



## **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, 18 February 2020 at 1.30 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 D Powell, Director of Corporate Estates  
Mr R Waters, Service Director – Frontline Services  
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development  
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services  
Mr G Isingrini, Group Director Community & Children's Services  
Mr A Griffiths, Service Director – Highways & Engineering

#### **Others in attendance**

Mr M Drakeford AM – First Minister  
Ms Lesley Griffiths AM – Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs  
Ms K Thomas – South Wales Police  
Mr S Daley – South Wales Police  
Mr G White – South Wales Police  
Mr G O'Shea – Natural Resources Wales  
Mr J Hogg – Natural Resources Wales  
Mr S John – Pontypridd BID  
Mr J Payne – Pontypridd BID  
Mr R Parker – Landlord, Treforest Industrial Estate  
Ms G Shackell – Mileway

#### **1 Welcome**

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the inaugural meeting of the Steering Group and introductions were made around the table.

#### **2 Declaration of Interest**

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

### **3 Terms of Reference**

It was **RESOLVED** to agree the Terms of Reference.

### **4 Major Incident Impact & Recovery Report**

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

#### **Natural Resources Wales**

- The Storm saw over a month's worth of rainfall in just 48 hours, which was 80cm higher than the rainfall in the 1979 floods;
- There were 86 flood warnings, 2 of which were severe;
- Approximately 26,000 residents were reached via phone call/ text message/ email;
- There were approximately 10,000 hits per hour on the Natural Resources Wales website; and
- Assurance was given that there was ongoing work with the Met Office to monitor the predicted rainfall over the catchment for the coming week.

#### **South Wales Police**

- Storm Dennis saw a 40% increase in calls to 999 and a 20% increase in calls to 101 across the force, the vast majority of which were responded to;
- A Tactical Response Group was established in the early hours;
- Staff were quickly redeployed to support the incident;
- Shelters were set up for residents but were stood down as many chose to stay with families/other members of the community;
- Between 500-1000 homes were evacuated across the force; and
- Crucial areas of focus were the Sub Station and Prince Charles Hospital due to contamination issues.

#### **Operational Highways**

- Approximately 1600 calls were taken;
- Approximately 6,500 sandbags were distributed;
- Many of the major highways and side streets were closed but had since reopened;
- Dozens of vehicles had since been removed from side streets;
- Many of the community walking routes were closed;
- The clean-up process in Taff Street, Pontypridd was ongoing, along with a number of side streets located in Pentre;
- The Bus Service had resumed with no anticipated effects on home to school transport;
- Skip permits had been suspended for two weeks to support residents and businesses with the clean-up operation; and
- Normal business would resume with the main network due to be treated as a result of the incoming cold weather.

#### **Infrastructure**

- There had been significant damage to a number of culverts with severe pressure on hydraulic capacity, which was unable to deal with the water flow,
- 1 of the 4 culverts in Pentre remained substantially blocked with debris;
- The rivers were in the process of being inspected across the County Borough with more damage likely to be found;

- There had been 160 bridges identified for inspection;
- Ynysangharad War Memorial Park would remain closed to the public for the foreseeable future;
- Ynysangharad Footbridge in Pontypridd and Castle Inn Footbridge in Treforest remained closed due to the substantial damage from a shipping container, with further inspections due to take place;
- Blaenllechau Tip slip is a category D high risk tip and would need continuous monitoring by special consultants; and
- It was felt that a new approach needed to deal with surface water.

### **Housing**

- 100's of residential properties flooded;
- Staff had been redeployed to support the community and identify their specific needs;
- There were 21 households in temporary accommodation, with the number likely to increase;
- The pressure to attain accommodation was increasing (the majority had been used and many can't stay past the weekend due to bookings) and therefore, there was a need for a more sustainable solution;
- Lewis Street in Pentre was identified as a hugely impacted residential area, with the majority of houses deemed unsafe to live in;
- Many of the residents did not have contents insurance or insurance which covers floods;
- In respect of the Lido/Ynysangharad Park, the Director was unable to estimate how long it would take to repair the flood damage;
- There had been significant damage to the 3G Pitch in Aberdare;
- Praise was given to the community for their support to one another; and
- RCT were working in partnership with Interlink and community groups to coordinate a community response and ensure the correct support is provided in each of the locations.

