

Report of Carl Green, Head of Engineering Services, to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 27 January 2020

Implementation of recommendations of Flooding Task Group

Extract from minutes of meeting of the Cabinet held on Wednesday 28 November 2018, with updated information added for the benefit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Decision

Cabinet thanked the chairman and members of the task group for the very useful work they had put into clarifying the role of councillors and highlighting the support and training required and agreed the following recommendations:

1. That ward councillors actively support the excellent work already being undertaken by Flood Action Groups (FLAGs) and provide a lead in exploring options with local residents for setting up FLAGs in other parts of Wyre.

UPDATE:

Ward councillors are actively setting up FLAGs in Great Eccleston, Hambleton, Garstang and Pilling. Greater involvement from Ward members in Fleetwood wards is sought. A number of ward councillors actively support the FLAGs and attend the Wyre Flood Forum.

At the Flood Forum on 9th January the excellent work undertaken by the FLAGs within Wyre was highlighted. Officers continue to support the FLAGs and attend the group meetings.

2. That ward councillors advise, support and encourage residents to take whatever actions are necessary to make their own properties more resilient against the threat of flooding, perhaps to include the installation of flood gates/doors or the development of a Household Emergency Plan, for example. Actions should also include taking steps to improve resilience when household improvements are being made, such as new kitchens avoiding the use of chipboard or the installation of a flood-resistant front door.

UPDATE:

The role of ward councillors is included in flooding literature and included on the council's website flooding pages.

3. That a campaign is undertaken by the Communications Team to ensure that the community is fully informed about the role of councillors before during and after flooding events. This should include clarity about what is included and what is not included within elected members' roles and responsibilities in relation to flooding.

UPDATE:

- A presentation was provided to members by the Head of Engineering
- A drop in session was undertaken for members to meet the communications team and to discuss their role during emergencies
- The web site has been updated to reflect what the community should expect of their councillors during a flood event.
- A leaflet has been produced outlining what to do in a flood and what councillors can assist with.
- A guidance document has been issued to councillors.

4. That a system be put in place to ensure that ward councillors are provided with all essential information about flooding events, in a timely fashion, including the decisions made by the Strategic Coordinating Group and the implications for local communities.

UPDATE:

- A protocol has been adopted with information sent to councillors of affected wards. This is encapsulated in the emergency flood plan.

5. That the role of the ward councillors as an 'information hub' for residents be reinforced at every opportunity, so that it is fully understood by councillors and members of the public.

UPDATE:

- Including debriefing session and information gathering following a flood
- A dedicated flooding site and dedicated space during a flood. The Facebook page and Twitter feeds would refer back to the page for regular updates.

6. That ward councillors be facilitated to contribute to the de-briefing session following a flooding event.

UPDATE:

- The ongoing procedure will be that ward councillor in affected wards will be invited to the drop in session following

7. That the importance of ward councillors being involved in the medium and long-term support of people whose properties have been flooded be encouraged by

(i) Advising residents that this is part of the agreed role of a ward councillor, and

(ii) Ensuring that ward councillors have the requisite skills and knowledge to carry out such a role effectively

UPDATE:

- Developing a councillor training programme. Support through Flood Forum and community walk-about.

8. That flooding event training be made available to councillors at least annually, perhaps by way of a presentation at a pre-Council briefing or by other agreed methods.

UPDATE:

- This will continue on an annual basis.

9. That a list of Dos and Don'ts for councillors be adopted and distributed to all members, in line with the training to be provided as per recommendation 8 above.

- This was circulated to members.

Cabinet noted recommendation 3.6 of the report.

Recommendation 3.6

- 3.6** That the council stops routinely providing sandbags with immediate effect, in recognition of the facts that their effectiveness is limited, they are labour-intensive to fill and distribute and that members of the public should be increasingly encouraged to take responsibility for making their own properties safe from floods.

Consideration should be given to continuing to provide a limited number of sandbags to protect critical assets and to support FLAGs for distribution to previously identified vulnerable residents.

UPDATE:

- This has been widely publicised and accepted by the FLAG groups.

Carl Green

Head of Engineering Services

17 January 2020