

Membership of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Members

Cllr Arshad Hussain, (Chair).
Cllr David Green, (Deputy Chair).
Cllr David Warburton.
Cllr Sue Duffy.
Cllr Rosemary Watson.
Cllr Martin Smith.
Cllr Jack Rickard.
Cllr Simon Cooke.
Cllr Jeanette Sunderland.
Cllr Adrian Naylor.

Alternate Members

Cllr Vanda Greenwood.
Cllr Tariq Hussain.
Cllr Carol Thirkhill.
Cllr Rizwana Jamil.
Cllr Fozia Shaheen.
Cllr Andrew Mallinson.
Cllr Val Townend.
Cllr Mike Pollard.
Cllr David Ward.
Cllr Anne Hawkesworth.

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Chair's Foreword

Meeting those residents, businesses and voluntary groups who have been directly affected by the December 2015 floods has provided us insight into the real life difficulties faced by our residents.

During this information gathering sessions, members were concerned that some residents had still not moved back into their properties.

Floods are a natural disaster and despite action that has been taken to assist those that have been impacted by the floods, our approach to flood resilience should be stronger, with improved co-ordination of activities and communication by Bradford Council and its key partners.

Also we need to greatly improve our approach to preventing flooding and this is a key area of work of Bradford Councils Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In our co-ordinating role, we will be keeping an overview of this.

Flooding will happen again, but we as a Council and together with our partner organisations, need to provide robust support and advice to those that need it. From meeting those that have been affected by the floods, it is clear that Voluntary groups have been instrumental in assisting people and we need to work closer with such organisations.

I would like to thank the members of the Committee past and present for their commitment during this Scrutiny Review, as well as Council Officers.

More importantly, I would like to thank the residents, businesses and voluntary groups affected by the December 2015 floods, who gave up their time and came to speak to us. We have listened to what you have had to say and will strive to make our approach to flood resilience, and the support provided, much stronger through our recommendations.

Councillor Arshad Hussain
Chair, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Background

At its meeting on Tuesday 19 January 2016, Council agreed that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake an in-depth Scrutiny Review, into the effectiveness of Bradford Council and its Partners in dealing with the floods across the District in December 2015.

As part of this Scrutiny Review, members also looked to explore how we can learn from the approaches taken during the winter 2015 floods, to assist the Council and its Partners to better deal with future floods.

It was also agreed that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive the final review report, prior to its submission to full Council.

The Environment and Waste Management Overview Scrutiny Committee is undertaking a wider scrutiny review into Water Management across the District. Information gathering sessions for this review will take place in September 2016 and October 2016.

The winter 2015 floods affected several areas and communities across the District.

Key Lines of Enquiry

The key lines of enquiry for this scrutiny review are to:

- Evaluate Bradford's preparedness for serious flooding and response to December's floods;
- Identify how Bradford Council and other Local Authorities and Partners can share learning and strengthen joint working;
- Explore follow-up activity, in relation to supporting affected communities in the aftermath of the floods.

The Scrutiny Process

Members have received and gathered a range of information from a number of different sources, including:

- Two information gathering sessions with residents, businesses and voluntary groups;
- Information gathering session with Bradford Council and external Officers;
- Online Questionnaire Survey.

Chapter 2 – Key Findings

This section presents the findings of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee into the effectiveness of Bradford Council and its partners in dealing with the floods across the District in December 2015.

Throughout the course of the information gathering phase, members were made aware of various issues and concerns. Some of these focused specifically on flood prevention by looking into river dredging, drainage management, clearing debris from the River Aire, maintaining flood plains, rivers and reservoirs and upland management through tree planting. Areas such as these will be referred to the Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for those members to consider as part of their more wider Scrutiny Review into Water Management across the District. The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will keep an Overview of this.

Online Survey

An online flooding survey was used to gather the views of those that had been affected by the December 2015 floods. The online survey ran from April 2016 to July 2016 and a total of 75 responses were received.

The full survey results are available on request.

The responses are broken down in the table below by areas.

Table 1 – Total responses broken down by area.

