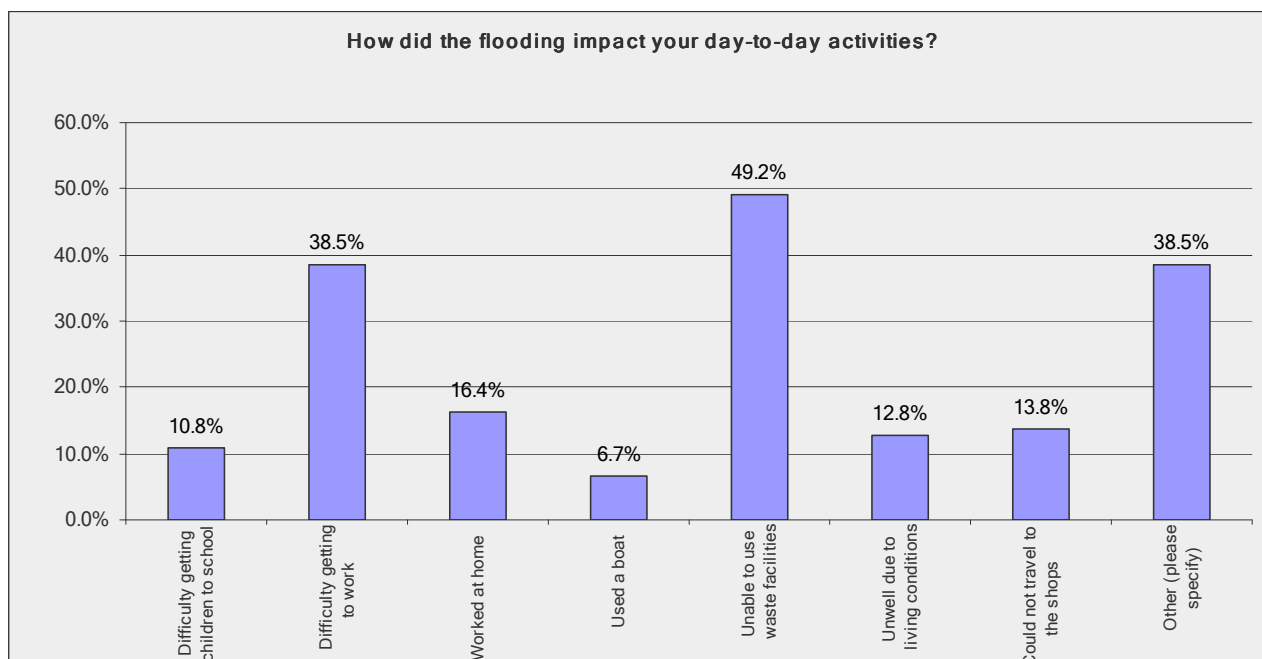
- Garden flooded (9)
- Flooding under the floors of properties but not in the 'living space' (7)
- Concerns about infection from contaminated water (2)
- Septic Tank issues in relation to private sewage disposal (1)
- Concerns about drinking water quality (1)

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 2:

- The effects of flooding can be complex depending on the type of flooding
- The Council should review the drains and gulleys it is responsible for in relation to areas where road closures/flooding was known to affect communities
- Thames Water should review the sewers in the areas affected by flooding in order to reduce the impact.
- Residents in flood risk areas should consider property level protection including the house and ancillary elements e.g. septic tanks.
- The Council should consider any new development proposals which may be in known flood risk areas such that not only is the building considered but also the means of access – for occupiers and emergency responders.

3. Apart from the effects of physical flooding and limited use of facilities the respondents detailed ***the impact of the flooding on their day to day life*** covering a range of issues:

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Of the 195 responders to this question the major impacts were note to be:

- Unable to use waste facilities (49%)
- Difficulty getting to work (38.5%)
- Other (38.5%)

The first two link to Q2 above in relation to:

- Sewage flooding and the other impact of the sewage system being impacted by groundwater in that the waste systems in homes cannot be used or have reduced capacity with the risk of internal flooding;
- Difficulty getting to work relates to the road issues.

However these options covered only some of the impacts of the adverse weather. Below are some of the themes and comments detailed as other impacts to the residents:

- Fearful about leaving the house since they were frightened that if they left it would flood. Someone nearly missed a funeral
- Exhausted since constant fear and making sure pumps and defences still working.
- Unable to leave the house since making sure pumps still working and power failures. Some had to refuel pumps every 2 hours.
- Unable to go to work due to the stress and need to protect the home
- Stress of living in part of the house – living upstairs since the ground floor flooded.
- Access issues – not only on main roads meaning long detours but cars being parked elsewhere since garage or road was flooded; walking planks to get out of the home, climbing over sandbags. Not able to get to the house or having to access via neighbours or even knocking down walls to get access. Often long detours to get anywhere.

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- Loss of fixtures, fittings and belongings
- Using portaloos for a long period of time and having to reduce the use of toilets, baths, washing etc to prevent the system from backing up more,
- Vulnerable people affected by being flooded directly or having to manage visits for dialysis or people with learning disabilities where change made their condition worse.
- 'living' in wellingtons or waders to go anywhere
- Suffering from gastroenteritis type infections or fearing being ill
- Worrying about pets or animals since they could not go outside and for farmers/stables there were issues of increased feeding costs

Throughout all the written feedback was the sentiment of fear, exhaustion and desperation of the responders to the situation they faced during the flooding exasperated since the situation went on for weeks.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 2:

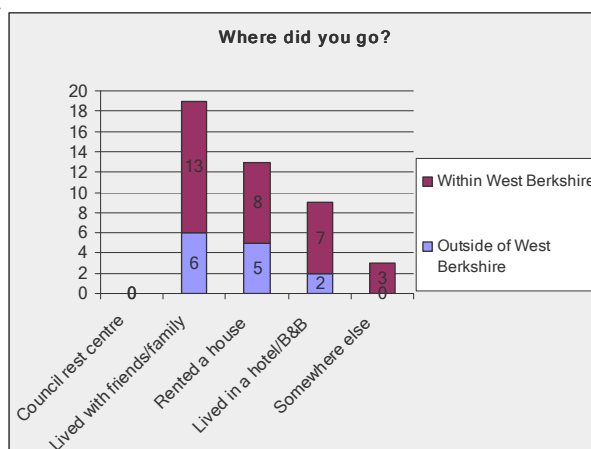
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RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 3:

- The impact of flooding is far more than the physical aspect of flooded properties but the significant impact on people’s wellbeing.
- In relation to how to reduce this impact on people there are two key elements:
 - Communications –providing information to allow residents to understand what has happened, why it’s happened and what the impacts may be. Therefore residents can make informed decisions, put aside the concerns that cannot be under their control but put in place actions which can reduce the other fears which may be installation of different pumps which are less onerous on managing, full property level protection.
 - Support - this is not necessarily support by way of physical flood defences but someone with knowledge to talk to. Whilst this does link to communications it is more than that and has been recognised in other events such as Dunblane Shootings and Glasgow Helicopter Crash. This support would be to allow a 2 way conversation to allow reassurance and if necessary additional support to be put in place. It would not necessarily be a one to one support but support to a community and would need to be put in place at the early stages of an incident. It is therefore suggested that the Council, working with other agencies should consider a Major Incident Support Team (MIST).

