



COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET MEETING: 5 JULY 2021
Report Number	Agenda Item 8
Subject	Creation of Cotswold District Council Flood warden programme
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr. Andrew Doherty –Cabinet Member for the environment, waste and recycling Email: andrew.doherty@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Robert Weaver (Chief Executive) Tel: 01285 623607 Email: Robert.weaver@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To consider the creation of a Cotswold Flood Warden programme.
Appendices	Appendix 1 – GRCC Proposal for Flood Warden Scheme Appendix 2 – Flood Warden Code of Conduct
Recommendation/s	<i>That:</i> (a) That the flood warden programme in 2021/22 is funded from the Severe Weather Recovery earmarked reserve; and (b) Authority be delegated to the CEO, in consultation with the Cabinet member for the environment, waste and recycling to liaise with GRCC to finalise the detail of the programme and identify the initial towns and parishes to be approached with a view to them being part of the initial programme.
Corporate priorities	Responding to the challenges presented by the climate crisis Supporting communities and town and parish councils in the rollout of local environmental schemes
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	Cllr Andrew Doherty, Cabinet member for environment, waste and recycling, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Deputy Chief Executive/Section 151 Officer

I. BACKGROUND

- I.1. Areas of the Cotswold district, like many parts of the county are susceptible to flooding. The winter of 2020/21 saw flooding issues which severely impacted locations in Cirencester, South Cerney and Bledington and also saw properties affected in Siddington, Mickleton, Moreton in Marsh, Daglingworth, Coberley and Adlestrop. Residents suffered internal property flooding and many households were left without flushing toilets and household drainage when sewer systems became inundated with river water.

The Council worked alongside Ubico to support residents, checking on the welfare of people effectively trapped within their homes by flood water, deploying sandbags and pumps to critical locations and in extreme circumstances providing temporary toilet facilities or temporary accommodation for vulnerable households. The Council worked hard to lobby and support action from other agencies such as Thames Water and held a public meeting to try and capture the issues and concerns that local residents raised. This is not the first time many of these locations have suffered flooding and many other settlements like Fairford, which have also flooded in the past were also placed at risk this winter.

The impact of flooding wherever it occurs, often results in distress, anxiety and complex insurance claims, creating stress and misery to those affected.

- I.2. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in July 2019. As part of this declaration, the Council committed to “*take a leadership role on the Climate Emergency in the Cotswolds, working with, influencing and inspiring partners across the District..*”
- I.3. Severe weather events are likely to become more frequent as a direct impact of climate change. In light of the Council’s commitment to taking a Climate Emergency leadership role, it is important that there are a number of responses to managing flooding.
- I.4. The council held an incredibly well received online ‘flooding forum’ with over 100 local residents participating following the severe flooding in 2020/21, which sought to get the views of those affected, offer support and advice and look at further ways to help local residents and businesses. The creation of a flood warden programme is one such way that the council can provide a supportive role, whilst capitalising on the wealth of local knowledge and experience that can be harnessed through volunteer programmes.
- I.5. Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) have been approached following their very successful track record of supporting councils in the creation and management of voluntary flood warden programmes. Such a scheme within the Cotswold district would be incredibly useful as part of the council’s ongoing commitment to proactively manage flooding and support those affected by flooding.
- I.6. The Chief Executive has previous direct experience of working with GRCC as part of the Tewkesbury Borough Council Flood Warden programme and can testify to the positive, proactive difference such a scheme can make as part of a multi-agency approach to tackling flooding. The scheme there is held in high regard by those who sign up to become volunteer flood wardens.

- 1.7. GRCC would work with key officers, the lead Cabinet Member and key Members to agree the scope and priority areas for engagement particularly in the first year of the programme, with a broader plan to roll the initiative out across the district in due course. GRCC envisage that this would be approximately 10 parishes/towns for sign up in the first 12 months. It is proposed that the towns/parish areas severely affected in the winter of 20/21 and referenced in paragraph 1.1 above, be those approached in the first instance with a view to recruiting volunteer flood wardens in these areas.
- 1.8. An overview of the programme that GRCC could provide, based on initial conversations between the CEO and the Cabinet Member for the environment, waste and recycling, is provided at Appendix 1, with the key deliverables summarised below:
- Approaching and facilitating discussions with town and parish councils in relation to seeking volunteers.
 - Promoting, recruiting and inducting Flood Wardens ensuring registration and induction forms are completed and the relevant paperwork is provided to Cotswold District Council to ensure Flood Wardens are covered by CDC Public Liability Insurance.
 - Facilitate and manage 3 training events per year for Flood Wardens
 - 1-2-1 work with Flood Wardens to map vulnerable areas or support on issues arising from flooding incidents
 - Act as a link between the council, Environment Agency, GCC Civil Protection and Flood Risk, and others as appropriate as part of the volunteer flood warden programme
 - Work with Cotswold District Council and Publica officers and relevant partners to review and modify where necessary the emergency plan as it relates to flooding responses
 - Undertake focussed work with the identified parishes/towns (or clusters) on developing their resilience & preparedness e.g. promotion of emergency planning (review and refresh current plans and maintain a borough activity log)
 - Attend the Community Local Resilience Forum, on behalf of, or in support of, Cotswold District Council, to share Emergency Planning updates from Cotswold communities and feedback to/from communities and officers/members

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Based on the suggested programme set out at appendix 1, the cost would be £14,000 per 12 month period including mileage. It is proposed that the cost of the scheme can be funded from an earmarked reserve allocated for 'Severe Weather Recovery'

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1. Specific risk assessments associated with signing up volunteers and supporting them in the roles, including providing the necessary insurance will be part of the programme. Having rolled out similar initiatives elsewhere, GRCC are well versed in supporting councils with the necessary risk assessments associated with flood warden programmes.

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 5.1. There is no direct equalities impact as a result of this report.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There is no direct impact upon climate change or ecological emergency implications as a direct result of this report. However, the proposals in this report support the promotion of the Council's Climate Emergency declaration and in seeking to proactively assist businesses and communities adversely affected by flooding and hence minimise the impacts of flooding.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 7.1. Cabinet could decide not to support the creation of a volunteer Flood Warden programme.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1. None.