Area	Number of responses
Bingley	15
Shipley	11
Keighley East	10
Bingley Rural	7
Craven	6
Baildon	5
Worth Valley	3
Heaton	1
Idle and Thackley	1
Ilkley	1
Keighley Central	1
Keighley West	1

The worst hit areas appeared to be Bingley and Bingley Rural who were badly flooded for one day and areas such as Bingley, Keighley East and Shipley who were flooded for up to a week. Craven and some areas of Keighley East were also flooded for up to a day.

Most damage was to homes and properties in the Bingley, Bingley Rural, Keighley East and Shipley areas of Bradford on the morning and afternoon of Boxing Day.

Furthermore, damage caused by flood water also extended to gardens, other internal areas of buildings, gas and electricity supplies.

Respondents highlighted Bradford Councils Emergency Planning arrangements' as the main service which could have been delivered better. Those from Bingley, Keighley East and Shipley were aware of schemes which assist victims of flooding.

It was clear from the responses that the only assistance that residents felt they had received was from Flood Support Groups, such as the Bingley Flood Support group. Here, the Bingley Flood Support Groups provided those affected by the Floods with food, plumbers, electricians and other supplies. It does appear the Bingley Flood Support Group has a sound model to assist residents who have been affected by floods.

From the online survey the key and recurring messages that arose were centred around communication, advice and support. Listed below are the key messages arising from the survey:

- more advice should be provided by Bradford Council and the Environment Agency, particularly in relation to the financial support available to assist residents;
- Respondents felt that they had not received adequate support and advice from Bradford Council, particularly relating to not being given enough notice about the floods and distributing sandbags early;
- Bradford Council should have had staff available as soon as the floods happened, even if it was a Bank Holiday;
- Council staff should have been sent out to visit areas that had been affected by the floods, in the early days after the floods, so that residents could engage with Officers directly with their queries;
- Better traffic management, where roads were closed due to flooding.

Information gathering sessions with residents, businesses and voluntary groups who had been affected by the floods

Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee also met with residents, businesses and voluntary groups who have been affected by the floods, as well Council and external officers. This took place on:

- Thursday 21 July 2016, at 6.30pm in Shipley Library, (see appendix 2);
- Thursday 26 July 2016, at 2.00pm, in Victoria Hall, Saltaire, (see appendix 2).

Overleaf are the key findings from both these sessions.

Effectiveness of the Support received by people affected by the Floods

- Not everyone was registered with the Environment Agency for Flood Alerts and even those residents that were, did not actually receive any flood alert warnings; hence residents were not aware that it was likely to flood.
- There had been a response from voluntary organisations and the community itself with regards to assisting the victims of the floods; however some residents felt that Bradford Council could have done more to assist.
- Members heard that some residents had still not moved back into their homes and are without water and heating, its clear that more support is needed for these residents to get them back into their homes as a priority. This was primarily due to residents still needing to make essential repairs to their properties to allow them to safely move back in.
- Businesses in particular felt the effects of the floods, as they had to close due to damage to their premises and subsequent loss in income, in an already difficult economic climate.
- People affected by the floods expressed their dissatisfaction at the Police, who they felt had not adequately protected the properties of those people who had to leave their homes. However discussions with officers from West Yorkshire Police indicated that there had been one reported case.
- Some people said that even though representatives from the Environment Agency had attended the flooding sites on the day, the officers did not provide any help or advice.
- It was unanimously felt by the people who had been affected by the floods that key organisations such as Bradford Council, the Environment Agency, Incommunities, West Yorkshire Police, Yorkshire Water and Fire Services were not working together and that people were being passed between them, with no one taking responsibility.
- There were also views expressed by residents, businesses and voluntary groups affected by the floods that local councillors were not “visible” enough at locations across the District where the floods had taken place and that the involvement from local councillors would have been welcome.

How could the support provided to those affected by Floods be further improved?