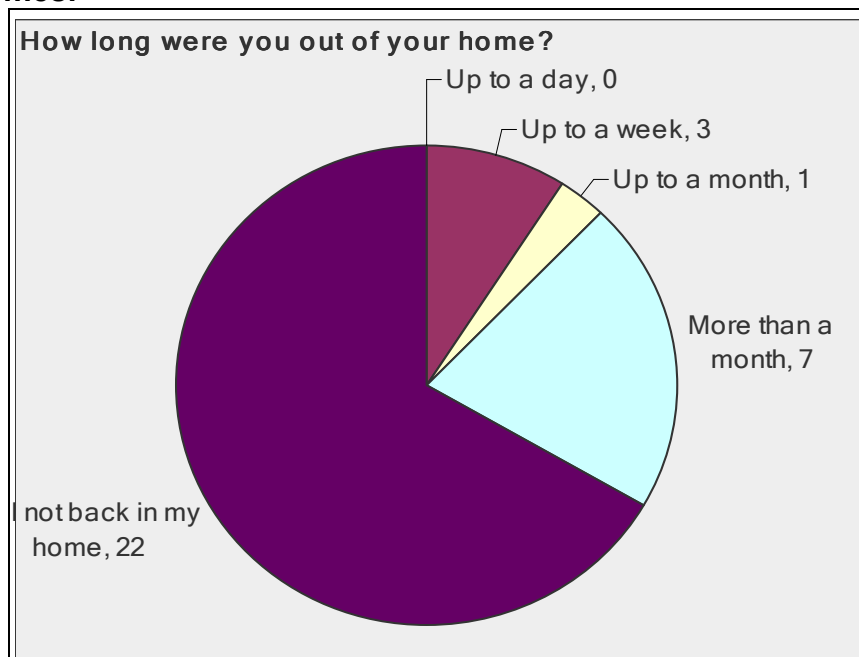
The majority 84% (187) of 223 responders remained in their property during the flooding despite the issues that this created to their day to day life.

5. For those that had to move out they were asked **where they went to?**



Of the 33 people who responded the majority found alternative accommodation within West Berkshire (70%) however a significant number (30%) had to move out of West Berkshire.

6. Responders who had moved out were also asked how long they were out of their homes.



Of the 33 responders 22 were still not in their home at the time of the survey closing (6 June 14).

The impact of having to move out of home for any length of period is known to add to the stress of the event since many people at first think they will move back in a few weeks. However often it is 6 months plus that people are out of the home. Adding to the pressures is if the alternative accommodation is not in the local area such that residents worry about it being burgled; changed routine for work/school which can have an adverse effect on those involved.

In this case no homeless requests were made to the Council to support any flood victim suggesting that all were managing through their own funds, insurance or landlords to find suitable alternative accommodation.

This situation may have been very different if more rented properties were affected or if in the future residents may not undertake effective repairs due to insurance charges. This may result in unfit homes under the housing legislation if full and proper repairs are not undertaken and therefore more pressure on housing stock.

Therefore under slightly different circumstances the impact on the Council could have been significantly more. The Government has been working with the Association of British Insurers however this has been slow with residents worrying and struggling in the interim. It is recommended that more head should be taken by insurance companies if residents put in property level protection in order to reduce the impact of flooding. In addition rehousing of larger numbers in a community should be considered as to how it would be managed for a period of 6 – 12 months

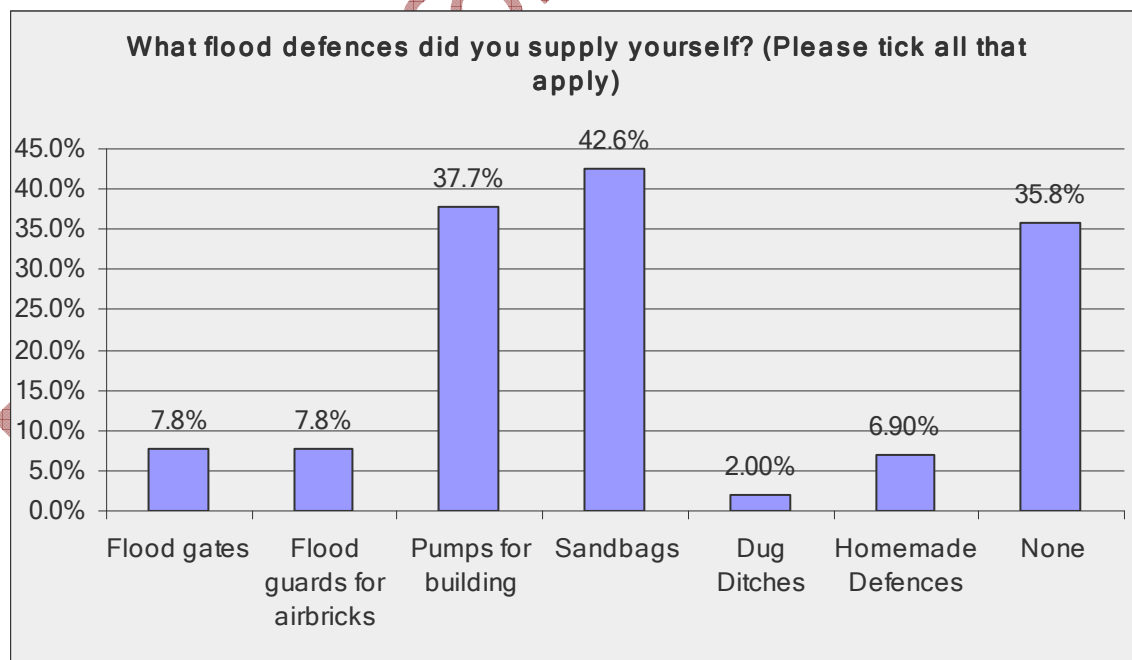
RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 4:

- Properties flooding can result in the residents having to move out for a long time adding to the stress of the situation.
- Whilst all residents found accommodation without support from the Council consideration should be given to how the situation would be managed if there were a significant number of residents to be accommodated for an extended period of time.
- Nationally work in relation to insurance for flood risk properties should continue to support at risk residents, including advantages of installing property level defences.

What did the responding residents do for themselves?

It is important to understand what the responding residents did for themselves and their communities in order to confirm good practice and encourage others to do similar actions. This is relevant because there is no legal duty for the Council to protect individual properties from flooding instead under Civil Law it is the responsibility of the property owner¹. To this end a number of questions were set to establish how prepared individuals and communities were to respond to flooding and what they did.

7. Responders were asked what flood defences residents supplied themselves.



¹ <http://www.environmentlaw.org.uk/rte.asp?id=105>

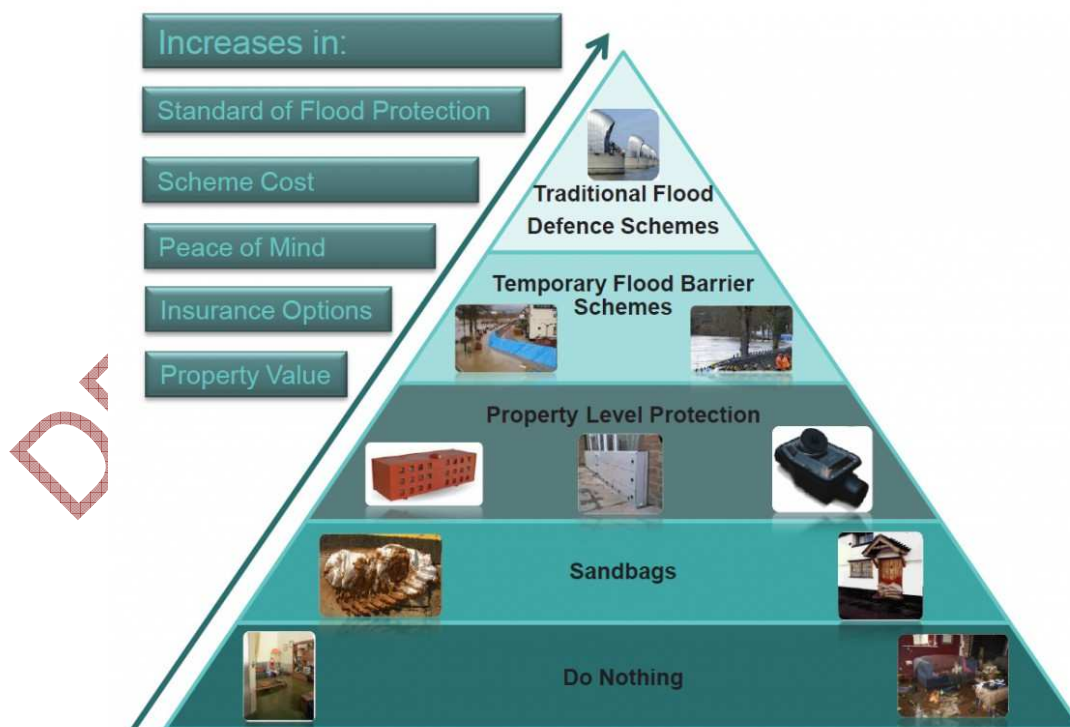
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From the responses as set out in the graph below there are 3 distinct areas.

- a. 53.3% of responders who had a degree of preparation by way of property level protection which would require planning and purchase in advance (53.3%) (Flood Gates, Flood Guards & Pumps). It should be noted however that some of these pumps were sourced during the event.
- b. 51.5% of responders who took immediate actions taken during the event. This includes sandbags, digging ditches/by passes and homemade defence. In this group by far the greatest reliance was on sandbags.
- c. 35.8% of responders provided no flood defences. Some of this can be explained in that it was noted that some residents did not flood; some 'accepted' that with the amount of water and where they lived there was nothing that could be done. 2 responders also identified that they were infirm or unwell and therefore not able to help themselves.

The responses suggests that despite warnings and knowledge that their properties are in flood risk areas the occupants are not planning in advance to prepare themselves and their properties.

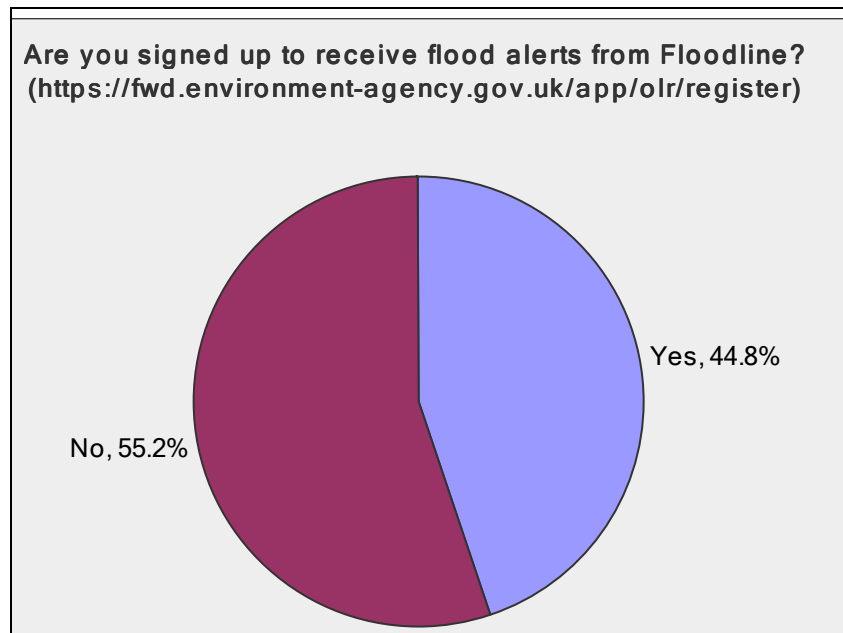
The group of responders doing last minute own defences focusing on sandbags is also a concern. Sandbags are often seen as the answer to flooding – they are not. They have their place but unless carefully planned and laid correctly they may stall the risk of flooding for sometime but will not necessarily stop it. This is also reflected in the National Flood Forum website² which shows the link between increasing standard of flood protection with sandbags being shown as being better than doing nothing but low down on the standard of protection they afford.



² <http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/>

Source – National Flood Forum.

8. Responders were asked if they were signed up to receive alerts from the Environment Agency run Floodline Service.



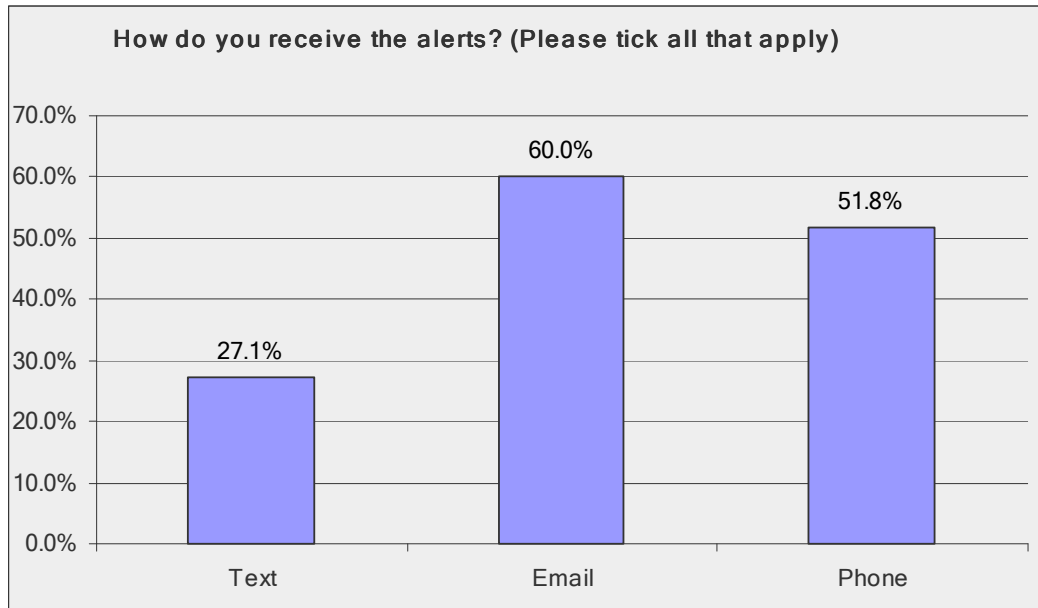
Significantly 55.2% of 201 responders to this question were not signed up to the free service and therefore did not receive any form of direct alert in relation to flood risk in their area.

On reviewing the postcodes in more detail against the Environment Agency website flood risk areas³ to consider if the responders were or were not in flood risk areas it was found that the majority of responders (~95%) were in or very close to flood risk areas.

9. On asking those who received alerts in **what format they received the alert**.

³ <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?value=RG8+8BL&lang=en&ep=map&topic=floodmap&layerGroups=default&scale=9&textonly=off&submit.x=9&submit.y=9>

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85 responders confirmed that the majority of alerts were received by email (60%). This was closely followed by phone alerts (51.8%) with text alerts being the least common (27.1%).

It was noted, however on reviewing the alerts and warnings put in place over the winter, that approx 50% of alerts were put in place outside 'office' hours with one at 00:40am therefore depending on the means of alert; the email address used and the platform for receiving emails some people may not receive a quick alert to the forthcoming risk. Therefore there are limitations with the scheme.

DRAFT - for Consultation

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 5:

- There are insufficient residents in known flood risk areas who are not signed up to basic flood alerts which are suitable for their needs. Therefore at local and national level to encourage residents to sign up for the most appropriate alert for their circumstances in order that they have time to protect themselves. This could also be bolstered at community level with community notification means to support all in the community.
- There is an over reliance on last minute flood defences by residents and there is an over reliance on sandbags being the only flood defence. Therefore at local and national level residents should be encouraged to put in place property level protection which is appropriate for their property and the flood risk to them.
- There have been Government schemes to support property level protection in the past however these have been based on community schemes and whilst bids have been submitted in West Berkshire none have been approved do to cost benefit analysis. Currently those properties which have flooded are eligible for up to £5000 towards property level protection (PLP). Sadly however if resident put in a massive effort and managed to protect their property they are no eligible. It is therefore recommended that the Government review the PLP scheme to allow more at risk properties to received grants or loans to support them in protecting their properties.
- The Council, Communities and other agencies should jointly investigate temporary flood barrier schemes or flood defence schemes where appropriate. More permanent schemes will take time to come to fruition therefore options to put in more strategic temporary flood defences should be investigated so as to protect properties without the significant resources being required as in 2013/14.

