

Committee: **Community Services Scrutiny Committee**
Date of meeting: **4th October 2021**
Report Subject: **Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, Llanhilleth**
Portfolio Holder: **Executive Member for Environment – Councillor Joanne Wilkins**
Report Submitted by: **Clive Rogers, Head of Community Services**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
07/09/2021	09/09/2021	23.09.21			04/10/2021	10/11/21		

1. Purpose of the Report

To present the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Llanhilleth following the flooding that occurred in Meadow Street and Railway Street during 15-16th February 2020.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 A Section 19 Flood Investigation Report is required under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 following a significant flood event. It is the duty of the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to investigate all significant flood events that occur in their area (a significant flood event being defined as any flood event where 20 or more properties have been flooded in a single period/event). Once completed, it shall publish its findings in a S19 Flood Investigation Report and to notify any relevant risk management authorities of its findings.

2.2 Blaenau Gwent CBC is the LLFA for Blaenau Gwent, and has recently completed its investigation into the surface water flooding that occurred in Meadow Street and Railway Street, Llanhilleth in February 2020. The purpose of the S19 report is to review the flooding incident that occurred and the operational response to the flood event. The S19 report also investigates the causes of the surface water flooding.

2.3 **Key findings of the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Llanhilleth:**

- Saturated Ground:

The winter that preceded the February storms of 2020 was one of the wettest on record and meant that much of the ground was already saturated before the February 2020 storms arrived, leading to an increase of surface water.

- Heavy and Persistent Rainfall:

Storm Dennis, which was the second storm event of February 2020, and occurred between 15th and 16th February 2020, brought an exceptionally high volume of rainfall to South Wales. In a period of 24 hours between 9am on 15th February and 9 am on 16th February 2020, 115 mm of rainfall was recorded at Carno Reservoir Rain Gauge (near Garnlydan, Ebbw Vale), which is 89 % of the total average monthly rainfall for February. At Cwmtillery Rain Gauge, 108 mm of rainfall was recorded in the same period, which is 95 % of the average monthly rainfall for February.

- River Levels:

River levels at Aberbeeg River Station during Storm Dennis exceeded 1.8m, the highest level recorded since records began in 1975. As a comparison, the average river flow recorded at the station is 0.8m. The report found that the surface water flooding was caused by exceptionally heavy rainfall, high volumes of surface water run-off and blockages in the highway drainage infrastructure. There was no evidence of river flooding during the investigation.

- Surface Water:

Due to the saturated ground and heavy and persistent rainfall, surface water increased, particularly at low points.

- Local topography:

A subsequent topographical survey shows that both Meadow Street and Railway Street have a bowl-like topography from east to west, therefore, they both have low points in the middle, and higher ground at each end. This means that when there is a high volume of surface water and rainfall, water travels to the low points (middle of the street) and accumulates.

- DCWW Pumping Station:

Due to the high level of surface water on site, it was initially suspected that the pumping station, located to the east of Meadow Street, had failed. The authority responsible for the pumping station is DCWW, therefore, they were called out to inspect it and ensure it was working properly.

DCWW inspected the pumping station and led its own enquiry into the suspected pumping station failure; the inspection found that the pumps were working during the time the River Ebbw reached its highest peak of 1.82m at 04:00 on 16th February 2020. Therefore, it is unlikely any failure contributed to the flooding at Meadow Street and Railway Street.

- Storm Water Drainage Infrastructure:

Two blockages in the storm water drainage infrastructure of Meadow Street and Railway Street were found in separate locations during Storm Dennis. One blockage was observed at the eastern link road between Railway Street and Meadow Street. The other blockage was observed in the carriageway of Railway Street.

Both blockages caused water to surcharge from nearby inspection chambers, causing water to spill out onto the surface, build up at low points. Drainage officers removed both blockages during the storm and soon the flood water subsided.

2.4 **Key actions of the S19 Flood Investigation Report for Llanhilleth**

BGCBC to continue its routine and critical drainage inspections, particularly prior to forecasted storm events.

BGCBC to investigate ways of improving drainage capacity at Railway Street and Meadow Street.

Reference Appendix A The Section 19 Flood Investigation Report for Storm Water Flooding at Meadow Street and Railway Street, Llanhilleth (BGCBC Infrastructure Services, August 2021)

3. **Options for Recommendation**

Option 1

- 3.1 Scrutiny accepts the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, Llanhilleth and agrees to publish the report in accordance with the FWMA 2010 legislation.

Option 2

- 3.2 Scrutiny rejects the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, Llanhilleth and makes recommendations for amendments to the report.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

Blaenau Gwent CBC is the LLFA for Blaenau Gwent and has a statutory duty to investigate all significant flooding in Blaenau Gwent and publish its findings.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 **Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)**

There are no financial implications associated with the production of the Section 19 Flood Investigation Report, Llanhilleth report outside of officers' time covered within existing revenue budget provision.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

There is a risk of non-compliance with the FWMA 2010 if the S19 report is not accepted or published. Publishing the findings of the report will mitigate the risk of non-compliance.

5.3 ***Legal***

Legal has been consulted on the report and concludes that the report meets the requirements of the FWMA 2010.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

There are no impacts on human resources in accepting the S19 report.

6. ***Supporting Evidence***

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

N/A

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

That the report be published and the findings of the investigation be made available to the public.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Consultation with Blaenau Gwent Civil Contingencies, Neighbourhood Services, Dwr Cymru Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales was undertaken when preparing the report.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

N/A

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

N/A

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

DCWW and NRW

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

Civil Contingencies, Neighbourhood Services and Benefits & Revenues provided information for The Section 19 Flood Investigation Report for Storm Water Flooding at Meadow Street and Railway Street, Llanhilleth (BGCBC Infrastructure Services, August 2021).

6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***

N/A

6.9a ***Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment***

N/A

6.9b. ***Equality Impact Assessment***

N/A

7. ***Monitoring Arrangements***

N/A

Background Documents /Electronic Links

- *Appendix A Section 19 Flood Investigation Report for Storm Water Flooding at Meadow Street and Railway Street, Llanhilleth (BGCBC Infrastructure Services, August 2021)*