

## FORM 2

### NOTICE OF DECISION OF CABINET MEMBER


Pursuant to Section 15(4) of the Local Government Act 2000, as amended by section 63 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the senior executive member may discharge any of the functions that are the responsibility of the Cabinet or may arrange for them to be discharged by another member of the Cabinet or Officer. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010, the Council adopted the Strong Leader Model for Corporate Governance 2011 as required under Part 3 of The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (The 2007 Act).

In accordance with the authority delegated to me, I have made the following decision:

Subject	Decision	Reason for decision	Date for Decision to be taken
January 2021 flooding – flood recovery support	Subject to confirmation of the expected £190k of funding from MHCLG, to approve (a) the proposed purposes and scope of the flood recovery support set out in the report; (b) amendments to the capital programme to include a contribution of £80k to the permanent flood defences at Beales Corner and an allocation of £61.3k for local flood schemes and property resilience measures.	To decide how to use resources already received or expected under the Flood Recovery Framework in 2020-21, in order to provide a scheme of financial support for householders and businesses affected by the Storm Christoph flood in January 2021 and to allocate other sums to support implementation of flood defences and resilience measures.	16 August 2021

**I confirm that the appropriate statutory officer consultation has taken place with regard to this decision.**

Dated: 16 August 2021

Signed: 

Councillor: Helen Dyke  
Leader of the Council

## WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Strong Leader Report

#### JANUARY 2021 FLOODING – FLOOD RECOVERY SUPPORT

OPEN	
<b>DIRECTOR:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Ian Miller
<b>DATE:</b>	13 August 2021
<b>APPENDICES:</b>	None

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To decide on a scheme of financial support for householders and businesses affected by the Storm Christoph flood in January 2021 and to allocate other sums to support implementation of flood defences and resilience measures.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Subject to confirmation of the expected £190k of funding from MHCLG, the Cabinet is asked to **APPROVE**

(a) the proposed purposes and scope of the flood recovery support set out in this report;

(b) amendments to the capital programme to include a contribution of £80k to the permanent flood defences at Beales Corner and an allocation of £61.3k for local flood schemes and property resilience measures.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A number of households and businesses in Bewdley and Stourport were flooded over the weekend of 22-23 January 2021 as a result of Storm Christoph, including properties at Beale's Corner, Bewdley where the Environment Agency's temporary barriers failed. For many of them, this was the second or third flooding event in less than 12 months, following the two major storm events in February 2020, Storm Ciara and Storm Dennis.

- 3.2 The position across Wyre Forest is that 60 residential properties and 17 businesses are known to have been flooded.

- 3.3 While the impact locally in Wyre Forest and in a number of other areas was significant, the effect across England was not as widespread as the flood events of February 2020. Despite representations from this and other councils, the Government did not implement the Flood Recovery Framework in respect of Storm Christoph. In previous events the Framework has resulted in additional grant funding for councils where 25 or more households had been flooded.

However, as set out in the financial implications section, the Council has received and is expecting grant funding from MHCLG that can be deployed to provide financial assistance for households and businesses that were affected in January 2021 and also to consider other interventions to improve flood resilience in future.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The expected level of available funding allows the Council to replicate the approach that it adopted in 2020. Households that have suffered water ingress in the habitable area have suffered much greater hardship and are likely to face much higher costs and inconvenience than others affected by the flooding. A payment of £500 is proposed for the 60 households that suffered flooding in the habitable area (i.e. not including gardens, sheds and garages). In line with arrangements adopted in 2020, only primary residences are eligible and thus the Council will not make a payment of £500 in the case of second homes or empty properties.

4.2 In line with the 2020 arrangements, a payment of £2,500 is proposed for the 17 businesses that suffered internal flooding.

4.3 This leaves a sum available for allocation to improve future flood resilience in Wyre Forest. The Council has been working with the Environment Agency and other partners on proposals for permanent flood defences at Beales Corner. On 27 July, DEFRA announced that the Government would proceed with the defences and announced £6.2m funding for the estimated costs. In recognition of the important benefits for this community in Wyre Forest, and that this is a partnership scheme, it would be appropriate for the Council to make a modest contribution towards the cost of the scheme or associated works. It is proposed to allocate £80k for this purpose.

4.4 Finally, it is proposed to allocate the balance to provide a generic pot for administration by North Worcestershire Water Management. This would be available for smaller scale interventions to protect or improve flood resilience of individual properties or small groups of properties. It could be used, for example, to contribute towards Environment Agency flood defence schemes associated with relevant rivers; to provide contributions for works to assist businesses and residents, for example raising access roads; or to provide contributions for protection measures for individual properties.

4.5 The latter two allocations represent capital expenditure and therefore require appropriate amendments to the Council's capital programme. Hence the recommendation in paragraph 2.1(b), which relies on the Council decision of 12 May 2021 to delegate authority to Cabinet to make amendments to the Capital Programme in instances where the Council receives external capital grants and the full amount of the grants to be distributed is met from the external funding source.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The Council has an earmarked reserve of £23.8k from funding already received in 2020-21. In addition, for several months, it has been awaiting payment of £190k from MHCLG in respect of the Flood Recovery Framework for 2020-21. This sum

is not required to fund payments already made in the last financial year and therefore is available for allocation.

5.2 Subject to confirmation of receipt of the £190k additional grant, the total resources available for allocation are therefore £213.8k. This report's recommendations are as follows:

<b>Allocation</b>	<b>£</b>
Flood recovery grants: households (60 @ £500)	30,000
Flood recovery grants: businesses (17 @ £2500)	42,500
Beales Corner flood defences – contribution to Environment Agency scheme announced on 27 July 2021 or associated works	80,000
Local flood schemes and property resilience measures	61,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>213,800</b>

5.3 The Council's expenditure in respect of community recovery and future resilience measures will be aligned with the level of grant received. Therefore there is not expected to be a financial implication for the Council. Staff time in administering the payments will be covered within existing resources. If the confirmed level of funding from MHCLG turns out to be significantly different from the figure in this report, revised allocations would be brought forward for agreement in a further report.

## **6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The Council is a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The powers upon which the Council will rely in deploying the community recovery grant (which the Government has paid under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003) include section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the general power of competence, and sections 111 and 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

7.1 A preliminary impact needs assessment has been undertaken. Comprehensive information is not held on the protected characteristics of households that have been affected by flooding, although it is believed that people whose primary residences were flooded include people whose disposable income is low. On balance, the assessment concludes that the proposals represent a proportionate response to the circumstances facing local residents and communities. The Council has its extant Welfare Support Scheme to provide further assistance if necessary.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 The principal risk is presentational in that the Council needs to demonstrate progress with allocating the funding that has been or is expected to be received. The bespoke approach devised in Wyre Forest allows support to be targeted at residents and businesses that need the most help, while also providing funds for a package of other measures that will promote future resilience for affected communities and at the level of individual properties.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The Cabinet is invited to approve the proposed allocations set out above, together with amendments to the capital programme in respect of the two elements that represent capital expenditure.

## **10. CONSULTEES**

10.1 Cabinet

10.2 Corporate Leadership Team

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

February 2020 flooding – community recovery grant, Strong Leader report, 4 March 2020