What support did the responding residents get or give in their Community.

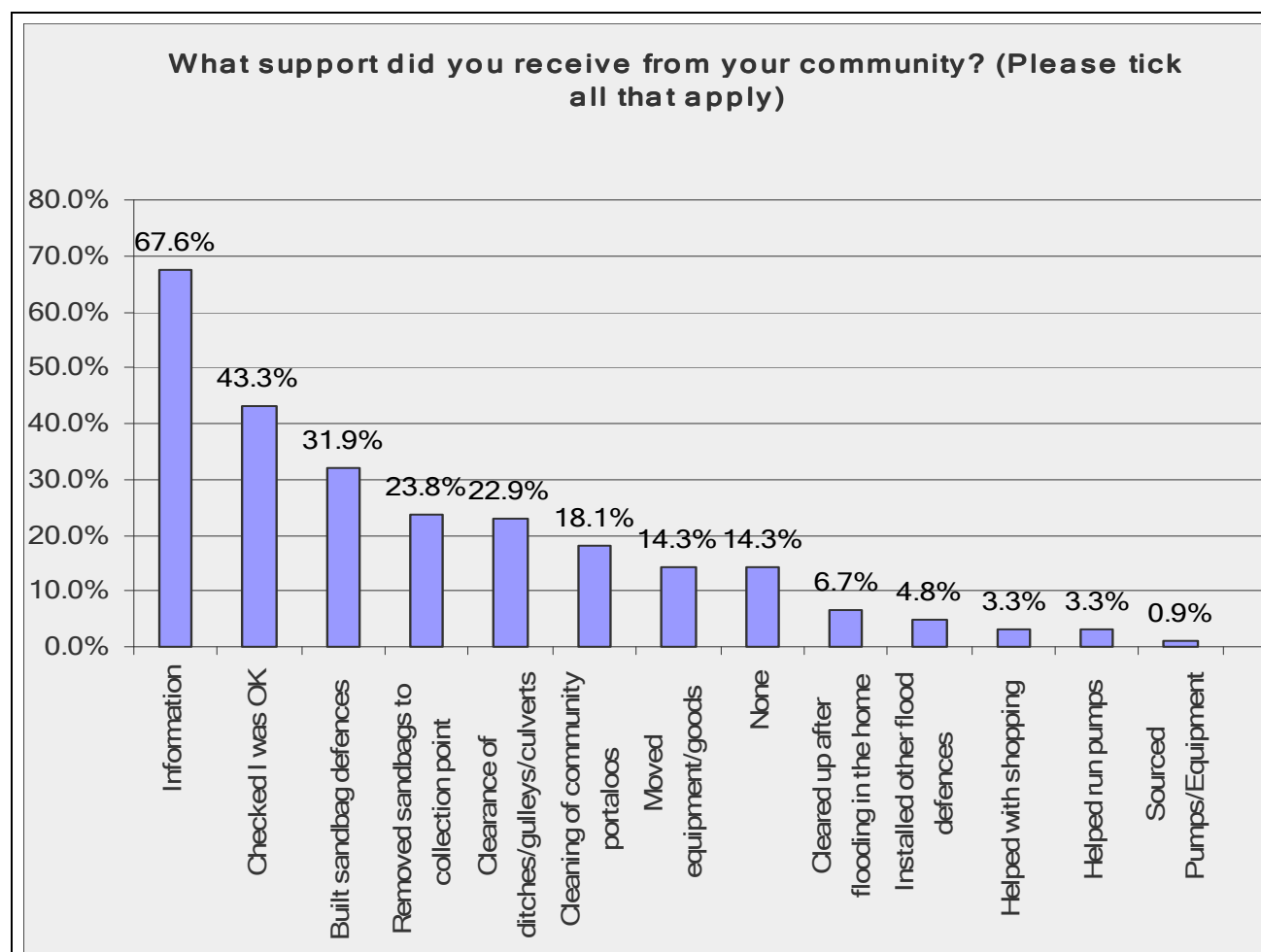
In recent years there has been a drive by West Berkshire Council for communities to develop Community Emergency Plans. This was identified as good practice following the severe winters of 2009/10 and 2011/12 which showed that despite the best efforts of the Council the size of the area and the scale of the situation meant that the Council could not be everywhere at once. This has also been picked up by many communities in their Community Plans⁴.

⁴ <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=29165>

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In an attempt to understand what help was given and provided in communities and therefore additional support that may be required to support communities in their planning a number of questions were asked of responders.

10. Responders were asked what **support responders got from their communities?**



There was a wide range of support provided by the communities from the provision of information to sourcing equipment.

With respect to information Flood Wardens and Lock keepers were specifically praised along with a few Ward and Parish Members.

Other types of activities included support during the response phase including the clear up of homes or the community.

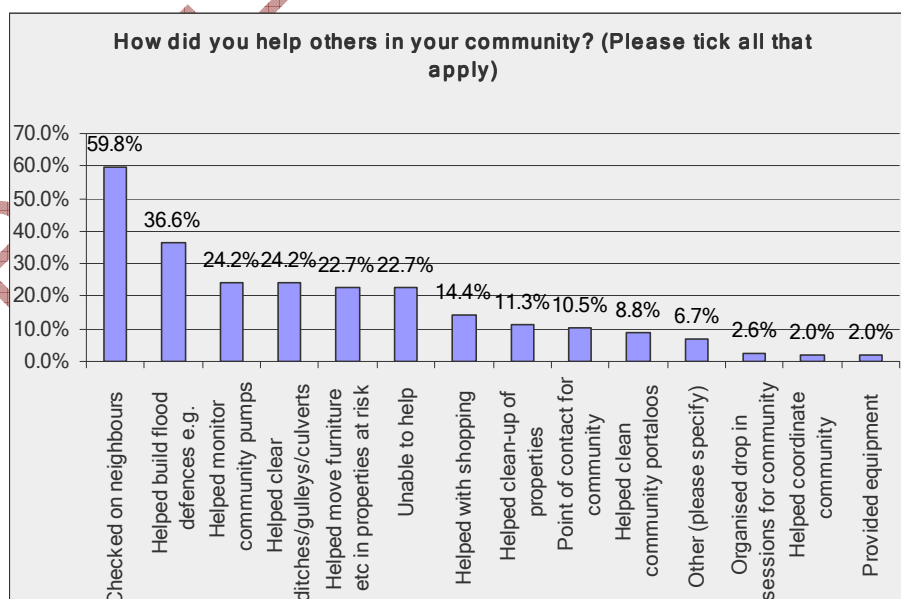
Some responses clearly showed how responders believed the community pulled together stating that they were 'incredible' or 'exceptional'. It was also noted that neighbours and families supported each other and not necessarily the wider community.

However, whenever there is good community and individual efforts there tends to be some alternative feedback. This was borne out in comments about how residents saw their neighbours as selfish – doing work on their own properties to the adverse effect of others.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 6:

- Community spirit and support was evident during this event with some communities working very hard for each other.
- The support provided was wide ranging.
- There was more community support and engagement during the response phase than in recovery phase (removal of sandbags to collection points and clearing up) the community support dropped away.
- Rural communities supported each other more than in more urban settings.
- An example of the above was noted by the WBC Recovery Team in particular in relation to sandbag recovery. It was found that rural communities helped themselves and the Council in recovering sandbags from individuals to be used in the community later or for collection. In contrast the area of Shaw in Newbury was the very opposite, despite leafleting door to door in the affected area. The outcome was that the WBC Recovery Team engaged with the Community Pay Back service and arranged for a Saturday morning where Volkers Highways Contractors, Council staff, Ward and Town Councillors moved sandbags to collection points – with no support from the community.
- More work, especially, in urban communities is necessary to encourage self help and supporting each other.

