

## Background and Context

Following on from the publication of the Government guidance *Emergency Response and Recovery*, a section was included in the Rotherham MBC generic Borough Emergency Plan focussing on recovery and how it would be addressed should a major incident affect the Borough. This section included:

- How recovery would be controlled and co-ordinated, specifically through a Recovery Working Group
- Roles and responsibilities within the recovery process
- Particular areas that the Group should focus on as specified in the guidance:
  - Social Impacts (disruption to daily life, education, transport, utilities, and displacement)
  - Health Impacts (death, physical and psychological impacts)
  - Economic Impacts (individual and businesses needs, infrastructure and macro-economy)
  - Environmental Impacts (bio-diversity and ecosystems, built environment, waste and pollution, natural resources).

The floods which occurred during June 2007 caused damage right across the Borough of Rotherham and instigated implementation of the plan.

## How the Topic was Handled

The initial actions for the Corporate Recovery Working Group (RWG), which was set up immediately after the response phase had finished and early stages of recovery had commenced, included addressing how the floods had impacted across the Authority.

The composition of the group, which was chaired by the Director of Asset Management, included representation from each Directorate, specialist departments and external partners such as Voluntary Action Rotherham and the PCT.

Officers from the initial and subsequent meetings were tasked with finding out and reporting back on how the floods had affected their area of responsibility including:

- Updates on the clean-up operation
- Number and location of residential properties flooded
- Number and location of businesses affected
- Repairs to the infrastructure
- Disruption to transport
- Financial assistance to both businesses and individuals
- Charitable donations
- Recovering costs
- Disruption to residential and social care
- Health implications
- Work of the Flood Assistance Centre
- Public meetings

- Media / VIP visits
- Waste and pollution
- Damage to bio-diversity, ecosystems and natural resources
- Damage to the built environment.

Some statistical data that was derived from information gleaned during this exercise can be found below (data gathered July 2007 unless stated):

Issue	Numbers	Comments
Agricultural Impact	Nil	
Businesses Affected	406	
Community Safety/ Community Cohesion	Nil	All minor issues dealt with at the time.
Council Premises Affected	28	Minor to major damage.
Emergency Reception Centres Opened (Herringthorpe Leisure Centre and Dinnington Comprehensive School)  Ø Wath Montgomery Hall, Wath-upon-Dearne	Over 650 people  20 people	Maltby Comprehensive School put on standby but not used.

Ø Meals provided

2373

Ø Washing completed

62 loads

Fatalities	Nil	
Flood Assistance Centre	Over 600 requests for advice and assistance, as well as managing charitable donations.	
Infrastructure		
Ø Streets damaged	36	Minor to major repair.
Ø Footpaths damaged	14	

Ø Potholes

202 repaired

Ø Road closures

42

Ø Rail Network	2 closures	<p>Rotherham Mainline Station re-opened Monday 23 July 2007.</p> <p>Kiveton Station currently closed for a further 3 months owing to embankment collapse.</p>
Performance Indicators Affected	Currently 20	
Public Health and Healthcare	6 residents out of 33 who were evacuated from private nursing homes that are funded by the Council remain in alternative accommodation.	
Public Meetings	4	Catcliffe, Whiston, Dinnington/ Laughton Common and Thorpe Hesley/Scholes, with follow up meetings.
Residential Reported Properties Flooded (as at 1 November 2007)	428	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 47 Council and 381 private.</li> <li>· A full investigation is ongoing.</li> <li>· A full investigation is ongoing.</li> </ul>
Ø Number of Council tenants without home insurance	22	

Ø Households requiring alternative accommodation	44	
Ø Grants paid to residents	371	
Sandbags	10,000 provided	360 requests received

School Closures	77	Two still remain closed - Kilnhurst Primary and The Willows - 306 children displaced.
Ø Pupils affected	25,111	
Ø Pupil days lost	48,144	
Skips provided to affected residents	273	
Ulley Reservoir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· 8.5 million litres of water pumped out each hour</li> <li>· 2,000 tonnes of hard core added to the Dam wall.</li> <li>· 2,000 tonnes of hard core added to the Dam wall.</li> </ul>	



Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· HRH the Prince of Wales - Friday 29 June 2007</li> <li>· Minister of State for Children, Schools and Families, Jim Knight MP - Thursday 26 July 200</li> <li>· Minister of State for Children, Schools and Families, Jim Knight MP - Thursday 26 July 200</li> </ul>
--------	---

## Social Impacts

It became evident early on in the recovery phase that people wanted and even expected assistance, particularly with the clean up operation, whether they were council tenants or private householders. The council, with direction from the Corporate Management Team and Corporate Recovery Group, minimised disruption to daily life and the utilities through the provision of:

- Skips for residents to dispose of their flood affected furniture etc
- Separate lorries to collect white goods to dispose of them in line with environmental requirements
- Neighbourhood wardens assisting residents with cleaning out of their homes and the provision of security for homes vacated
- Cleaning gloves and materials being provided to residents to reduce risk to health
- Under the direction of the Council 2010 Rotherham Ltd, sent engineers to check the safety of gas and electric appliances for both Council and private residents.

A number of residents have been made temporarily homeless by the flooding. This has been addressed by the Council with the provision of alternative accommodation. Permission was granted to some residents to put caravans close to their flooded properties for them to move into in the short term. Assistance was also provided by laying suitable hardstanding and the provision of electrics to the caravans.

