

Flooding update

Oliver Morley &

Hilary Tandy – Flood Manager –
Cambridgeshire County Council

Background



- Cambridgeshire and its neighbouring counties experienced widespread flooding in December 2020 and January 2021. Huntingdonshire was particularly affected. Subsequently, an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was established to conduct an evidence-based investigation into the nature and extent of the flooding, the lessons that could be learnt and the steps that might be taken to ensure communities are adequately prepared going forward.
- A focussed study methodology was devised. It identified primary sources of evidence, namely Cambridgeshire County Council, the Environment Agency and Anglian Water. Separate meetings were held with each of these organisations. The report summarises the evidence submitted, the discussions that took place and the actions agreed with partners that address the Terms of Reference.
- Original report can be found here. [8. Overview and Scrutiny Flooding Task and Finish Study.docx](#)

What was the response?

- We committed to 5 actions on the back of this work.
- This has then been informed by subsequent events including the events of January 2024
- A number of principles informed this work, and our work to date
 - Our residents struggle to understand who is responsible for what, and **simple guidance and single sources of the truth** benefit everyone.
 - There are **likely to be more flood events** over coming years, if the pattern of events we have seen over recent times continues.
 - There is a **key role for the public and community activity** in seeking to prepare and mitigate flood events
- In short flooding is everyone's responsibility, and HDC are committed to:
 - **Doing** what is within their powers and legal duties to do
 - To **enable** and support residents and communities to take action that will benefit our residents and businesses
 - To use our **influence** and work with partners to ensure residents voices are heard, and that we act to support the best possible outcomes for our residents

What we committed to doing following 2020/21 – All underway



- a) to **publicise links to flooding advice** through the District Council's own communication channels and forward the advice to all Town and Parish Councils;
- b) that the Council works with the County Council to **support the establishment of local flood groups** as a means to develop community resilience against future flooding and as an important additional source of information for forecasting flooding;
- c) a **study be undertaken by a group of technical experts to understand fully the causes of floods** linked to climate change, to look at the issue of cumulative impacts and to make a series of recommendations to feed into the next SPD document review, ensuring the refreshed document responds to changing realities and technology;
- d) to work with Cambridgeshire County Council and other partners to create a case conference system to **evaluate technical advice on flood mitigation on those most complex applications**,
- e) to **collaborate with partners on the development of a joint drainage and waste water management plan**, and
- f) that the Council **support the County Council in its project to map local water courses** and call for this mapping activity to begin with Huntingdonshire.

Planning and Land Management

Updates on activity



- The Environment Act became law in November 2021. It sets binding targets including for air quality, water, biodiversity and waste reduction
- HDC declared a climate emergency in 2023, recognising the impact of climate change on local events such as flooding
- HDC published a climate strategy in 2023. This sets the direction for how we manage our own land and influence partnership working with statutory stakeholders alongside Town & Parish Councils, with flood risk being a key consideration.
- In January 2023 Cabinet agreed to commence an update the Huntingdonshire Local Plan(HLP). One of the evidence bases being prepared relates to integrated water management (IWM). This will look at surface water, flood risk and waste-water. CCC are actively inputting into this process
- In preparing the update to the HLP statutory consultees are engaged in all consultations, and the EA are working with HDC through the stages of development of the HLP.
- We are actively trialling Alternative Land Management to support biodiversity, and hope to contribute to the slowing of water entering watercourses

Publicity and Promotion

Publicise opportunities to act on flooding [Flooding - Huntingdonshire.gov.uk](https://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk)



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Environmental Issues

Flooding

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Flooding

Who is responsible for managing flooding in the district?

[Cambridgeshire County Council](#)  is the Lead Local Flood Authority and is responsible for managing:

- surface water flooding - including rainfall that runs off surfaces such as roads, roofs and patios
- groundwater flooding - including flooding caused by long and heavy rainfall that increases the groundwater table flooding from ordinary watercourses, such as drains and ditches, but excluding main rivers.

Flooding from rivers is dealt with by the [Environment Agency](#) .

We are responsible for maintaining some watercourses and ensuring that owners of land next to watercourses



Be Prepared for an emergency

Flooding, severe weather, prolonged power out, heatwave, large smoke plume, chemical leak... how would you cope in an emergency situation?

If there is a major emergency affecting wide areas the emergency services will attend to the most vulnerable first. Being prepared and knowing what to do in an emergency can limit the impact of the emergency on you, your family and the community and help the recovery process.

Find out what you can do to be prepared using the tabs on the right.

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum (CLRf) is a multi-agency group



Severe Weather

Severe weather can come in many forms - rain, wind, snow, fog, severe cold or heatwave.

You can sign up for weather warnings through the Met Office.

In the event of severe weather:

- If possible store some basic supplies
- Keep pets indoors (bring outdoor pets in)
- Close doors and windows and close curtains to protect against broken windows
- Secure outdoor belongings such as bikes, garden furniture etc., or if possible bring them indoors
- If the gas, water or electric stop working let the relevant service know - know who your suppliers are and have their contact numbers and your account numbers in a handy place
- Warn vulnerable people in your community. Help them prepare.



Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Prepared



Severe weather

Prepare for flooding

- Sandbags
- Flood water
- Cold weather
- Strong winds
- Hot weather

Prepare for flooding

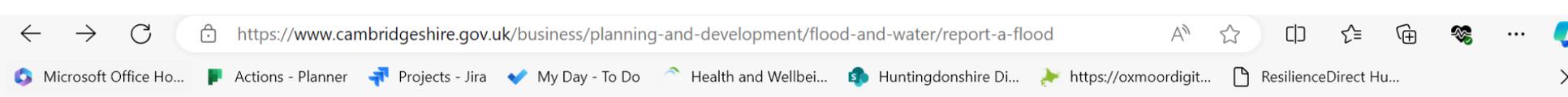
Is your home at risk of flooding?

Floods can happen quickly, so don't wait until it's too late to think about preparation.

Here are some things you can do to prepare before it starts raining.

- Check if your property is at risk from flooding
- Sign up for flood warnings if you live in a risk area
- Check your insurance coverage
- Find out what you can do to protect your home
- Consider flood protection equipment for your home
- Know how to turn off your utilities in your home
- Contact your Parish Council to find out if your community has a flood group

The self-reporting tool as a key asset



programme

Flood planning and
development

Flood risk management

Report a flood

Watercourse management

Flooding emergency

In the event of a flood, if there is a threat to life call 999

To report the emergency to the Police, please call 101

Report a flooding problem on roads and pavements

To report flooding problems on roads or pavements (e.g. overflowing drains and gullies) use the link to our highway reporting tool below.

[Report a flooding problem on roads and pavements](#)

Report flooding in a property, home or garden

Flood risk communities and Community Flood Groups

Following 2020/21 floods CCC identified areas triggering additional studies



- [Alconbury and Alconbury Weston](#) - Dec 2020
 - [Brampton](#) – Dec 2020
 - [Broughton](#) – Dec 2020
 - [Buckden](#) – Dec 2020
 - [Godmanchester](#) – Dec 2020
 - [Offords](#) – Winter 2020-21
 - [Old Hurst](#) – Winter 2020
 - [Ramsey](#) – Dec 2020
 - [Sawtry](#) – Dec 2020
 - [St Ives](#) – Dec 2020
 - [St Neots](#) – Dec 2020
 - [Woodwalton](#) – Winter 2020
 - [Great Ouse](#) – Dec 2020
 - [St Ives](#) – August 2020
 - [St Neots](#) – August 2020
-
- A review of risk and possible interventions has been completed across these areas with results expected in Feb/March.
 - The role of the Community sensors benefiting from the LoraWaN network.

CCC are aware of flood groups in the following areas, all are different:



- Abbots Ripton and Wennington
- Brampton
- Brington
- Buckden
- Elton
- Fenstanton
- Godmanchester
- Hemingford Grey
- Hilton Houghton & Wyton
- Kimbolton and Stonely
- Molesworth
- Offords
- St Ives
- St Neots
- Wistow
- Alconbury Brook (Alconbury, Alconbury Weston and Hammerton)



Cambridgeshire County Council

Play (k)



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Flood Groups, Flood Kit and Storage

Flood Groups, Flood Kit and Storage



What do you and your communities need to support the development of flood groups?



Watercourse Mapping

Who owns what?

How is it maintained?

What to do in the event of an
issue remain key concerns?

Demo by CCC

Hilary Tandy

How do we support the mapping work?



- Ensuring we have a single source of the truth on ownership and responsibilities around water courses is critical.
- This will always be an ongoing process, and as we continue to improve our knowledge of water courses, we will be pursuing ever more detailed work.
- Tracking down the information on ownership is not always a quick process, and one no authority is resourced for.
- We can provide advice and guidance for any member of the community or organisation to seek the clarity we desire.
- We are exploring a Citizen Science approach, where if community members do the research and submit the evidence we will update the map accordingly and take responsibility for any ownership it implies.

Flood Events of 2024

What happened?

- Emergency response 2nd January, in response to Storm Henk.
- Impact of the Storm and rainfall minimal given prior preparations.
- Emergency response escalated from 3rd January as River Flooding from catchments for the Great Ouse.
- Peak river levels and related flooding 5th – 7th January.

What we did?

- Communications went out to members and the public. How do we continue to enhance?
- Excellent response from Community flood groups
- On the ground response from HDC in Ramsey and Buckden amongst other areas.
- Planned contingencies multi-agency approach for evacuations

Taking the learning from the events of 2024



- Enhanced support for the Community role
 - Appetite to empower residents to take action within guidance?
Not asking for action but informing of action.
 - To act to safeguard their interests?
- That could include roles around checking watercourses, where there is a benefit for residents and communities to do so, supported by campaign resource.
 - E.g. Check your local culvert, move your car, put up a flooding sign.
- Work with County to explore a different management of operational delivery around street cleansing
- Explore a stronger enforcement approach to altering drainage arrangements without permission

What else and what next?



- HDC will strengthen our own severe weather/flood plan. Exploring how we will work with flood groups and promote flood prevention work, actions to be taken when alerts and warnings are received which would be linked to our graduated response framework.
- Influence CPLRF to undertake scenario planning for Huntingdonshire using EA modelling.
- Enhancing our communication and coordination role and using our comms channels to reassure and direct. Expand communications approach to broadcast more widely. Promote information centre for relevant trusted information.
- The Cambridge & Peterborough Local Resilience Forum (CPLRF) are establishing two pilot Community Resilience groups, one in St. Ives and one in Alconbury to promote community resilience and much of this work will be focused on currently establish community resilience groups such as the flood groups.
- Review at risk residents, especially independent living complexes

Questions and feedback