11. Responders were also asked what support they provided to their communities.



Similar to the support provided by the community there was a wide range of support provided by the 194 responders to this question.

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The biggest areas of support provided related to checking on neighbours (59.8%) and helping build flood defences. There was then a relatively even spreads of support provided by way of managing community pimps, clearing gulleys and moving property at risk of flooding.

A not insignificant number (22.7%) were unable to help this was based on being 'too old'; being unwell and being too busy trying to save own property.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 7:

- The wide support provided by the responders was positive.
- This support cannot be relied upon since residents at risk themselves will look to saving themselves and their homes first.
- In any community there will be a number of residents who cannot help themselves and may need more support – by the community or other agencies.
- Any community emergency planning needs to take into account that, whilst community resilience volunteers may be 'allocated' areas in their direct neighbourhood, to support, there needs to be flexibility for others from different areas to come to help when whole neighbourhoods are affected.
- When a community is heavily involved in their own response additional support to the vulnerable needs to be considered – potentially by the formation of a Major Incident Support Team. This team would support vulnerable in communities and identify any further 'welfare' issues emerging where support can be put in place.

12. Communications in any incident is important. It has also been raised in previous incidents in relation to understanding what is happening. Therefore in order to find out more the responders were asked **how residents found out what was happening in their community?**

Answer Options	Face to face	Email	Website	Twitter	Facebook	Radio/TV	Publication
West Berkshire Council	45	58	26	1	1	8	9
West Berkshire District Councillor	35	13	2	2	0	0	1
Local Town/Parish Councillor	69	44	5	1	1	0	1
Flood warden	73	46	2	0	4	0	1

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Community group	47	45	3	0	4	0	1
Environment Agency	34	33	37	0	0	6	3
Thames Water	23	19	12	0	0	0	4
Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE)	7	5	2	0	0	2	2
Local media	7	8	11	1	0	28	14
National media	4	3	3	1	0	29	7
	343 (40.3%)	274 (32.1%)	103 (12.1%)	6 (0.7%)	10 (1.1%)	73 (8.6%)	43 (5.1%)

186 responders answered this question.

From the responses the main sources of information were face to face (40.3%) and email (32.1%) regardless of the source.

Most of this information received was from Flood Wardens, 19.3%; followed by information from Local Town and Parish Councils and community groups.

Other information was received from West Berkshire Council (16.7%) and the Environment Agency (10.8%). This indicates that most people get their information locally from local community and not necessarily from West Berkshire Council or other agencies which cover wider than the local community. This may be because the information provided by the other agencies was not suitable or in the correct format for the majority of responders.

When taking into account responders using the website for information which was the third major source of information (12.1%) then the Environment Agency website was the biggest source of information with 35.9% of the response, West Berkshire Council followed with 25.2%.

Other sources of information reported by the responders included:

- Met office,
- Thames Valley Police,
- Lock Keepers
- Village Shop/Pub
- Village Magazine
- MP

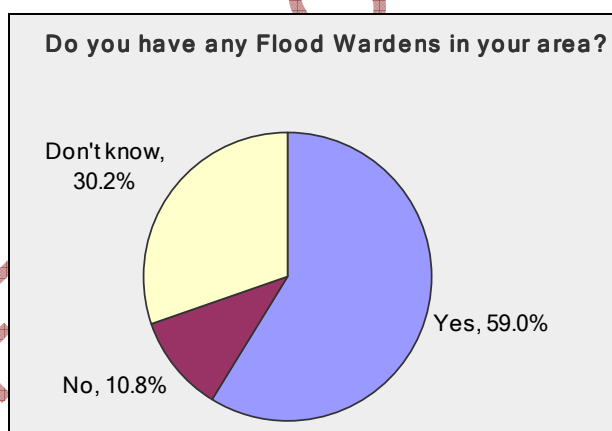
Interestingly the use of social media was not high on the responders means of finding things out. It is not known why this is – perhaps not enough use of it by the agencies to make them of value. This is in contrast to a recent survey undertaken by the Cabinet Office which showed that the majority of responders to the survey used social media (amongst others) to provide information during an incident (92 of 151 responders). However in the same report it was noted that *'in 2012 a survey conducted by Ipsos-MORI on behalf of the Cabinet Office found that 62% of the British public would want to be informed of an emergency via television. In contrast only 20% of respondents wanted to be informed via social media. A 2013 survey*

conducted by eMarketer found that just over 50% of the UK population (32.1million people) used social media at least once a month, although this was also forecast to rise to 53% by 2014.⁵

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 8:

- Communications in an emergency with accurate information is essential
- The community information updates was most commonly spread by the communities, face to face or via email.
- Council, EA and TW websites were used for updates to a lesser extent.
- Social media was not a commonly used means of communication.
- In order to get the same message out to all about what is happening in communities in emergencies then a suite of formats needs to be used including some of those sources identified in the response.
- Residents do wish to get information directly in their community and therefore finding means to increase that conduit should be considered which gives sufficient factual detail of each community.

13. Over recent years a network of Flood Wardens has been developed. Responders were asked if they if **there were flood wardens in their community?**



The response demonstrated that 59% knew they had flood wardens in their community.

Where they said no this is either because the flood wardens did not exist or perhaps were not known to the responder. Using the postcode information provided at least 13.5% of responders are in areas with no flood wardens. To allow for some additional areas not having flood wardens this would lead to more responders not knowing they have flood wardens in the area to link into. This suggests that in some communities there are insufficient flood wardens for the area they support or they are not making themselves known to support the wider community.

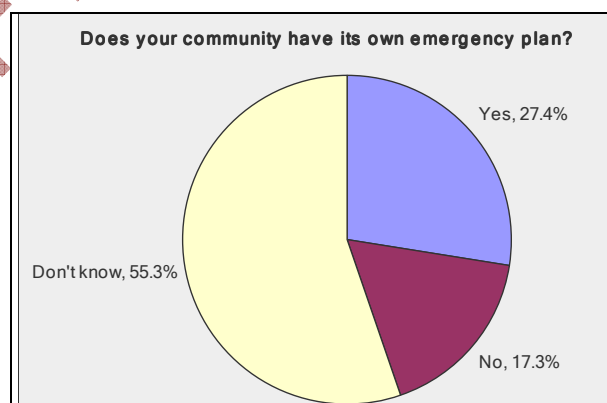
⁵ ALERT ACTIVATION PROTOCOLS: CONSULTATION REPORT 2014 – Cabinet Office

Similar to the point above in relation to supporting communities, many of the flood wardens have volunteered since they have flooded in the past therefore in floods are at risk of being affected and in some cases less able to fulfil the role.