- There was general consensus amongst residents, businesses and voluntary groups that had been affected by the floods that this had in fact been like a “perfect storm”, whereby the floods happened when it was a public holiday; staff were themselves affected and were unable to travel; however, it was felt that there needs to be a plan to mitigate against this risk.
- Furthermore, there was agreement that improvements should be made to the sharing of information. For instance many people had experienced flooding in the areas before and had a wealth of local knowledge that they could have shared with organisations such as Bradford Council, the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Incommunities and West Yorkshire Police. It was also expressed that the sharing of information should also include sharing the contact details of local voluntary groups with partner organisations.

- Those in attendance at the information gathering session also said that people residing on flood areas should all sign-up to the Environment Agency's flood alert system and that the Environment Agency should provide early flood alerts to people who are likely to be affected.
- There was agreement amongst those affected by the floods that a "flood buddy" approach should be developed in the District, where in the event of a flood and at very short notice, local people could assist those that have been affected by floods, for example assisting in moving furniture and providing food and water, as well as other support.
- It was felt that much better use could be made of social media such as Twitter and Facebook to circulate key messages to people before, during and after the floods.

Information gathering session with Officers

Members of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee also held an information gathering session with Bradford Council and External Officers, on Thursday 25 August 2016.

Members learned how Bradford Council's approach to handling future floods was already getting stronger, through a number of actions had already been taken. These actions included:

- presented an effective case to government for £2.4m for flood repairs; these are now programmed;
- provided Council Tax rebates;
- following the flooding, checked and cleared all road gullies in known high risk flooding areas. Gullies in high flood risk areas, busy junctions, arterial roads or on storm drains are inspected 4 times a year and emptied 2-3 times a year;
- prioritised and cleared reported blocked gullies within 21 days;
- put in place 25 clean teams, 35 transit vehicles and 1 Refuse Collection vehicle which are available to assist in both delivering sand bags and clearing debris both during and post flooding;
- trash screens to keep debris out of water courses/ becks are also inspected monthly or quarterly, dependent on risk, or more often in anticipation of heavy rainfall;
- where risk is visible, all damaged highway structures have been identified and assessed for repairs based on risk;
- underwater inspections to major vulnerable structures commenced in late June with anticipated 3 months completion;
- in conjunction with the Environment Agency, identified 15 worst hot spot flooding locations for further investigation with a view to a bid for Flood Defence Grant in Aid Funding;
- reviewed the Council's policy with regard to the purpose and use of sandbags which will be publicised. Numbers of sandbags held and their locations is currently being reviewed;
- made sure that weather and flood warnings are being directly linked to levels of service that need to be available based on the severity of risk;
- ensured that Elected Members now receive direct notification of weather alerts and other warnings in addition to Emergency on call arrangements;
- reviewed the Council's Adverse Weather plan;
- looked at the adequacy and location of rest centres across the district, with additional ones now under consideration;
- considered the on call/standby arrangements of Council services involved in the flooding response with services determining their ongoing requirements. Local arrangements are in place for all key services. Marketing and Communications was identified as a key area for improvement which now has a standby arrangement in place;
- arranged for the Council's Emergency Management Team to now tweet emergency and out of hours on call incidents on Bradford Council's main Twitter Account to enable greater public coverage;
- ensured that the Emergency Management Team are provided with better IT connectivity to ensure access to necessary Council systems in emergency

- situations. Individual services are reviewing their individual IT connectivity requirements for emergency situations;
- a new video conferencing facility is now in place to enable better communications between the Council and its partner organisations in emergency situations;
 - enabled the Council's Contact Centre to now prioritise any high priority or ongoing emergency incidents at the top of its help list;
 - the capacity of the Council's call handling is to be reviewed by the end of August 2016;
 - a wide ranging Communications strategy is in the final stages of development to explain the Council's, partner and public responsibilities in responding and dealing with serious flooding incidents;
 - been working with local Councils to develop Local Resilience Plans where the community may become isolated and may need to help itself until Emergency Services/Council Services are available and then work with them. Communities are being encouraged to identify storage space where appropriate emergency equipment/resources can be held in the community. The Council is working with the EA to ensure active flood wardens are included in emergency and flood plans;
 - ensured that volunteers and voluntary groups who came forward are being linked into Local resilience plans to ensure consistency in contact and follow up actions.

However further discussions with officers highlighted that following key issues.

