

Report to:

**TOURISM ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer:

John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser

Date of Meeting:

8 February 2023

COMMUNITY FLOOD RESILIENCE POLICY SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To inform the Committee on the work undertaken by the Community Flood Resilience Policy Scrutiny Review Panel.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 That the Committee approve the following recommendations of the review and incorporate future work into its workplan:

- That the wording of the Introduction of the Community Flood Resilience Policy be amended as outlined at 6.12 of this report.
- That details of local flood risk management work being undertaken be provided to Councillors.
- That the finalised Policy be brought to a future meeting of the TEC Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the Committee has an overview of ongoing Flood Risk Management work, as the responsible committee of the Council.

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 None.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

6.0 Background information

6.1 On the 15 December 2022 Members of the Tourism, Economy and Communities (TEC) Scrutiny Committee held a Review Panel meeting, to consider the work being undertaken to develop the Community Flood Resilience Policy.

6.2 The meeting was chaired by Councillor Gerard Walsh, with the following members of the TEC Scrutiny Committee in attendance:

6.3	Councillor Paula Burdess	Councillor Paul Galley
	Councillor Adrian Hutton	Councillor Fred Jackson
	Councillor Martin Mitchell	Councillor Rick Scott
	Councillor Paul Wilshaw	

6.4 Councillor Jane Hugo, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, Mr John Blackledge, Director of Community and Environment Services, Ms Clare Nolan-Barnes, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnerships, Mr John-Paul Lovie, Head of Waste Policy and Partnerships and Mr Scott Butterfield, Strategy and Climate Lead, were also in attendance.

6.5 It was reported that the last major flood event experienced in Blackpool was in Anchorsholme in 2017, with a minor event having taken place in Revoe in 2019. Since this time the Council and United Utilities (UU) had undertaken significant work to improve the management of flood risk in Blackpool. This had included investment by UU in flood mitigation infrastructure in Anchorsholme, such as a new water storage tank capable of holding the equivalent of five Olympic swimming pools of water. In addition to this UU had undertaken an investigation of water flow in Blackpool to better understand where future investment was required.

6.6 The Council had undertaken a programme of gully clearing works to improve drainage across the town. It had also been recognised that greater clarity was need for residents on which drains were “fast” draining and which were “slow”, as misunderstanding could lead to a perception that the drainage system was not working. Officers confirmed that the work by the Council and UU had improved the management of flood risk in Blackpool overall and the drainage system had operated effectively during recent heavy rainfall. However it had been noted that climate change made future forecasting difficult and would lead to new challenges

such as increased severe weather going forward. It was therefore important that the Council adopted a Community Flood Resilience Policy to ensure residents could be prepared for future severe weather events.

- 6.7 The unpredictable nature of future weather patterns, and the impact of “global weirding”, was recognised as being a permanent change to the weather experienced in Blackpool. This had led to the Council having to change its approach to new developments to mitigate potential flooding and had appointed a Climate Support Officer to engage communities and schools. This work would highlight the impact of climate change and show the changes that could be made to improve resilience. The Policy would support this through increasing the role of communities in flood risk management and ensuring greater adaptability in the response to climate change.
- 6.8 The Policy had been developed following the agreement of a Multi-Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) with partners across Lancashire, and would ensure a consistent approach to flood resilience in the county.
- 6.9 The aim of the Policy was to ensure that there was clarity on responsibilities and communications in relation to flooding and to allow communities ownership and the power to develop resilience in their areas. This included the development of Community Flood Action Groups across Blackpool, with funding support available from the Council’s Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 6.10 The review panel discussed importance of the community’s voice in the development of Community Flood Action Groups. To ensure engagement officers confirmed that consideration would be given to the timing, location and communications regarding the groups to maximise those involved. The Council had also sought to gain learning and advice from Wyre Borough Council where groups had been established and operated successfully. Officers also advised that initially it was proposed that groups would be established in the following areas:
- Anchorsholme
 - Claremont
 - Norbreck
 - Revoe
 - Valencia
- 6.11 Establishing these groups would begin in January 2023, with communications having been put in place for the process to be started. The establishment of groups in other areas would be dependent on community feedback, and the Council would be ready to provide support to any area that wished to establish a group.
- 6.12 Members noted that the wording of the Policy started with the words “There is no legal requirement for Blackpool Council to provide direct protection to private property from

flooding". Although this was technically accurate the review panel expressed the view that as a document seeking to engage and empower the community this wording was an unnecessarily negative beginning to the Policy. It was therefore recommended that this be changed to reflect the more positive intention of the Policy document.

6.13 The review panel also discussed the work taking place within Blackpool to mitigate flood risk and asked that members be provided with details of specific local work taking place to enable better understanding of what was taking place and improve communications with communities.

6.14 Officers welcomed the input from members of the review panel at the meeting and agreed that once further consultation had taken place on the Policy that a finalised version would be brought back to the TEC Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

6.15 The review panel asked that the following recommendations be noted by the TEC Scrutiny Committee:

- That the wording of the Introduction of the Community Flood Resilience Policy be amended as outlined at 6.12 of this report.
- That details of local flood risk management work being undertaken be provided to Councillors.
- That the finalised Policy be brought to a future meeting of the TEC Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

6.16 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 The Community Flood Resilience Policy forms part of the work being undertaken by the Council in relation to the declaration of a Climate Emergency. The TEC Scrutiny Committee has agreed, in addition to its role in scrutinising flood risk, to maintain an overview of climate emergency work and this meeting formed part of that scrutiny work.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.