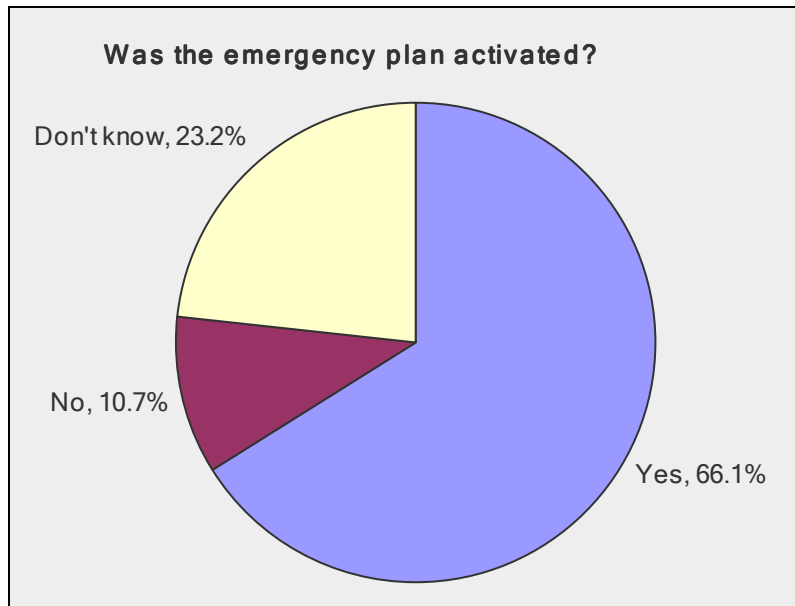
RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 9:

- Flood Wardens/Community Resilience Volunteers area useful means of passing information around their communities and being a conduit in the community to the Parish Council and/or West Berkshire Council.
- Some are not known to the communities they are operating in.
- Some, by the nature of how they got involved in the role, will have been busy protecting their own properties and therefore not commit the time perhaps needed to the wider community or running themselves into the ground trying to do everything.
- All communities should be encouraged to develop a network of Community Resilience Volunteers. (CRVs)
- Communities with existing CRV's should encourage more in the community to be involved.
- The roles of these CRV's should be reviewed
- Joint training should be provided so as to share good practice and experience.

14. Since 2007 communities have been encourage to develop Community Emergency Plans as a result responders were asked **if their community had an emergency plan and if so if it were activated**

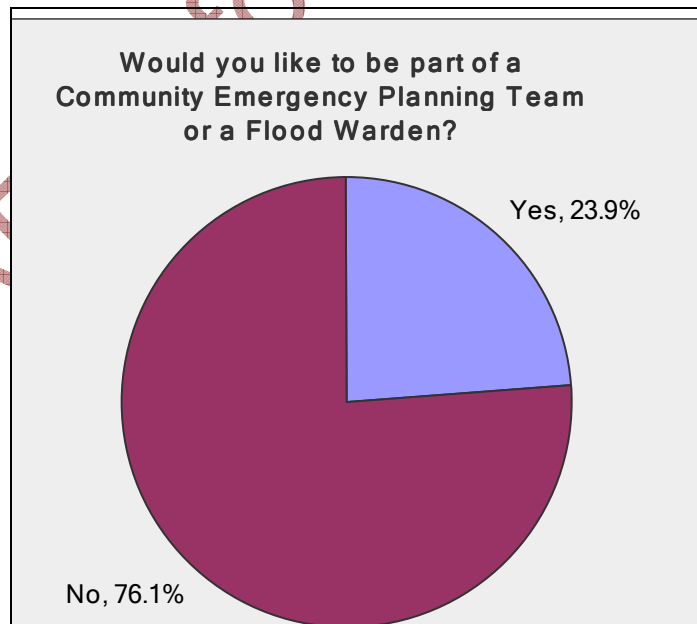


Only 27.4% (57 of 208) responders knew their community had a Community Emergency Plan and of these 57 responders 66% said their plan had been activated/used which was positive.



On reviewing the number of communities known to have plans against the postcodes of responders there were 27 'communities' of which 7 are known to have Community Emergency Plans. It was also noted that of the 7 with Community Emergency Plans the response from the communities were amongst the highest and 4 of these communities have a number of active flood wardens. (see page 1 of this survey analysis)

15. Responders were asked if they would like to be part of a Community Emergency Team or a Flood Warden.



Only 23.9% (50 responders) of those who responded (209) said they would suggesting that to increase the size of any network of support locally will be difficult and there is not necessarily the will to get involved in the community.

That said of the 50 who said they would be happy to get involved they all provided their details with only 4 of them already being flood wardens for their communities already. Therefore there is a starting point which will be pursued.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 10:

- Where there are Community Emergency Plans and flood wardens/community emergency volunteers the knowledge and engagement is greater.
- Where communities have been affected in the past by an incident they are more likely to be engaged.
- The engagement of those in the local community to be more engaged in Community Emergency Plans or as a Community Resilience Volunteer is going to be challenging, particularly in more urban areas.
- Development of Community Emergency Plans and Volunteers should be encouraged and supported.

What support did the responding residents get from West Berkshire and how did they evaluate this support.

Whilst it is not the Councils duty to protect individuals properties it is the duty of the Council as a Cat 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 to

- | |
|---|
| a. preventing an emergency, |
| b. reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency, or |
| c. enabling other action to be taken in connection with an emergency, and |
| d. have arrangements to warn the public |

Having regard to this, questions were asked to evaluate the support provided by the Council.

16. Responders were asked as to whether they had contacted the Council?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	46.3%	94
No	53.7%	109

46.3% (94) of 203 responders confirmed they had contacted the council.

17. They were then asked as to why had they contacted the Council?

Issue	No of contacts
To ask for sandbags	55
To report flooding	53
To get updates on the flooding in my area	33
To report sewage problems	26
To ask for pumps	21

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To report contamination issues	16
To report concerns about public health	16
To report trees and other storm damage	8
To ask for portaloos	7
To report power outages	4
To report blockages in rivers	2
To report breakdowns in pumps	2
To find out about bin collections	1

Of the 94 that had contacted the Council 91 responded to this question. The majority of contacts were in relation to sandbag provision (59%) and to report flooding (58%).

A significant proportion 35% were calling up regarding updates on their area therefore suggesting that the information sent to communities and on the website was not sufficient; was not accessible or that some people want to have human interaction.

28% of responders were contacting the Council about sewage issues despite the fact that this is the responsibility of Thames Water with a smaller 2.2% reporting issues with rivers despite this being the responsibility of the Environment Agency. One comment suggested they came to the Council because they were not getting answers from these agencies. The number of responders contacting the Council on matters relating to Thames Water or Environment Agency suggested they were frustrated to be told to contact the correct agency rather than understanding the roles and responsibilities of which agency could do what.

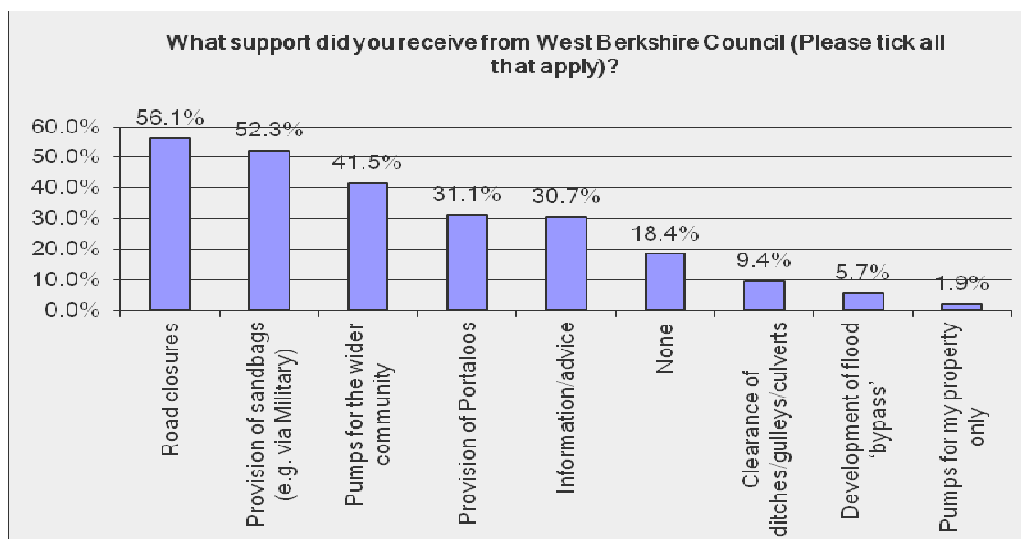
Whilst most of the reasons for contacting the Council were related to floods however it is clear that despite the major incident the issue of waste collection was also on the agenda.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 11:

- The calls requesting sandbags and other flood defences need to be carefully considered since there is no duty on the Council to protect individual homes.
- In order to reduce calls going to the incorrect agency clearer information as to who does what needs to be available to all.
- All agencies involved, particularly the utilities, should review their websites in relation to roles, responsibilities and what they will or will not do.
- Business continuity plans need to be robust to continue as many services as possible. However where not possible then a clear message as to where they are not being conducted and why should be communicated.

