



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL MAJOR INCIDENT RECOVERY BOARD - FEBRUARY 2020 'STORM DENNIS' FLOODING EVENT

Minutes of the meeting of the Major Incident Recovery Board - February 2020 'Storm Dennis' Flooding Event meeting held on Tuesday, 10 March 2020 at 2.00 pm at the Conference Room, Sardis House, Sardis Road, Pontypridd, CF37 1DU.

County Borough Councillors - Major Incident Recovery Board - February 2020 'Storm Dennis' Flooding Event Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan Councillor M Webber
Councillor A Crimmings Councillor M Norris

Officers in attendance

Mr C Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services

Others in attendance

Mr J Hogg – Natural Resources Wales
Mr T Graham - Pontypridd Town Council
Mr S Prichard – Pontypridd Town Council
Ms S John – Pontypridd BID
Mr J Nicholas – Mileway
Mr A Comley – RCT Citizens Advice

23 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

24 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2020 as an accurate reflection.

25 Service Recovery Update

The Leader informed the Steering Group that he would be meeting with the First Minister on Thursday afternoon to push forward any arising actions from the meetings.

The following updates were provided by Council Officers and Key Partners in respect of the major weather incident 'Storm Dennis':

Highways, Infrastructure and Frontline Services

- There was approximately £44M worth of damage to infrastructure and it would likely increase once all formal inspections had been undertaken;
- The vast majority of properties had been cleaned, with the odd few still arising;
- Additional vehicles had been released to support with the food package deliveries;
- There were issues with residents not being at home to receive the deliveries and as such, officers would contact them in advance of re-delivering; and
- To date, the tipping cost was £150,000 and rising.

Businesses

- 398 businesses had been confirmed as having flood damage; 277 of which were microbusinesses;
- 229 hardship funds had been processed;
- 15 skips had been provided in Treforest Industrial Estate;
- Footfall figures had improved in Pontypridd town centre;
- The Welsh Government had announced the release of £2.5M emergency funding to support businesses severely impacted by floods. The Council were awaiting further information on the process and whether the fund would be available for uninsured businesses; and
- In respect of the Council's grant funding support for property renovation, 199 households had been identified as a priority; 54 of which, were without insurance. The houses were in the process of being surveyed to support the residents back into their homes as soon as possible.

Housing

- 748 residential properties had been verified as having flood damage;
- 37 households had been placed in temporary accommodation but 28 had since been placed with family or given a six month tenancy;
- There were 78 open homeless cases, which officers were working to support;
- To date, 299 food packages had been delivered with 500 more ready to be delivered in the coming week;
- Donations were naturally slowing down;
- The mobile libraries had, again, visited various community venues, in partnership with RCT Citizens Advice and the Council's Community for Work team at the communities; and
- Of those offered Meals on Wheels provision, 6 had taken up the offer to date.

Pontypridd BID and Pontypridd Town Council

- The introduction of a park and ride facility for the town centre would be welcomed, which Pontypridd Town Council would help the Council with the costs; and
- An event to promote Pontypridd as 'open for business' would be welcomed to increase footfall within the town centre.

Treforest Business

- The bridge had been inspected and was safe for foot traffic. A detailed

- inspection would be carried out shortly;
- Contamination had been identified across the estate and the drying out process had commenced; and
- The businesses sought guidance on the Leader's recent decision taken to issue businesses with 3 month local relief (Credit) for the payment of Non Domestic Rates (NDR).

Natural Resources Wales

- There had been no river flooding in RCT over the weekend, but there had been areas with surface water flooding;
- The aim was to complete the cleaning of bridges by the end of the week, weather permitting;
- The defence inspections had not been completed due to the river level but no major issues had arisen from those inspected to date;
- The modelling work in Tylorstown would be complete by 13th March 2020; and
- The review of Pentre was underway, in conjunction with officers from the Council's Highways department and would be complete by the end of the week.

RCT Citizens Advice

- Over 300 residents had sought advice since Storm Dennis; 75% of which, had not accessed the service in the past 6/7 years;
- The recent mobile library visits had been a success and as a result, three houses were informed of the Council's hardship fund;
- Examples of good and bad practice was provided – the Steering Group were informed that energy pre-payment was an issue, and that some providers had installed pre-payment metres to flood damaged homes and residents were left waiting for their metre card to arrive;
- Issues had arisen around health, with some residents contracting coughs from living in a damp home;
- There were concerns in respect of the Coronavirus;
- A key issue was that residents were being refused the Discretionary Assistance Fund if they had received the hardship fund, but staff were confident that this could be resolved;
- Staff were finding capacity to complete follow-up work, in particular to those who may have received advice immediately following the floods;
- Staff continued to explore unsociable hours to provide advice to those who may work through the day; and
- RCT Citizens Advice had been identified as showing good practice on a National level.

The Leader announced that the target for re-opening Ynysangharad War Memorial Park was Saturday, 4th April, in time for the Easter holidays and to coincide with Danter's Funfair coming to the Park between Monday, April 6th and Tuesday, 21st April.

The Leader advised of the following specific areas of work in relation to the Park:

- Bowls Pavilion - there remained a significant amount of work to be undertaken and an update would be provided in due course;
- National Lido of Wales – The clean-up work was continuing and the electrical connections had been re-established. However, there was still a lot of work needed and it was unlikely that the Lido would reopen during the summer season;

- The Lido Play Area – This had been cleaned several times and the last load of sand and a new zip wire would be delivered to be completed in the next few weeks;
- Café and Public Toilets - Temporary catering outlets and temporary public toilets would be arranged for use during the Easter holidays, until the facilities are in a position to re-open;
- Fencing - Approximately 400m of fencing was being replaced alongside the river and would be complete by the target date;
- Llys Cadwyn Footbridge - Work had progressed well on the installation of the new structure and a completion date would be announced shortly; and
- The Cricket Pavilion and Football Changing Rooms – Both buildings avoided flood damage and would be open, depending on pitch assessments.

The Leader also advised that a letter had been sent to Welsh Government in respect of establishing a commercial flood re-insurance scheme and that he was awaiting a response.

The Chief Executive advised that the Council were also looking into the prospect of a Flood Resilience Grant for doors, floors and electrics for smaller businesses to get them up and running quicker.

The Steering Group **RESOLVED**:

- That the Director, Prosperity and Development would contact Welsh Government for the criteria for their emergency funding to support businesses;
- That the Council would work with partners to trial a Pontypridd Park and Ride facility on Saturdays for a month, in the first instance, and depending on its success, would look to extending it;
- That an event would be organised in Pontypridd to coincide with the opening of the new library on 30th March to increase footfall in the town centre;
- That the Council would liaise with the Mileway representative to ensure that Treforest Businesses are fully informed about the 3 month local relief for the payment of Non Domestic Rates (NDR), which would be credited to the 2019/20 accounts and that businesses are fully aware that they may receive new NNDR's in the meantime as part of the Council's annual process, which may not include the credit;
- To request that Welsh Government hold drop in sessions at Treforest Industrial Estate; and
- That subject to GDPR compliance, the Council share the details of the 54 priority households without insurance to RCT Citizens Advice for further support.

26 Urgent Decision of the Leader of the Council

The Steering Group **RESOLVED** to note the Urgent Decision taken by the Leader of the Council.

This meeting closed at 3.00 pm

**A Morgan
Chairman.**