The Flood Assistance Centre in the Memorial Hall in Catcliffe provided residents in the affected communities with a central point or one-stop-shop for all their wants and needs. The Assistance Centre was well publicised with offers of transportation for those who couldn't get there by their own means. This information point has since been replaced by a Portacabin staffed at publicised times.

The Public Meetings have also proved helpful in ascertaining the wants and needs of the affected communities and nearly all actions taken away

from the meetings have now been addressed; follow up meetings have also taken place.

Charitable aid in the form of donated goods and financial aid grants are being co-ordinated and managed through The South Yorkshire Community Foundation Appeal and application for grants through this appeal can be made either individually or community based. Additionally, financial support in the form of a grant from both the Government and Council was given to every affected household and where appropriate council charges have been waived.

## **Health Impacts**

Luckily there were no deaths in Rotherham as a result of the floods and there were no particular health issues raised although Environmental Health officers were informed of rat infestations. It is noted that Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber are conducting a survey to determine any health impacts that may have been experienced. Dr John Radford, Rotherham PCT has agreed with the Health Protection Agency that they will undertake an environmental assessment relating to the flooding of the River Rother at Catcliffe.

Neighbourhood and Adult Services have compiled data of those individuals who were considered to be vulnerable prior to the flooding but now have an increased vulnerability, as well as those that were adversely affected and require additional support in the interim period. It should be noted that this vulnerability is due to physical problems, not social ones.

The Health Protection Agency have sent out a questionnaire to all flood areas to ascertain if there are any long term health issues, both physical and psychological as a result of the floods.

## **Environmental Impacts**

Streetpride arranged the collection and appropriate disposal of white goods from affected residents (both Council and non Council tenants). This continued until there was no demand for this service.

Increased street cleaning and refuse collections in affected areas continued until demand diminished.

A vast number of sandbags had been issued throughout the duration of the incident. Streetpride made the decision that where these had been delivered in large quantities they would be collected. Where they had been distributed in smaller quantities, residents were advised to either use them for their own purpose, ie. spread in the garden, or to ring and arrange collection.

Bio-diversity and the eco-system were investigated and there have been no reports of any impact or effects on the bio-diversity of the area or eco-systems.

Loss of a natural resource was identified in Ulley Country Park due to the ongoing efforts however the decision has now been made to repair and reinstate the reservoir and surrounding Country Park.

## Economic Impact

Approximately 406 business premises were affected through the flooding; at the time this was due to a number of reasons including loss of power, inability to access the building(s), or the premises being flooded. Some businesses still remain closed.

Representatives from the Council's RiDO (Rotherham Investment and Development Office) are continuing to liaise with colleagues on a wider basis in order to gauge the effects on the macro economy of the local area and restore confidence to businesses both in Rotherham and future business links.

In April 2007, the council organised a borough wide Business Continuity Event for all businesses and voluntary organisations. On 22 November 2007, an additional event was held reminding businesses of the need to have Business Continuity Plans in place. Following this, it is intended to host a number of workshops which will help and assist individual businesses to formulate their Business Continuity Plans.

A number of council premises were also damaged and suffered loss as a result of the flooding.

## Financial Impact - Overall Cost of the Emergency

In order to identify the full financial impact of the storm and flooding, Directorates were asked to identify the events and actions that gave rise to costs (both revenue and capital items). The outcomes of this process are summarised in the table below which shows expenditure incurred to date and an estimate of ongoing costs - it must be appreciated that this figure could, of course, fluctuate with time.

	Revenue £'000	Capital £'000	Total £'000
Cost of dealing with the emergency	2,905		2,905
Damage to Council property and equipment	3,391	6,516	9,907
Loss of income	1,716		1,716
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,012</b>	<b>6,516</b>	<b>14,528</b>

The full financial impact of the floods is currently being determined - this includes impact on the Capital Programme, Insurance, Bellwin Claims and Revenue budgets.

The **Recovery Working Group** will continue to meet until all actions outstanding from the minutes of the meetings and the Public Meetings have been completed, although the majority of them now focus on people who are still not back in their home and drainage and flood defence

issues. It is anticipated that all council residents will be back in their homes for Christmas 2007.

## Lessons Identified

1. Alternative Borough Emergency operations room, alternative storage for emergency stores and purchase of equipment such as pumps for future flooding events; strategic placing of sandbags around the borough.
2. Full review of Council's insurance arrangements for all its resources.
3. Full review of Council's water rescue resources and equipment together with a policy on its implementation which will be progressed in future meetings with partners.
4. Further development of inter-agency working with South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive in emergency situations.
5. Production and maintenance of a Vulnerable Persons Listing in conjunction with the Primary Care Trust.
6. Review the structure and cleaning of vulnerable drains and culverts around the borough.
7. Public liaison groups in areas subject to flooding to be established and progressed
8. Ensure the Chief Executives office is kept informed of instances where residents are required to pay inflated costs or excesses for insurance.
9. A walk around the flood affected areas by appropriate ward Members and Parish Councillors.
10. Improving procedures for assisting non-English speaking residents in an emergency.

All above are subsequently being addressed, along with recommendations from the de-briefs. In addition, comments made within the Independent Review by Sir Mike Pitt and the Environment Agency review are being taken into consideration for future development and improvement.

## Contacts for Further Information

**Alan Matthews,**  
Emergency and Safety Manager,  
Rotherham MBC  
Tel: 01709 823878  
[alan.matthews@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:alan.matthews@rotherham.gov.uk)

**Annette Senior,**  
Emergency Planning Officer,  
Rotherham MBC  
Tel: 01709 823861  
[annette.senior@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:annette.senior@rotherham.gov.uk)