



## **North Devon Council**

**Date:** 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**Topic:** Progress Report re Barnstaple Flooding Event August 2020

**Report by:** Andy Cole  
Environmental Protection Service Lead

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. This report seeks to update the Committee on actions taken by Officers following the flooding event of August 2020.

1.2. The following associated reports have previously been submitted to the Committee:

- Full report - 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 - Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager
- Verbal report - 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 - Alex Miles, Graduate Emergency Planning Officer

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the current position.

### **3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 To provide the Committee with confidence that Officers are working collaboratively with all relevant stakeholders to ensure actions are undertaken by relevant parties to improve resilience in the likelihood of future flooding events.

### **4. REPORT**

4.1. Following the floods of August 2020, Council Officers' commissioned a drainage inspection survey to identify any defects present in drainage systems serving properties in Clifton Street and Sticklepath Terrace, Barnstaple - which could have contributed to the problems which were experienced by residents.

4.2. The survey acknowledged that the main factor which had led to the problems experienced was the overall capacity of the existing infrastructure network –

but also identified a number of defects present in the public and privately owned drainage systems.

- 4.3. Council Officers established a working group with key Councillors and representatives from relevant partner agencies - including Devon County Council (DCC), South West Water (SWW) and the Environment Agency (EA).

The purpose of the group was to work collaboratively to identify and undertake a course of action - to minimise the likelihood of residents experiencing similar problems to the future.

- 4.4. Having been made aware of the Council's survey, DCC and SWW undertook a programme of repair work – resulting in all the defects identified in the publicly owned drainage system infrastructure, being repaired.

- 4.5. SWW identified that the scale of work needed and level of financial investment required to deliver wider infrastructure improvements, meant that such works would not be able to be delivered in the short term future.

- 4.6. In addition to progressing projects associated with the delivery of these longer term works, SWW have also secured funding to make a range of interim infrastructure improvements – which will be delivered this financial year

- 4.7. DCC have also secured additional funding – which will enable affected properties to opt into a scheme to facilitate property specific flood protection measures to be installed – all funded by DCC.

- 4.8. Throughout this project, the working group has been undertaking regular communications with relevant property owners – as a partnership – to keep them updated on the ongoing work of the group.

- 4.9. In June 2022, on behalf of the working group, Cllrs Knight and Lofthouse hand delivered further communications to all affected properties:

- advising them of the works which SWW will be undertaking this financial year
- inviting them to apply for DCC administered property specific flood protection measures

- alerting relevant property owners / occupiers to defects which are present in their own properties – which it is their responsibility to repair

4.10. Whilst the actions secured through the working group will no doubt represent a significant improvement to the functionality of the existing drainage systems, Officers will continue to work with its' partners to ensure the ongoing delivery of these and future initiatives

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. Work undertaken so far in relation to this project has been delivered using existing financial and manpower resource.

## **6. EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT**

6.1. There are no equalities implications anticipated as a result of this report.

## **7. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

7.1. The delivery of improvements to existing drainage systems will help:

- adaptations to deal climate change
- prevent pollution
- protect the natural /built environment.

This will be achieved by :

- minimising the impacts of future flooding on public health and the environment by minimising the likelihood of sewage and foul water entering clean water systems
- building in resilience to cope with intense rainfall and flash flooding events

## **8. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

8.1. The development of this important work supports the Council's corporate priorities in relation to "Becoming Focused on Delivering the Best for our Citizens", "Cherishing and Protecting our Environment".

8.2. In addition, by establishing and nurturing strong and positive working relationships with relevant partners in relation to securing future improvements in drainage infrastructure, it will assist us in “Planning for North Devon's Future”

## **9. CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT**

9.1. Article of Part 3 Annexe 1 paragraph (h)

9.2. Delegated power

## **10. STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY**

This report contains no confidential information or exempt information under the provisions of Schedule 12A of 1972 Act.

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: (The background papers are available for inspection and kept by the author of the report).

- Committee report - 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020 - Katy Nicholls, Public Protection Manager
- Verbal report to Committee - 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020 - Alex Miles, Graduate Emergency Planning Officer

## **12. STATEMENT OF INTERNAL ADVICE**

The author (*Andy Cole - Environmental Protection Service Lead*) confirms that advice has been taken from the following Councillors and Officers:

- Cllrs Netti Pearson, David Knight, Graham Lofthouse
- Hannah Pettifer (Legal Executive)
- Jon Triggs (Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive)
- Jeremy Mann (Head of Planning, Housing and Health)
- Ken Miles (Chief Executive)
- Alex Miles (Graduate Emergency Planning Officer)
- Matthew Brown (Senior Planning Officer)
- Simon Fuller (Head of Legal Services)
- Donna Sibley (Sustainability and Climate Officer)

