

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Support for residents and businesses whose homes or business premises have been flooded in February 2020
Date of decision:	18 February 2020
Decision maker:	Director for Adults and Communities
Authority for delegated decision:	Council constitution 3.7.9 all necessary decisions in the case of emergencies
Ward:	All wards
Consultation:	Members and Group leaders have been consulted
Decision made:	The council adopts for households and businesses affected by the floods in February 2020, a Community Recovery Grant Scheme and a Business Recovery Grant Scheme (detailed in Appendix A) with a budget up to £1,000,000; and the Acting Assistant Director Highways & Transport / Head of Infrastructure Delivery be authorised to determine grants in accordance with the scheme criteria (as set out in Appendix A)
Reasons for decision:	<p>Herefordshire Council is designated as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Herefordshire. This means we have a number of duties and responsibilities in relation to managing flood risk across the county.</p> <p>A major flooding event occurred in Herefordshire during the weekend of 15-16 February 2020, with river levels on the River Wye and River Lugg exceeding the highest recorded levels on record. A major incident was declared by Herefordshire Council on Saturday 16 February. Severe weather warnings remain in place for the River Wye at Blackmarston, and the River Wye and River Lugg in Hampton Bishop, meaning that there is a danger to life. Water levels are expected to remain high for several days.</p> <p>As a consequence, Herefordshire experienced significant surface water and river flooding, with a significant number of properties believed to have been impacted during February 2020 (anticipated to be many more than flooded in October 2019). Herefordshire Council staff and our contractors Balfour Beatty Living Places, together with the Environment Agency, the emergency services and voluntary sector organisations are still dealing with a large number of road closures, flooded properties, stranded people and abandoned vehicles. Our contractor has drafted in significant extra resources to deal with flooded roads and affected communities by putting road closures in place as necessary and supporting the police and fire services where rescues and evacuations are required across Hereford City and across the county.</p> <p>We are still awaiting government announcements regarding support for people and businesses affected by flooding in February 2020. Therefore the council is going to offer grants as set out below. We will adopt the eligibility and funding to households and businesses affected by the severe weather that Government</p>

	<p>provides under the Flood Recovery Framework. This would consist of a Community Recovery Grant, equivalent to £500 per eligible household, to help communities with their immediate recovery and a Business Recovery Grant, which will provide up to £2,500 per eligible small and medium-sized business.</p> <p>The maximum budget to be allocated to provide eligible households and businesses with a Community Recovery Grant or Business Recovery Grant is £1,000,000.</p> <p>It is anticipated that government has announced that they will reimburse local authorities for awarding council tax and business rates reductions to households and businesses affected by the recent floods. Households and businesses in Herefordshire who were affected by the floods in February 2020 will be encouraged to contact us so that we can arrange for one of our visiting officers to go and inspect the damage.</p> <p>This scheme matches the Community Recovery Grant scheme which was launched in December 2019 to help support residents and businesses who were flooded in October and November 2019. Further details can be found at: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200196/roads/345/flooding/3</p> <p>Given that climate change is projected to increase the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall, we are aware that such grants may be required in the future. However this scheme is only available to those affected by the February 2020 flooding and any future occurrence would have to be considered in the future which would take into account the effectiveness of this scheme.</p>
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<p>The provision of these rules does not prevent the council acting through the Chief Executive and director(s) from incurring expenditure which is essential to meet any immediate needs created by a sudden emergency or situation relating to Section 138 of the Local Government Act 1972. This is subject to the action being reported as soon as practicable to the appropriate authority.</p> <p>A budget of up to £1,000,000 is estimated as required to fund the hardship schemes for the number of properties flooded during February 2020. This would be funded from ear marked reserves</p> <p>This decision is to set up a community grant scheme to specifically support those that have suffered from flooding and is irrespective of any of the protected characteristics, we therefore do not believe that it will have a detrimental impact on the Council's public sector equality duty.</p>
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>Not to approve the hardship schemes has the potential to prevent Herefordshire households and businesses from recovering from and meeting the costs associated with the damage caused by the exceptional weather. This option has been rejected on the basis that this is an urgent situation with many residents and businesses suffering direct damage and loss as a result of the unprecedented flood levels experienced within the county.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None</p>

Signed..... Date: 18 February, 2020

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