

# 2024 Section 19 Flood Report

<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Scrutiny Commission
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	17 October 2024
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Stuart Gourley
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jon Winstanley
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	N/A

## 1 Purpose of the Report

To present the investigation into the flooding across West Berkshire during the early part of 2024 in accordance with section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. That the views of the Scrutiny Commission inform the prioritisation process for proposals resulting from the S19 report.

## 2 Recommendation(s)

That the contents of the report be noted and, following input from the Scrutiny Commission, further developed to produce a prioritised action plan of flood resilience measures which will be reported for Individual Decision to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Highways.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	The S19 report has no direct financial implications. However, many of the actions, mitigation measures and initiatives recommended in the s19 report will require financial support and be subject to Council funding or successful bids for external funding.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	None as a result of this report, however some of the actions, mitigation measures and initiatives recommended in the s19 report will require additional resource to deliver.
<b>Legal:</b>	None

<b>Risk Management:</b>	The measures proposed within the s19 report are aimed at reducing the risk of future flooding.			
<b>Property:</b>	Proposed measures within the report may have an impact on third party property and assets belonging to other flood risk authorities.			
<b>Policy:</b>	The proposals relate to national and local flood risk policies.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	x			The proposals contained within the report will improve resilience to flood risk for properties across West Berkshire.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	x			The health and wellbeing impact of flooding can be significant. Reducing the risk of flooding will have a positive impact on health.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		x		None

<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		x		None
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	x			The recommendations from the s19 report supports two of the Council’s priorities:  1) Tackling the climate and ecological emergency  2) A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire.
<b>Core Business:</b>		x		N/A
<b>Data Impact:</b>		x		N/A
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	<p>Comment has been sought from Thames Water and the Environment Agency. Whilst no response had been received at the time of publication of the report, it is known that both the Environment Agency and Thames Water are preparing detailed responses, and these can be incorporated into the report at a later date.</p> <p>Flood Wardens have also had an opportunity to feed into the development of the investigation report and mitigation measures for their local areas.</p>			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 From January to April 2024 widespread flooding occurred across West Berkshire. Many of the observed river level gauges and groundwater boreholes in the District were the highest on record, demonstrating the severity of the flooding.
- 4.2 Under section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA), Lead Local Flood Authorities are required to investigate and report on flood incidents based on the investigation criteria within the [Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) (Appendix 3).
- 4.3 Given the extent of the flooding, consultants WSP were employed to assist with information gathering and the production of the section 19 investigation report.
- 4.4 The report produced sets out (as far as practicable) the flood risk management responsibilities of the different authorities, the cause of flooding in the various locations and potential options to mitigate future incidents.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 Consultants WSP were commissioned by West Berkshire Council to conduct Section 19 Flood Investigations following flooding which was reported across West Berkshire because of storms in January 2024. The storms included Storm Henk on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January, Storm Isha from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, and Storm Jocelyn from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 24<sup>th</sup> of January. The flooding led to internal and external property flooding to residents & businesses and road closures.
- 5.2 The s19 report produced by WSP gives a detailed analysis of the rainfall that led to the flooding, with the 3 months preceding the flooding recorded as being some of the wettest on record.

### Background

- 5.3 A total of 77 properties were flooded internally across 10 Parish Council areas. Sources of the flooding include groundwater, fluvial (river), pluvial (surface water) and flooding from sewers.
- 5.4 Residents have in the past been (understandably) reluctant to report that their properties have flooded internally as this can impact on insurance premiums. However, it is important that we understand which properties have been impacted to ensure we can plan mitigation measures and to demonstrate to central government that our flood hit areas are in need of additional funding. Reported numbers of properties flooding both during and immediately following the initial floods were low (less than 20).
- 5.5 To improve our understanding of the numbers of properties impacted leaflets drops were undertaken targeting flood hit areas with a QR code linking to a questionnaire. This proved effective with a total of 159 responses received with 76 properties having flooded internally.
- 5.6 The most recent comparable flooding event occurred in 2014 where 182 properties flooded across the district. The table below gives a comparison the 2014 and 2024 events in the numbers of properties flooded internally.