18. Responders were asked what actual support was provided them by the Council?

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212 residents responded to the question. A wide range of responses were provided ranging from road closures (56%) to provision of pumps to individual properties (2%).

Where support was provided it could be split into 3 areas:

- Physical - Protecting individual properties – provision of sandbags (52.3%); pumps for properties (1.9%)
- Physical Protecting & Support in wider community – road closures (56.1%); pumps for communities (41.5%); provision of portaloos (31.1%); clearances of ditches/culverts and gulleys (9.4%) and digging flood 'bypasses' (5.7%).
- Provision of information (30.7%).

In a. above the requests made were made in relation to individual properties and therefore were more appropriate for the property owners to have plans and flood defences in place themselves.

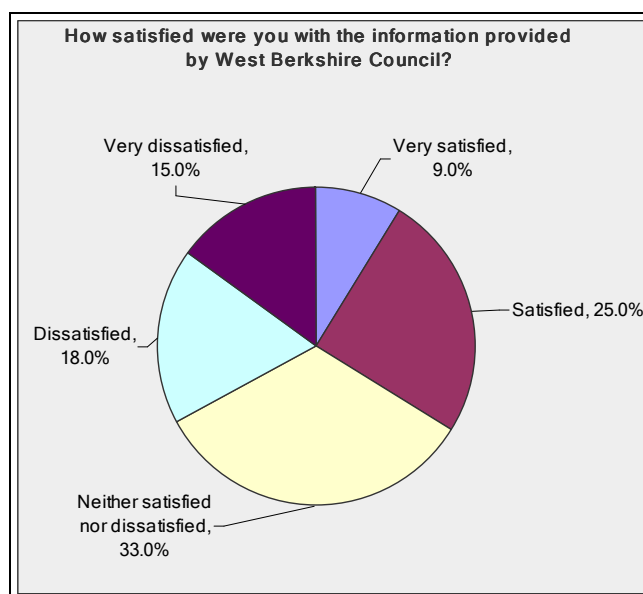
Whereas in b. above these could perhaps be more seen more as attempting to *reducing, controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency*, in the terms of the CCA and therefore the Council and other Cat 1 and Cat 2 agencies having a responsibility.

Finally with respect to c. above this does fall into the Warning and Informing element of the CCA of Cat 1 & Cat 2 agencies.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 12:

- As stated previously there is a need for residents to have an understanding as to who does what and what their responsibilities are and what the Council is not responsible for.
- Provision of some support e.g. portaloos needs to be considered in more detail with utility companies.

19. Responders to the survey were asked if they contacted the Council if they were satisfied with the information provided.



From the 182 responders to the question 34% confirmed the information provided to be satisfactory or very satisfactory; 33% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied however 33% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the information provided.

20. The provision of information and satisfaction with the Council was further assessed when responders were asked about how they contacted the Council and how satisfied they were with the response.

Answer Options	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Response Count
Phoned customer services during the day	7 (12%)	18 (31%)	9 (15%)	14 (24%)	11 (19%)	59
Phoned emergency contact centre out of office hours	1 (3%)	9 (30%)	6 (20%)	3 (10%)	11(37%)	30
Phoned Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)	3 (11%)	9 (33%)	3 (11%)	8 (30%)	6 (22%)	26
Email	4 (17%)	13 (58%)	4 (17%)	0 (0%)	3 (11%)	24
Online reporting	1(7%)	2 (14%)	3 (21%)	4 (29%)	4 (29%)	14
Other	4 (44%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	2 (22%)	9

84 responders answered the question therefore some responders contacted the Council by a number of means suggesting they were not provided with the answer on the first contact.

On reviewing how the responder was in contact with the Council and their satisfaction with the information/service provided then:

- **57.2%** were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the **on-line reporting system**,

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- **51.8%** were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the **Emergency Operations Centre**
- **46.7%** were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the **Out of Hours Contact Centre**
- **42.3%** were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the **Office Hours contact Centre.**
- **70%** however were satisfied or very satisfied with the **Email**

With respect to the 'other' comments which provided a satisfied or very satisfied figure of 55.5% these tended to relate to direct contact with specific officers or Councilors'. The comments also related to specific issues which were perhaps not the answer the person making contact wished therefore dissatisfaction was recorded.

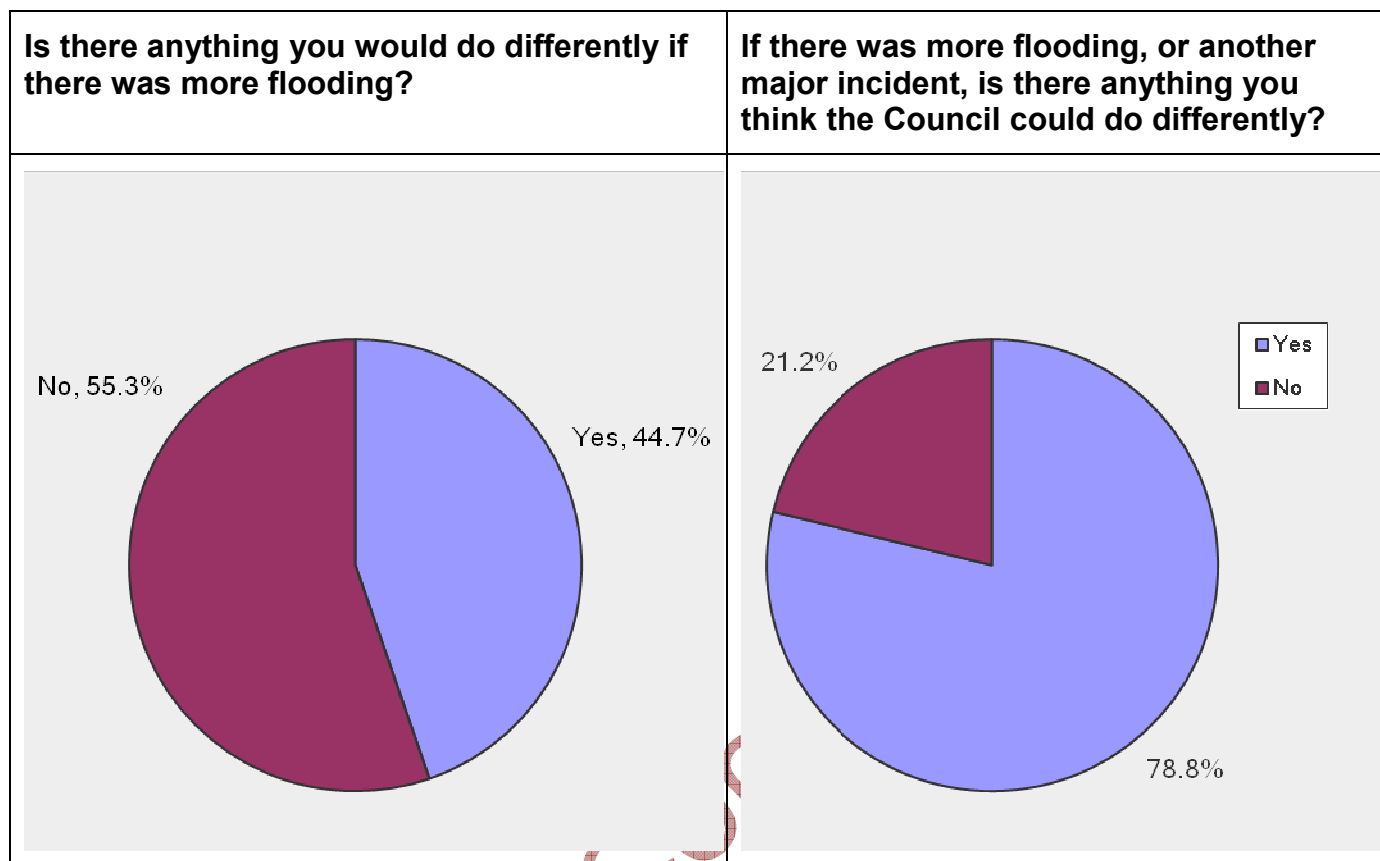
Having regard to the dissatisfaction with the Out of House Contact Centre and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) these options may not have been clear since during the main part of the flooding the EOC was taking all the out of hours calls.

