



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, 25 February 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 P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr R Waters, Service Director – Frontline Services
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development
Mr M Crumbie, Head of Procurement Delivery
Ms W Edwards, Service Director – Community Services

Others in attendance

Police Sergeant S Williams – South Wales Police
Mr J Hogg – Natural Resources Wales
Mr J Payne – Pontypridd BID
Ms S John – Pontypridd Bid
Mr J Nicholas – Mileway
Mr T Graham - Pontypridd Town Council
Mr S Prichard – Pontypridd Town Council

11 Welcome

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and introductions were made around the table for the benefit of new members.

12 Declaration of Interest

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

13 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2020 as an accurate reflection.

14 Service Recovery Update

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

Highways and Infrastructure

- To date, 199 river bridges had been inspected;
- 9 bridges were closed, 3 of which were considered to be significant (Berw Road, Castle Inn and Ynysangharad);
- The closure of the Berw Road bridge was the cause of traffic through Pontypridd;
- 7 river walls had collapsed but as the engineers were unable to inspect in terms of scour, there was likely to be significant damage that was yet to be identified;
- 74 culverts had been re-inspected since the flood with just over 20 left;
- Pentre culverts were clear but Mountain Ash remained blocked with debris;
- 43 category C and D tips had been inspected with no significant ongoing issues apart from Llanwonno tip, which was subject to 24 hour monitoring with drainage works commencing;
- There was an embargo on all utility works; and
- 568 residential properties had been affected by the flooding.

Frontline Services

- Cardiff Council, the Vale of Glamorgan and Flintshire Council had supported the Council with the ongoing clean-up by providing gully suckers and road sweepers;
- A huge clean-up had been undertaken of Oxford Street, Mountain Ash;
- The clean-up was ongoing in areas as a number of residents must wait for their insurers' inspection;
- The Treforest Industrial Estate bridge had been inspected and the update was pending;
- The issue with sewerage in Trehafod was being dealt with;
- GE had offered volunteers to help with the clean-up in Trehafod and Taffs Well and would be matched with Council officers;
- The river levels were lowering; and
- Praise was provided to the teams for their outstanding and ongoing work; and the residents for their resilience.

Businesses

- 347 businesses had flood damage;
- 92 businesses had applied for the hardship fund, with 68 currently being processed by finance;
- A well-received drop in session took place in Nantgarw, whereby over 40 businesses attended;
- 39 of the businesses located in Treforest Industrial Estate had applied for the hardship fund;
- 5 of the businesses located in Mountain Ash had applied for the hardship fund;
- 27 of the businesses located in Pontypridd Town Centre had applied for the hardship fund;
- 16 out of the 22 businesses located in Cwmbach had applied for the hardship fund;

- The Council were liaising with Business Wales to provide legal advice as loss of earnings and business continuity was a key concern;
- A walkabout had taken place with the Minister in Cwmbach to observe the damage caused;
- There had been limited impact on Hirawun Industrial Estate; and
- Sandbags had been of great benefit for the houses in Llewellyn Street, Pentre.

Pontypridd BID

- £38,000 of the budget had been allocated to assisting the town centre with flood relief:
 - £1,500 for small uninsured businesses;
 - £750 for small insured businesses; and
 - £400 to National businesses.
- Free advertising was provided to promote the town;
- The closure of the Lido, Ynysangharad Park and the footbridge will have a negative impact on businesses, along with the short-term closure of key services such as the Post Office and Boots;
- The businesses were happy with the support provided thus far; and
- There was a need for further promotion or events to take place in Pontypridd to keep businesses afloat.

