

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	John-Paul Lovie, Head of Waste Policy and Partnerships
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jane Hugo, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment
Date of Decision:	23 January 2023

COMMUNITY FLOOD RESILIENCE POLICY 2023-2025

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To seek approval for the adoption and implementation of Blackpool Council’s Community Flood Resilience Policy 2023-2025.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To adopt the draft Community Flood Resilience Policy 2023-2025 attached at Appendix 4a and any associated communications and work streams with effect until 31 December 2025.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 In order for Blackpool Council to develop a clear, robust and sustainable policy in relation to community flood resilience. This will enable a consistent response to requests for assistance in a flood event and provide clear lines of accountability and communication with residents and partners. It will also provide clear concise information around any other flood defence/protection and equipment used by residents, and to ensure consistent messaging by the Council and its emergency partners during flood-event communications.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council’s approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 Not to adopt the policy. Given the increasing prevalence of flood events as a result of climate change, this would leave communities who live in high flood risk areas more vulnerable and less resilient to flood risk.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant council priority is: “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”.

6.0 Background information

6.1 As part of the council’s duties under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and the work with the Lancashire Resilience Forums Flooding and Severe Weather Groups, a Multi-Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) has been developed.

6.2 The plan consists of two parts:

MAFP Part 1 – Generic Multi-Agency Response Arrangement for Lancashire

MAFP Part 2 – Local Planning and Response Arrangements (based on Local Authority areas).

6.3 As part of the review of the above plans, a Community Flood Resilience Policy is required within Part 2 for each individual authority.

6.4 The Environment Agency is responsible for managing the flood risk from rivers and the sea, whereas Lead local flood authorities (LLFA) are responsible for managing the flood risk from surface water. For Blackpool, the Lead local flood authorities is Blackpool Council. The Environment Agency on behalf of government, have produced flood risks maps to show the potential risk and impacts of flooding in the flood risk areas. Flood risk maps showing the flood risk from rivers or the sea, from surface water and from reservoirs in Blackpool can be found at <https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/map> . The flood risk maps show that most areas in Blackpool are low flood risk, with some medium and high flood risk areas.

6.5 It should be noted that flooding has already taken place between the Blackpool and Wyre border in the Anchorsholme area in November 2017. A Section 19 investigation report in respect of the flooding in the Anchorsholme area was produced in order for Blackpool Council to discharge its’ statutory duty under the Flood and Water management Act (2010) (attached at Appendix 4b). Given the number and proximity of residential properties around this boundary, consideration has been given to the consequences of having a conflicting policy with Wyre and potential impact on any future community flood action groups. Therefore, the proposed policy is in line with Wyre’s policy and in addition Fylde’s, in order that the authorities’ approaches to developing community flood risk resilience are in keeping.

6.6 Property owners themselves maintain the responsibility to protect their properties and should plan to reduce the impact through advice and mitigation measures such as:

- Creating and completing a flood plan
- Preparing a flood kit of essential items;
- Obtaining appropriate insurance;
- Purchasing or obtaining/installing flood defence equipment or other appropriate

protection products (including sandbags if desired)

- Ensuring arrangements are in place for drains and watercourses, which they are responsible for, to be kept clear and properly maintained.