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 13:

- The majority of contact with the Council was via phone (71%)
- The least used (7%) and with least satisfaction (57%) was the online reporting system.
- The greatest satisfaction was when responders emailed the Council. (70%). This may be because the officer involved had more time to consider the response with other officers if necessary. It is however resource intensive in the EOC.
- Contact centres (both during office and out of hours) need to be investigated as to how they could support the response better. This may be by way of more briefs from the EOC or a Liaison officer in them to support them with some calls.
- The EOC contact process needs to be reviewed in that calls direct from the public should not go into the EOC since it is a coordination centre of the Council response and not the contact centre.
- Any review of the customer contact undertaken will accept that not everyone will ever be satisfied.

What would the responding residents do differently and what would they suggest the Council does differently in the future.

21. A key element of debriefs is for everyone to consider what they could do differently the next time. To this end there were a number of questions set for responders to consider **what they would do differently the next time** and **what they think the Council could do differently.**



From the 193 responders 79% believed the Council could do more the next time, however from the 188 who responded as to whether they would do anything differently the next time only 45% said they would.

22. Responders were then asked to provide details as to what the **Council could do differently**. The responses, of which there were 146, have been split into the following themes and points as set out below.

Themes	Number of Comments	Summary or points raised
Resources	58	<p>This are has been split into the following suggested areas of improvement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sandbags (26) – to be provided by the Council, to be out in the communities, to be there a lot quicker and to individual homes. ○ Pumps (12) – to be provided by the Council, quicker, more details as to where being pumped to so as not to create knock on effect. ○ Officers in the communities (11) (LA Liaison Officers) to be the face of the Council to answer community questions. ○ Waste Bins (3) to be provided in the communities and collected in advance of flooding. ○ Portaloos (3) – more to be provided, to be cleaner and quicker in their delivery.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Road signs (1) – such as flood, road closed etc to be stored in communities to be put out quicker.
Maintenance	45	<p>Of the comments received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 14 referred to improved maintenance of Thames Water assets ○ 13 referred to the Env Agency improving the maintenance on the rivers (weed management, regarding, removing blockages, managing riparian owners who do not do their responsibilities) ○ 15 referred to improvement of surface water drains & ditches ○ 3 referred to improved management of ditches/drains/culverts of private landowners.
Communications	42	<p>The improvements suggested in relation to communications include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Specific information improvements in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Public Health Info ○ Bin Collections ○ Roles and Responsibilities ○ The communication routes to the wider communities – not only by email or internet. ○ Web Pages not being up to date or providing information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More use of local radio ○ Much more general JOINT information as to what is happening and where it is happening and by whom ○ A need for more WBC officers in the communities ○ Support for public meetings ○ Ensuring all staff in the EOC, contact centres, out in the area are aware of the current situations to give the most accurate detail to the communities
Flood Defences	27	<p>These 26 comments refer to specific flood defence type schemes (rather than routine maintenance). They include specific areas to suggest diversions/ditches to be created, storage areas for water, dredging etc.</p> <p>Suggestion that the Council could be more involved in advising on flood defences for properties</p>
Roads	11	<p>The improvements suggested in this area include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More closure of footpaths ○ More road closures – and quicker ○ Diversion routes being put in place and signposted ○ Protection put in place where roads open but there is flood water to protect homes.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fords to be closed earlier ○ Enforcement of Road Closures
Joint Working/Comm and & Control	10	<p>The improvements suggested in relation to joint working and command and control included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Joint preventative work – including the improvements ongoing with the Flood Forums in place ○ More visible joint working of all the emergency services, Council and the military. ○ More joint working with the communities and the other responders. ○ More communications in relation to this joint working.
Response times	10	<p>Appearance of Council not being up to speed and responding slowly as a result.</p> <p>Reviewing communications may assist in resolving this issue</p>
Utilities (other than Maintenance issues)	5	<p>Recommendations to put more pressure on the utilities – Thames Water and Scottish & Southern Electricity to improve their services.</p>
Listen	5	<p>The comments were in relation to listening to communities as often local knowledge can help the responders – esp some historical information.</p>
Members	4	<p>The feedback referred to some positive action by Members but also improvements by way of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thinking and acting in best interest of constituents rather than external visitors ○ Visiting their communities ○ Be part of the communications process
Officers	3	<p>Concerns raised in relation to the empathy of a few officers to the community in difficult times.</p>
Development Control	2	<p>More consideration should be given to further development in flood risk areas</p>
Plans	1	<p>Suggestion that the plans are reviewed</p>
Learning from Others	1	<p>This referred to learning from the Somerset Levels.</p>
Companies	1	<p>This specifically referred to the fact that the Royal Mail could not deliver in some areas.</p>

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Schools	1	Suggested some training in schools to children about flood water risks
Vulnerable	1	Recommended more direct communication with the vulnerable – not only those known to the Council but GP's and known in the community.
Misc Points Noted	15	These comments referred to specific facts rather than suggested improvements.

Of the 242 individual points made from the 146 responders the main issues raised were:

- 24% related to resources – sandbags/pumps/people etc
- 19% related to maintenance (of Thames Water, Environment Agency and WBC assets)
- 17% related to communications
- 11% related to flood defences

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 14:

- There is a high expectation of all those responding of what the Council should do. (this was also the feedback from the Somerset Levels debrief)
- There is a lack of understanding as to who is responsible for what including the residents responsibilities. When informed there is often a cry of what do I pay my Council Tax for?
- There is a lack of understanding about how all agencies work together during incidents.
- There are a number of flood forums in place with action plans which will pick up some of the specific issues relating to roles and responsibilities, specific engineering solutions in at risk communities and the promotion of responsibilities.
- There are some specific elements from the feedback e.g. delivery of mail etc that should be picked up as a wider action plan with respect to general community resilience planning.
- Communications needs to be reviewed in all its forms.

23. When asked what the resident responders **would do differently next time**. 86 responders provided information which has been split into a number of themes:

Actions to be taken	No responding
Put in Property level protection or flood defences	39
Call the Council or other agencies	19
Nothing	9
Prepare more and act sooner	7
Move out	6
Get more involved with the Community efforts	3
Sell	2
Do riparian ownership work to ditches and rivers	1
Ensure Insurance is up to date	1

RESIDENTS Key Points/Comments 16:

- Again there is a high expectation of all those responding that the Council and other agencies can prevent the flooding and will therefore call us earlier or more often.
- Again the lack of understanding as to who is responsible for what including the residents responsibilities is demonstrated.
- A large number 39 (42%) are considering their own property level protection and flood defences.
- There are 37 responders (highlighted in red) (43%) who appear to be reliant on others or hoping that it will not occur again rather than doing something about the risk.
- More information on roles and responsibilities is necessary.