

## MEMBER/PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO SCRUTINY 27 JANUARY 2021

### 1.1 Question from West Dereham Parish Council

What is NCC doing about flooding in the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, particularly in West Dereham? Properties in Station Road, West Dereham have suffered severe external flooding so far in 2021, with the concern that any further incidence may result in flooded homes and damage to property. Homeowners in Station Road, West Dereham say that they have reported the problem to Norfolk County Council but no positive action to remedy the situation has been taken. Could you please explain why this is the case?

#### Response by Chairman of Scrutiny Committee

When the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) learn of a flood event in Norfolk, the Council will consider whether an investigation should be carried out, under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, in order to determine:

- Which authorities have relevant flood risk management functions
- Whether each of those authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.

The Council take a risk based approach to investigating flooding, using the [Flood Investigation Protocol](#) and [impact criteria](#). The following types of flooding will initiate a flood investigation

- Any risk to loss of life or serious injury
- One or more properties flooded internally and/or one or more properties rendered inoperable or their functions severely compromised due to the access to the premises being impassable
- Any section of a national category 3 road or above made impassable due to flooding and/or flooding to [priority 1 and 2 gritting routes](#).

If any property owners have suffered internal flooding please can they report it via our website: [Report a flood - Norfolk County Council](#)

If the flooding is connected to the ordinary watercourses to the south and east of Station Road, please contact the Downham Market Group of Internal Drainage Boards, who may be able to advise. Following the submission of your question, our Flood and Water Management Team have contacted them to alert them to the issues in West Dereham.

### 1.2 Question from Cllr Sandra Squire

In low lying areas of the Fens, it can be hard to ascertain the cause of drainage issues and flooding or who is responsible for solving issues so they don't reoccur in the future. When it is ascertained that the problem is a drain managed by a riparian owner that causes flooding, the council is reluctant to engage with riparian owners and make

them undertake required maintenance, so the problem persists. Is it time that areas that raise concerns, have their drains audited to ensure they work efficiently and that residents are given a single point of contact when issues arise, rather than having to negotiate with several different organisations.

#### **Response by Chairman of Scrutiny Committee**

The regulatory responsibility for the ordinary watercourses in the low lying areas of the Fens rests with the Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) who have their own bylaws for applying their powers for maintenance and obstructions.

Outside the IDB areas the Council have regulatory responsibility for ordinary watercourses, and we may take measures, in line with the Council's Flood and Water Management Enforcement Protocol, where an action has or is likely to increase flood risk and relates to:

- Internal flooding of a residential property which can include an attached garage (please note - a detached garage or shed is not considered internal)
- Flooding of critical infrastructure e.g. hospitals
- Flooding of main roads e.g. priority 1 and 2 winter gritting routes

### **1.3 Question from Cllr Ed Maxfield**

The Flood Management Team worked hard in response to the December flooding event. I only heard positive comments locally about how it was handled at the time. However, has the event exposed the need for more resources to be invested? I do hear that dealing with the results of the December flooding is still affecting the team's ability to tackle other work. Do we also need clearer lines of accountability following the adoption of a new Flood Management Strategy: the workings of the North Norfolk Surface Water Steering Group remain opaque to me and their web page only lists two flood reports, one of which is not in North Norfolk.

#### **Response by Chairman of Scrutiny Committee**

On the 12th of January 2021 Cabinet agreed to invest £650,000 in additional revenue and capital funding to increase the resource in the Flood and Water Team, to cover urgent repairs on the highway network caused by floodwater damage, and to repair existing drainage systems. A further £1.5m has been allocated in 2021/22 for a Flood Reserve to assist with flood related issues.

The Cabinet also agreed to set up a task force to work with MPs and other stakeholders to ensure that the Environment Agency develops comprehensive, costed and funded plans to meet the challenges as set out in the recently published national strategy for England. The Council will also be developing a "memorandum of understanding" with other organisations who are key stakeholders in flood events (e.g. Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Boards, Anglian Water, other councils etc) to set out respective responsibilities, and a framework to help support and deliver common objectives and potential pooled funding in terms of how we collectively respond to and manage flooding events.

Additionally, when the Council prioritises and progresses flood risk mitigation studies in areas of local flood risk, stakeholder groups are formed that include the Districts, Anglian Water, local Internal Drainage Boards and other relevant stakeholders to assist the identification of flood risk issues and their potential solutions.