- 6.7 Climate change is likely to mean more frequent and intense flooding. Intense storms are becoming more frequent and sea levels are also rising because of climate change. As the threat of flooding is increasing, it is important that people know their risk and are prepared to take action. Central to Blackpool Council's proposed policy is ensuring residents are aware and able to reflect upon measures they can take to prepare prior to a flooding incident taking place. There are a number of products that local residents can purchase to make their home more resilient and prepare for flooding, details can be found on the council's web pages and at www.thefloodhub.co.uk (example booklet attached at Appendix 4c), as well as the National Flood Forum at www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk.
- 6.8 Another key focus of the proposed policy is the assistance and support of establishing sustainable community based flood action groups or forums. Initial meetings have been arranged, work is ongoing to establish and develop these groups.
- 6.9 Although the risk of flooding can never be entirely eliminated, the risk of water getting in to homes or businesses can be reduced, along with its impact if it does. The techniques come under many different names, including Property Level Resilience (PLR), Property Flood Resilience (PFR) and Property Level Protection (PLP). In addition to these measures the Council has also developed a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy including a live Business Plan which details what actions and activities the Council are undertaking with a view to reducing and mitigating flood risk, the non-technical version of this document can be found at www.blackpool.gov.uk.
- 6.10 Resilience is about reducing the impact of flooding, should water get inside a property. The aim is to ensure that damage is minimised and people can get back in to their homes or business as quickly as possible. Measures should be tailored to each property, such as using porous plaster, fitting solid floors or tiled floor coverings, raising electrics and taking simple steps in a flood event to move furniture and valuable possessions upstairs. Structural measures need to take account of the building type and its fabric.
- 6.11 The Six Steps to Flood Protection offers a step-by-step approach to ensure that you reduce the risk most effectively and are able to respond if there is a flood. See www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk for further detail and guidance around each of the following six steps:
1. Understanding the Risk
 2. Planning a Scheme
 3. Property Surveying
 4. Design and Specification
 5. Product Installation
 6. Maintenance and Operation.

- 6.12 In further support of developing a Community Flood Resilience Policy, the council is supporting the establishment and development of local based Community Flood Action Groups or Forums. This will enable effective communication to those in high-risk areas as well as sharing of best practice and latest developments.
- 6.13 Further to the above, in line with statutory obligations, Blackpool Council will not supply sandbags to individual domestic or commercial properties. This is in line with neighbouring districts across Lancashire ensuring a consistent approach. It is worth noting that sandbags are not recommended by the Environment Agency and are often ineffective due to a lack of knowledge in their use and the limitations associated with them. Post flood use, sandbags are considered to be hazardous waste and as such require dedicated, specialist (and costly) remove and disposal arrangements. There are more appropriate flood protection measures that can be taken by property owners, depending on what is trying to be achieved.
- 6.14 Additionally, it is worth noting that as part of the Blackpool Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) Investment Plan, a Community Flood Risk Reduction project has been proposed to increase flood resilience. The Shared Prosperity Fund project will have a portion of funding for communications to ensure communities in at risks areas are aware of flood risk, as well as £70,000 to deliver measures to assist. The proposed Community Flood Resilience Policy and Community Flood Risk Reduction project will have direct linkages as they are both centred on enabling communities who live in high flood risk areas to become more resilient in preparedness for a flood event. The Shared Prosperity Fund Investment plan was approved by government in December and further detail is included in the report on the Shared Prosperity Fund elsewhere on this Executive agenda.
- 6.15 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

- 7.1 Appendix 4a – Draft Community Flood Resilience Policy 2023
Appendix 4b – Section 19 Report (Investigation into flooding on 22nd November 2017)
Appendix 4c– Flood Hub example (Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Booklet, September 2021)
Appendix 4d – Equality Analysis Record Form

8.0 Financial considerations:

- 8.1 There are no associated financial impacts on the adoption and implementation of the draft policy.

9.0 Legal considerations:

- 9.1 The Council is required to produce a Community Flood Resilience policy as part of the Multi-Agency Flood Plan (MAFP).

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Potential reputation damage due to either a lack of, or a poorly implemented and communicated, community flood resilience policy.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 As detailed throughout the Equality Analysis (EA) Record Form (Appendix 4d).

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 The climate is changing and differences in weather patterns are resulting in more extreme weather events and an increased chance of flooding. While Blackpool Council has adopted a target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, in order to help mitigate the effects of climate change, the council also recognises the importance of adopting adaptation measures and building community resilience to the effects of climate change. The proposed Community Flood Resilience Policy is just one example of how the council will support communities to prepare for and cope with the likely increased prevalence of flood events in the future.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 This policy will be subject to discussion and agreement by the community flood groups referenced in this report.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? Yes

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 4/2023

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.31 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency: N/A

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If yes, please give reason:

N/A

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 13 January
2023

Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1

19.0 Summary of Discussion:

19.1

20.0 Executive decision:

20.1

21.0 Date of Decision:

21.1

22.0 Reason(s) for decision:

22.1

23.0 Date Decision published:

23.1

24.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

24.1

25.0 Executive Members in attendance:

25.1

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

27.0 Notes:

27.1