- Members said that Bradford Council and its partners do have a good idea of the areas where it will flood, hence the people who will require support and guidance should be easily identifiable and people living in those areas should have flooding guidance information early. It was agreed here that officers from Bradford Council and the Environment Agency need to consider which communities are most at risk, how best to support them and where best to target resources.
- Members also felt that those at risk would need to know now what steps they need to take in the event of a flood, (before and after); something as simple as a "10 Point Plan", pinned up on their wall/fridge.
- Communication before and after the event was another key area raised, where more could be done and even though social media was used to communicate key messages to those affected by the floods; members felt that not everyone used social media and that Bradford Council and its partners needed to be more proactive. One such approach included posting key information through peoples doors in high risk flood areas.
- For communication to be effective, the general consensus amongst members was that those at risk of flooding needed to be communicated prior to the flooding event happening.
- There was considerable praise for the Bingley model of supporting peoples who had been affected by the floods and it was recommended that this model be used in other flood risk areas, developing "community hubs", across these areas.
- Members were also concerned about the confusion surrounding the use of flood resilience grants, as well as half of the properties affected by the floods had actually received flood resilience grants and that that had of the properties that had been flooded had actually applied for flood resilience grants.
- A colleague from Calderdale Council informed members and officers that there flooding had highlighted similar issues, particularly those relating to communication and flood resilience grants.

Chapter 3 – Concluding Remarks

Providing support and guidance to those affected by floods across the District by Bradford Council and its Partners is complex and one that requires a multi-faceted approach.

It has been clear from the discussions that members have had with residents, businesses and voluntary organisations who have been affected by the Floods, that whilst Bradford Council and its partners have provided support and guidance to those affected by floods, more can and should be done.

In its deliberations, this committee has endeavoured to take a balanced approach to this Scrutiny Review and one that encompasses the views and concerns of all interested parties.

The Scrutiny Review report identifies a number of recommendations, if implemented, would further improve the support and guidance provided to those who have and will be affected by floods.

Bradford Council's Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will monitor progress against the Scrutiny Review recommendations.

Chapter 4 – Summary of Scrutiny Review Recommendations

The recommendations set out below have come from the online flooding survey and information gathering sessions undertaken.

Recommendation 1

This Committee recommends that Bradford Council Officers engage with residents, businesses, the Bingley Flood Support Group and other Flood Support Groups to share best practice in developing its own Flood Resilience Plans.

Recommendation 2

This Committee recommends that Bradford Council together with key partners produce a laminated leaflet containing key flooding information. This leaflet should be provided to all living in flood affected areas and should include:

- advice on what to do to prepare for a flood;
- who to contact during and after the flood;
- what to do with flood damaged goods;
- Who can apply for funding to replace flood damaged goods;
- Where you can get advice from to help protect your property for the future.

Recommendation 3

This Committee recommends that a “flood buddy” approach be developed for the District.

Recommendation 4

This Committee recommends that support mechanisms for businesses in flood affected areas be designed, in anticipation of future floods happening.

Recommendation 5

This Committee recommends that Bradford Council and its partners encourage and support residents in very high risk flood affected areas to develop personal emergency plans for future flooding events.

Recommendation 6

This Committee recommends that the Environment Agency ensures that all residents and businesses that have been affected by the flood are on the flood alert system and that flood alert messages should be circulated much early.

Recommendation 7

This Committee requests that Bradford Council staff involved in emergency planning receive training on communicating key flooding messages, particularly through the use of social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

Recommendation 8

This Committee recommends that progress against the Flooding Scrutiny Recommendations be presented to this this Committee by the end of the year.

City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Flooding Scrutiny Review - Response to the Winter 2015 floods across the District

Terms of Reference

See Part 3E paragraphs 2.1 to 2.11 of the Constitution of the Council.

Background

At its meeting on Tuesday 19 January 2016, Council agreed that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee undertake an in-depth Scrutiny Review, into the effectiveness of Bradford Council and its Partners in dealing with the floods across the District in December 2015.

As part of this Scrutiny Review, members will also seek to learn how we can learn from the approaches taken during the winter 2015 floods, to assist the Council and its Partners to better deal with future floods.

