

Agenda Item No. 6(d)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

16 January 2020

Report of the Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**SEVERE FLOOD EVENT – INFORMATION REPORT OF THE EFFECT ON
HIGHWAYS ASSETS (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE)**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To provide Cabinet with an update on the recent Derbyshire wide severe flooding and the consequent implications identified to date.

(2) **Information and Analysis** Between 7 and 17 of November 2019, the whole of Derbyshire experienced a prolonged period of excessive rain. On 7 November 2019, Derbyshire experienced a month's rainfall in a single day, resulting in a major incident being declared and the tragic death of the former High Sheriff of Derbyshire, who was swept away by floodwater near Darley Dale.

The major incident resulted in a multi-agency response, to deal with the immediate threat to life and infrastructure.

Matlock also received a Prime Ministerial visit on 8 November 2019.

This event is only three months on from the emergency surrounding Toddbrook Reservoir. The County Council, as highway authority, is still dealing with the network damage that the emergency caused.

From a Highways perspective, the severe flooding has caused significant damage to highways infrastructure across the County and this is being assessed in the aftermath of the event. The Highways Service is still in the recovery phase and is working to understand the impacts of the event. However, it is clear that there are still significant risks to highways assets that are likely to manifest themselves over the coming months as more detailed assessments and surveys are undertaken.

The following provides an idea of the scale of damage, identified to date, that are being dealt with in relation to Derbyshire's highways assets:

- During the event, there were in excess of 200 locations across the whole of Derbyshire that were affected by the severe flood event.

- 199km of Derbyshire's carriageways were affected.
- There were 7 landslips.
- 25 highways structures were affected.
- 8 Rights of Way structures were affected.
- 13,481 gullies and associated drainage connections were affected.

As indicated, the recovery phase is underway and is likely to continue for some time. To date, the estimated costs allocated to this phase are in the order of £600,000 and this is likely to rise as further works are identified. However, the cost of this recovery work is minor, compared with the estimates of permanent repair outlined below. The immediate post event emergency related work may be eligible for grant under the Bellwin scheme, although, this is still being assessed at this time.

To ascertain both the short and long term impacts of the flooding, the Highways Service apply appropriate asset management principles aligned to the Well-Managed Highways Infrastructure Code of Practice. This has provided the framework to which the County Council undertakes appropriate condition surveys, applies appropriate lifecycle planning, and cyclic maintenance in order to prioritise its work on the highway, in order to deliver a safe, reliable and resilient network.

The severe flooding event has had visually obvious impacts, as is the case with a landslip at Abney, and severe carriageway damage at Gashouse Lane, Eckington. However, the unseen damage through the shortening of the life of assets is concerning and will effect Derbyshire's budgets for many years to come.

Excess water in the foundations of roads causes weakening of the roads themselves, while the impact on soil slopes can lead to instability and slips. Scour from water flow can undermine and weaken bridges and retaining walls and cause significant damage to highway drains.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has acknowledged the impacts that the flooding has had on highways assets and has requested that a response is provided to the head of maintenance and resilience within the DfT, outlining the scale of the damage and an estimate of the cost to repair such infrastructure.

In response to this request, the Highways Service has prepared estimates of the damage identified to date, with a caveat that there will be damage still yet to be identified. At this time, it is estimated that in excess of £20million in damage has been caused by the floods and this is aligned to the asset management principles touched on above.

Given the budgetary constraints, it is clear that the scale of the damage cannot be contained within the Department's budgets. Hence, the financial

assistance from the DfT is vital in ensuring that the burden on highways budgets is not further exacerbated.

(3) **Financial Considerations** Existing revenue budgets are being used to help the Highways Service recover from the event. Current estimates are in the order of £600,000 which is currently contained within existing revenue budgets. This is likely to rise as issues become evident following further investigation.

The information being provided to the DfT on the extent of the damage to highways assets is currently estimated to be in excess of £20m. This cannot be contained within existing capital or revenue budgets.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The County Council has a duty to maintain the highway under the Highways Act 1980 and works in accordance with the Well-Managed Highways - a Code of Practice which, in turn, will enable the County Council to set risk based levels of service that will support maintenance practices and assist in the defence of claims.

(5) **Human Resources Considerations** The impact of severe weather events and climate change need to be considered in order to adapt and change relevant services.

(6) **Social Value Considerations** The maintenance and management of highway infrastructure is critical to the economic wellbeing of Derbyshire. This is vital in ensuring that the businesses, residents and visitors benefit from a safe and reliable network.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(7) **Key Decision** No.

(8) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(9) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department.

(10) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That Cabinet notes the information contained in the report.

Mike Ashworth
Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment