Northwich Town Centre Flood Risk Management

April 2022

Update on plans to reduce Northwich's flood risk

Following flooding in the Northwich town centre in recent years, Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C), the Environment Agency (EA) and United Utilities (UU) have been working together to reduce the risk of flooding in the future.

Since the flooding in October 2019 and from Storm Christoph in January 2021, extensive investigations and maintenance activity has taken place, including checking and verifying all the infrastructure currently in place to reduce the risk of flooding from different sources.

Sources include the main river, surface water and the sewer network. The work has included a detailed survey of the surface water and sewer network, and a review of the ownership and maintenance of all the outfalls into the river.

In October 2021, temporary pumps were installed at Barons Quay and Dock Road Pumping Stations. This additional capacity was calculated to be able to cope with an extreme storm the size of Storm Christoph and was a temporary measure to deal with any risks from further severe winter weather.

Analysis has showed that the risk of flooding is higher during the winter months. Now spring/summer is here, the additional contingency pumps will now be removed. As we do that we move to an interim arrangement, with enhanced monitoring and rapid asset deployment, co-ordinated by a collaborative, integrated response between the three organisations.

The river network is monitored at Hayhurst Bridge and when the river reaches certain levels, contingency measures to reduce flood risk, such as flood defence barrier installation or temporary pumps, are deployed.

United Utilities has installed an extensive network of monitoring in the sewer network and the Council is exploring the installation of water level monitoring sensors, that can provide an early indication of any surface water issues.

customer service line	incident hotline	floodline
03708 506 506	0800 80 70 60	03459 88 11 88

This monitoring will trigger the deployment of the Council's dedicated high volume pump units that will be used in London Road and Weaver Way to over-pump surface water to the river from existing gullies (grids).

Ollie Hope, Flood Risk Manager at the EA said: "We've been working really hard to ensure that we all deliver on the recommendations from the October 2019 section report, and to provide contingency to cope with an event the size and scale of Storm Christoph".

Craig Connor, Drainage Area Manager for United Utilities said: "When events are of an extreme size, the ways in which flooding occurs can be complex. Our partnership work in the short-term and long term will help us deliver options to reduce those sources of risk in a sustainable way going forward. A longer-term solution to increase town centre resilience to flood risk is being worked on and will be based upon results of in-depth modelling. This will help us collectively understand how all the drainage infrastructure in the area interacts, providing engineers with real-time data on surface water flows 'integrated catchment modelling', which is underway. Integrated catchment modelling allows engineers to understand surface flow dynamics using techniques to enable them to visualise potential issues and subsequently adapt the infrastructure to provide additional resilience."

Cheshire West and Chester Council's Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member of Environment, Highways and Strategic Transport, Councillor Karen Shore said: "A collaborative approach is needed to reduce the flood risk in the town centre from all sources of flooding, and we've been working together on improving that collaborative emergency response plan, to help make sure our response to any future flooding is strong and resilient."