Housing

- 568 properties had been identified as having been affected by internal water damage, the vast majority of which had been visited by the Council;
- To date, 1400 e-forms had been received which were being cross-referenced and verified in order for those affected to receive the hardship fund;
- There would be approximately 650 on the database by the end of the working day;
- Additional questions were being posed to residents in respect of their wellbeing;
- The pressure for temporary accommodation remained with the need for permanent accommodation increasing;
- The financial payments had begun;
- Drop in sessions had been organised in community hub/centres throughout the affected areas of the Borough to distribute the payments;
- The Council met with Welsh Government to work on aligning the payment methods and it was the intention for RCT to handle all resident applications – the way forward was yet to be confirmed;
- Due to the Council's duties in relation to GDPR, the Council would deal with the distribution of donations;
- There had been an extraordinary number of donations received and offers of volunteering. The Council were identifying staff to liaise between the Local Authority and the centres and were attempting to co-ordinate all donations although the logistics were challenging;
- A warehouse had been established as a singular base for the food donations;
- The Council had linked in with food banks for assistance;
- Tesco were providing food donations and advice and assistance on handling and distributing them;
- Generous food donations had been received from a number of places

such as Pembrokeshire, Wales Online and a Member of Parliament from London to name but a few; and

- Discussions were underway to establish a clear plan to ensure all residents affected by the flood (including the vulnerable and those without access to a vehicle) receive a balanced parcel of non-perishable foods early the following week.

Treforest Businesses

- Approximately 65 – 70 claims had been made;
- The formal inspections were due to commence the following day to identify key structural issues;
- The Director, Public Health, Protection and Community Services had provided guidance on contamination, which had been distributed to businesses along with the forms for funding; and
- Financial support for the smaller businesses was key.

Natural Resources Wales

- All rivers in South East Wales were to be reviewed to gain an understanding of how the flooding happened to prevent the same occurrence in the future;
- When the water level lowers, the defences would be inspected;
- Work load was being prioritised to clear trees from rivers etc;
- Teams were at Pentre over the weekend to remove timber, forest debris, stones, rubble and soil from the culverts; and
- Further discussions would need to take place in respect of the statutory duty to remove infected trees/leaving cuttings for biodiversity given the extreme weather experienced and concerns regarding the steepness of the hillside their left on.

Procurement

- Discussions were underway with the Council's top 200 suppliers to see what support they can provide; and
- The focus was on the food suppliers and there was a need for the donations to come in the same time as others from suppliers such as Tesco.

The Leader advised he was lobbying Welsh Government for business rate relief for occupied businesses for a period of three months and hoped for an imminent decision.

The Steering Group RESOLVED:

- That the Council need to work with Pontypridd Town Council and South Wales Police to communicate that all closed structures are of high risk to residents and a danger to life (for example: the White Bridge in Pontypridd will be closed for some time due to substantial scour to the central pier);
- That a meeting would take place between Pontypridd BID, Pontypridd Town Council and Regeneration to establish some practical, marketing opportunities to promote the town centre that would require funding;
- That the Leader would write to UK and Welsh Government for an opportunity to establish a flood re-insurance scheme for commercial buildings;
- That a one off emergency payment would be established to support the community centres which have provided huge support to the Council and

- residents;
- To review and ensure support is provided to the small-medium businesses, which are eligible for the Council's hardship payment, and may have got caught up with the larger businesses which would require help from Welsh Government;
 - That Natural Resources Wales would review the channel upstream from the culverts to ensure any remaining debris is removed;
 - That Natural Resources Wales communicate a clear message that it is their statutory duty to remove diseased trees;
 - That the Group Director, Prosperity, Development and Frontline Services would check the depot for any appropriate boxes to deliver the food parcels to residents;
 - That Regeneration attend the flood affected properties on Hawthorn Crescent, who had not been contacted to date;
 - That Pontypridd BID provide the Council with a list of all uninsured small-medium businesses within the town centre and their needs;
 - That the lists of flood damaged properties are shared with South Wales Police to ensure they are patrolled to prevent break ins;
 - To allocate £800,000 in order to provide grant funding for the renovation of flood impacted properties following Storm Dennis. This further support will be funded from £150k of the existing allocation to support recovery efforts, as set out in the urgent decisions of the Leader of the Council dated 17th and 21st February 2020, £150k from donations being received by the Council and the reprioritisation of £500k of existing Prosperity & Development capital funding; and
 - That free school meals is funded for children living with families living in properties impacted by the flood for a four week period.

This meeting closed at 3.35 pm

**A Morgan
Chairman.**