	Parish/Town	2014 Properties flooded (habitable areas).	2024 Properties flooded (habitable areas).
1	West Ilsley	9	0
2	East Ilsley	13	0
3	Compton	2	0
4	Hamstead Norreys	6	0
5	Lambourn	12	8
6	East Garston	6	0
7	Great Shefford	16	3
8	Winterbourne	1	2

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9	Newbury	41	11
10	Woolhampton	3	0
11	Theale	5	7
12	Burghfield	18	11
13	Padworth	4	0
14	Hamstead Marshall	1	0
15	Streatley	12	6
16	Pangbourne	4	4
17	Purley on Thames	29	25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>77</b>

5.7 Whilst flooding to any property is unfortunate, the above table demonstrates that flood mitigation measures following the 2014 event have proved effective in reducing the flood risk. Such measures include:

- Lambourn property level protection.
- Padworth property level protection.
- East Ilsley pipe maintenance and bund to retain flood water.
- Eastbury flood alleviation scheme.
- Pangbourne (Sulham Brook) Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- West Ilsley – pipe lining and maintenance.
- Compton – culvert replacement, pipe repairs and river pang clearance.
- Newbury cemetery flood alleviation bund and drainage improvements.
- Newbury flood alleviation scheme.
- Winterbourn Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- Pang Valley Natural Flood Management Projects
- Woolhampton, Station Road flood and drainage improvements.
- Great Shefford temporary flood relief channel/pumping (permanent flood alleviation channel has started on site).
- General District wide property level protection via the Property Resilience Grant (102 properties across the district benefitting from grants of up to £5000. Over £450k distributed).

5.8 The statistics in the table above demonstrate that the investment in flood infrastructure has been effective.

5.9 As outlined in the section 19 report, further measures are needed to reduce flood risk further and particular focus should be given to areas with high numbers of properties affected and those areas that experienced an increase in numbers flooded since the 2014 event.

### Grant Funding

5.10 Following the flood events the government announced a number of grants that residents and businesses could apply for if they had been impacted by the flooding. The main

criteria of the aid offered by central government is that a minimum of 50 properties must have flooded internally for the authority to be eligible for grant support. Fortunately, the response to the leaflet drop in flood hit areas provided the evidence needed. Property owners also had to demonstrate that they had flooded between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January.

5.11 A summary of the grants along with the number of properties benefitting and the amount issued can be seen in the table below.

Grant	Description	No. of properties benefitting	Total funding issued.
Community Recovery Grant	£500 grant if their residence was deemed to have been impacted by Storm Henk between 2nd to 12th January 2024.	45	£22,500
Council Tax Discount	A 100% Council Tax discount may be awarded for a minimum of three months for those impacted by the flooding.	45	£48,196
Business Recovery Grant	Small-to-medium-sized businesses that were flooded were eligible for grants of £2,500.	9	£22,500
Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme	Up to £5,000 available per property to make homes and businesses more flood resilient and to allow them to recover more quickly from future flooding.	41 applications have been approved in principle. 7 have completed works and claimed funding.	£27,254.80

5.12 To date £120,450.80 of grant funding has been distributed to West Berkshire residents and businesses following the flooding.

## 6 Conclusion

6.1 Widespread flooding impacted on many communities across West Berkshire. The section 19 investigation report provides a detailed assessment of the cause and impact, along with potential mitigation measures and potential actions for partner flood risk organisations.

6.2 The contents of the section 19 report should be noted contents of the report be noted and further developed to produce a prioritised action plan of measures to improve flood resilience across the district.

## 7 Appendices

### Appendix A – WSP Section 19 Flood Investigation 2024

#### Background Papers:

None

#### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position
- Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** \*(add text)

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