### **Corporate Estates**

- There had been a power cut at the RCTCBC data centre in Tylorstown;
- Due to flood damage, the Taff Vale development and footbridge completion date would be delayed; and
- There was still significant debris to the south of the Blaenllechau slip and the water main.

### **Businesses and Town Centres**

- Treforest and Pontypridd were the largest hit in terms of businesses;
- Approximately 75% of the business units in Treforest Industrial Estate had been affected;
- Many of the businesses have a mixture of owners and tenants and therefore, many tenants have full responsibility for repairs;
- Many of the businesses have contents cover but don't have loss of trade cover, which is a huge issue;
- There was a loss of Millions of pounds worth of loss in stock, WiFi, ICT equipment and furniture throughout the area;
- Over 50 stores in Pontypridd town centre affected;
- As a result of the flooding, many employees had been dismissed;
- There was a rolling supply of tips in Pontypridd town centre funded by the Council;
- A contractor had been funded by the Council to help businesses with electricity issues;
- Temporary traffic Measures had been put in place in Taff Street to

- facilitate the clean-up operation;
- Detailed advice been circulated to food businesses in respect of environmental health issues; and
- An RCT trailer had been placed in Pontypridd town centre to provide further assistance to the businesses.

### **Pontypridd BID, Pontypridd Town Council and Treforest Business Representative**

- Praise was given to the Council for the continuous support to businesses following the storm;
- Many of the independent stores were not insured which was of great concern;
- All BID projects had been put on hold, in order to fund and support the businesses;
- The growth of the town centre was a huge help to local businesses but the flood has destroyed the;
- The representative echoed the earlier statement that many residents had not left their homes but would soon need temporary accommodation; and
- Many business tenants do not have flood cover and therefore, cannot continue trading to mitigate costs.

## **5 Resources to support the recovery response of the Council**

The First Minister and the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs took the opportunity to thank the Local Authority, the partners and the community for working together following the significant damage from the flood. The First Minister recognised that there was a huge struggle ahead and announced that the Welsh Government had established a fund to ease pressure on those without insurance, help rebuild homes and get communities and businesses up and running as quickly as possible. The First Minister advised that an announcement would be made by the end of the week, as soon as a system had been established to get the money to the residents and businesses.

The Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs spoke of Welsh Government's commitment of £350m into flood defences over a five year period and the need to support Local Authorities with its delivery.

The Leader thanked the First Minister and the Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs, along with the partners who had gone above and beyond in supporting the residents. The Leader announced that an immediate allocation of £1M would be made from the Council's General Reserves to support the immediate recovery requirement arising from the exceptional event. The Council would provide support of £500 per residential property and £1000 per business property (SME). The Leader echoed the First Minister's comments in respect of establishing a clear financial mechanism to ensure residents receive payments effectively without delay.

(At this point in proceedings, the First Minister and Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs left the meeting.)

Discussions ensued with the Steering Group noting:

- That although this was considered to be an 'exceptional event', measures had to be put in place to mitigate any future storms of the

- same level;
- That the flood alleviation scheme in Rhydyfelin, subsidised by Welsh Government and European Funding, had been essential in preventing further flood damage to the community;
  - The need to provide earlier warning to residents and premises licence holders, where possible;
  - The need to assess the rivers to identify the damage caused under the water;
  - That discussions would take place with Business Wales regarding potential grants;
  - The Development Bank of Wales will work with the Council to provide potential micro loans ranging from £1000 to £25,000. A meeting will be arranged for Council Officers, Pontypridd BID and Treforest Businesses to meet with the Development Bank within the coming days;
  - The need to plan and develop large flood remediation schemes to be funded by the Capital Programme, such as the oversizing of culverts, new structures and hydraulic loading sites.

The Leader advised that he would be attending the Welsh Government's emergency summit, which was scheduled to take place the following day (19<sup>th</sup> February 2020) to discuss the damage and disruption caused by 'Storm Dennis'; and that the next meeting of the Steering Group would take place later in the week to receive further updates and future service planning.

**This meeting closed at 2.50 pm**

**A Morgan  
Chairman.**