It was also agreed that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee would receive the final review report, prior to its submission to full Council.

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Key Lines of Enquiry

The key lines of enquiry for this scrutiny review are to:

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- Identify how Bradford Council and other Local Authorities and Partners can share learning and strengthen joint working;
- Explore follow-up activity, in relation to supporting affected communities in the aftermath of the floods.

Methodology

The committee will receive and consider a variety of evidence/information provided by a range of interested parties. The Committee may adopt one or more of the following methods to collect evidence/information:

- relevant documents;
- relevant data;
- online survey;

- written submissions from, or meetings with interested parties;
- undertake relevant visits.

Indicative list of interested parties

An indicative list of interested parties is provided below. This is not definitive or exclusive and can be developed as the scrutiny progresses.

Organisation / Department	Contact
Residents Businesses and Community Groups affected by the floods.	
Bradford Council Officers.	Emergency Management, Drainage, Highways, Highways Asset Management, Contact Centre, CCTV, Neighbourhoods, Press and Communications and Finance.
The Environment Agency.	Graham Lindsay.
West Yorkshire Police.	Chief Superintendent Simon Atkin.
West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.	Ben Bush.
Airedale Inland Drainage Board.	Mr N Culpan/Mr C Windle
Yorkshire Water.	Michelle Lovewell.

Indicative Timetable

Date	Milestone
Wednesday 2 March 2016, 5.30pm, Committee room 1, City Hall.	DRAFT Terms of Reference to be presented to the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee – for discussion and approval.
Thursday 21 July 6.30pm – 8.30pm, Shipley Library.	Information gathering session – Residents, Community Groups, Businesses and Ward Councillors affected by the Floods.
Tuesday 26 July 2.00pm – 4.00pm, Victoria Hall, Saltaire.	Information gathering session – Residents, Community Groups, Businesses and Ward Councillors affected by the Floods.
Thursday 25 August 2016 – 5.30pm, Committee room 1, City Hall.	Information gathering session – Council Officers and key partners.
Thursday 29 September 2016 – Council Chamber, City Hall.	Final review findings and recommendations.

Information Gathering Sessions

Session 1 – Residents, Businesses and Voluntary Organisations, Thursday 21 July 2016, 6.30pm, Shipley Library.

42 Residents, Businesses and Voluntary Organisations attended.

Cllr Arshad Hussain.	Chair, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Simon Cooke.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Adrian Naylor.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr David Warburton.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Jeanette Sunderland.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Rosemary Watson.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Jack Rickard.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Martin Love.	Chair, Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw.	Portfolio Holder, Regeneration, Planning and Transport.
Cllr Sinead Engel.	Executive Assistant, Environment, Sport and Culture.

Session 2 - Residents, Businesses and Voluntary Organisations, Tuesday 26 July 2016, Victoria Hall, Saltaire, 2.00pm.

48 Residents, Businesses and Voluntary Organisations attended.

Cllr Arshad Hussain.	Chair, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Simon Cooke.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Rosemary Watson.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Martin Love.	Chair, Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Nicola Hoggart.	Co-opted Member, Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Session 3 – Council and external officers, Thursday 25 August 2016, 5.30pm, Committee room 1, City Hall.

Cllr Arshad Hussain.	Chair. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr David Green.	Deputy Chair, Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Simon Cooke.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr David Warburton.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Jeanette Sunderland.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Rosie Watson.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Simon Cooke.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Vanda Greenwood.	Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Martin Love.	Chair, Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Nicola Hoggart.	Co—opted Member, Environment and Waste Management Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Cllr Alex Ross-Shaw.	Portfolio Holder.
Steve Hartley. Mike Cowlam. John Major. Ian Day. Martin Stubbs. Alison Milner. Mike Powell. Dave Mazurke. John Anderson. Patricia Turner. Chris Slaven. Damian Fisher. Justin Booth. Chris Eaton.	Bradford Council Officers.
Steve Barnbrook.	Calderdale Council.
Graham Lindsey. Jonathan Moxon.	Environment Agency.
Jonathan Piatka.	Yorkshire Water.
	West Yorkshire Police.