



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDY: POYNTON, CHESHIRE

BACKGROUND

In 2016, Poynton, East Cheshire experienced prolonged and heavy rainfall. The ground was already saturated, decreasing infiltration and absorption rates, leading to large volumes of surface water runoff. This in turn overwhelmed sewers, drainage and watercourses, resulting in flooding at several locations. On the 11th June 127 properties were affected, 32 with internal flooding. On the 13th of September, Poynton suffered another flood event. While less severe, the event was still significant, and there were 3 reports of internal flooding.

Poynton has 2 flood warning areas but as the mechanisms which caused the flooding were surface water, ordinary water course, sewers and groundwater, the Environment Agency were unable to issue a flood warning, as the threshold for the triggers on the main river were not met.

As a Unitary Authority, Cheshire East Council is also the Lead Local Flood Authority and as such under Section 19 of the Water Management Act 2010, is required to undertake a full Flood Investigation Report where it is deemed necessary or appropriate to do so.

The Flood Investigation Report for Poynton was made publicly available in March 2019 and set out several recommendations which in summary included –

- "Maintenance of all drainage systems" (highways/surface water/sewer & watercourses).
- Hydraulic investigations to assess capacity and improvements to selected drainage systems.
- Advise and educate riparian owners of their duties and understanding of flood risk.
- Creation of individual flood plans and consideration of property level protection.

NEWGROUND

Using information from Environment Agency Flood Warning Area maps and those for Surface Water Flood Risk, Newground put together a list of properties at risk of flooding. The properties on the list would be the focus of a round of doorstep engagement work to –

- Provide information and resources on flood resilience.
- Increase awareness of the organisations involved in flood risk management.
- Try to increase flood warning sign up numbers in the area.
- Promote the multi-agency flood awareness event, which was to take place at the local Civic Hall on 16th May.

Newground visited approximately 600 properties at the beginning of May 2019, speaking to 180 residents and posting information to those who we were not able to speak to. Newground also supported the multi- agency flood awareness event with Cheshire East Council, United Utilities and the Environment Agency.



Image: The Flood Hub

FURTHER FLOODING

On 31st July 2019 another major flood incident struck Poynton with 60 - 90mm of rain falling in 24 hours. Roads were closed and sewers were overwhelmed by large amounts of surface water. Homes and businesses were flooded, a road was partially washed away, 11 people were rescued by the fire service and over 30 children had to be evacuated from a nursery. An emergency rest centre was set up at Poynton Civic Centre.

A post flood community drop in meeting was arranged for the 15th of August by the Environment Agency, with Cheshire East Council, United Utilities, Newground and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service also in attendance. Newground were able to provide lots of useful advice to the many residents who attended and gave out close to 500 flood resilience information resources from The Flood Hub. We also chatted to 120 residents about flood plans, home flood insurance and flood resilience.

FOLLOW UP WORK

Newground has since undertaken follow up work in Poynton including visiting homeowners to discuss property specific flood resilience and attending a 'Flood Smart Event' hosted by the Poynton Flood Action Group.