



Meeting: Full Council

Date: 30th October 2014

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: Extreme Weather Resilience Report: Torbay 2013/14

Is the decision a key decision? No

When does the decision need to be implemented? Report timetabled for Full Council 30/10/14 to be close to the Autumn national government budget statement

Executive Lead Contact Details: Councillor Robert Excell - Deputy Leader Conservative Group & Executive Lead for Safer Communities, Highways, Environment and Sport

Supporting Officer Contact Details: Charles Uzzell - Director of Place & Resources

1. Purpose and Introduction

- 1.1 The report provides an evidence base which details the impacts of the 2013/14 winter storm period on Torbay whilst laying the foundations for greater resilience in the future. It focuses on Torbay's highway, footpath and rail network, coastal defenses, harbours and green infrastructure.
- 1.2 This report provides the Council with recommendations to improve our response to extreme weather events acting as a community leader, service provider and estate manager.
- 1.3 The Extreme Weather Resilience Report: Torbay 2013/14 provides a record of the 2013/14 winter storm period and its impact on Torbay. It is not statutory document but it is intended that it will be publically available. The report is not a definitive or exclusive list of recommendations as some impacts are unlikely to manifest themselves for several years into the future.
- 1.4 The report explores the opportunities and priorities of Torbay Council as a community leader, service provider and estate manager in respect to extreme weather. In an increasingly competitive landscape for public resources it is important that Torbay articulates how the Council and its partners develop responses to extremes of weather.

2. Proposed Decision

- 2.1 That the Mayor be recommended:

To approve the submitted report and adopt the following recommendations in the Extreme Weather Resilience Report: Torbay 2013/14:

- That Torbay Council continue to enhance partnership working through the Peninsular Rail Task Force and Network Rail to further develop resilience in the Far South West and ensure that information from the events of 2013/14 are shared to reduce the impacts of future extreme weather events.
- That Network Rail be recommended to prioritise future funding to improve resilience and connectivity to the far South West ensuring future strategic plans include the need to improve resilience to this area. This should include plans to raise track heights and raise line-side equipment cabinets above track level on sections of track to reduce the vulnerability of the rail network, and additional passing places on the Waterloo Line to act as an alternative route should the need arise.
- In the event of major disruption to rail services, coordination arrangements over adjacent geographical areas are enhanced by Network Rail and Train Operating Companies.
- That Torbay Council continues to enhance partnership working with the Local Enterprise Partnership, South West Transport Authorities and the Highways Agency to develop a resilient strategic highway network funded with support from central government.
- That Torbay Council acting as Lead Local Flood Authority facilitate new studies and undertake small scale flood risk management measures to tackle new recovery and resilience requirements, on top of the existing and planned programmes of work.
- That Government should consult Local Highway Authorities on a single set of criteria to be applied to emergency highway repair funding, to minimise the administrative burden when applying for funds at times of crisis.
- That Torbay Council develops a prioritised harbour repair programme with funding assistance from outside bodies.
- That Torbay Council further develop the resilience of Torbay's coastline using the Flood Steering Group to enhance partnership working with the Environment Agency (EA) and South West Water.
- That Torbay Council supports tourism businesses through increased publicity and media campaigns during extreme weather events. That Torbay Council also surveys the impact of future events on this sector.
- That Torbay Council and the Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust work in partnership to identify ways in which Torbay's green infrastructure can reduce and slow flooding during extreme weather events.
- That Torbay Council supports the development of the Environment Agency Flood Warden initiative.
- That Torbay Council explores ways of sharing information in real time between emergency response teams during emergency events, for example using 'Resilience Direct'.

3. Reason for Decision

- 3.1 The report provides the Council with recommendations to improve our response to extreme weather events acting as a community leader, service provider and estate manger.
- 3.2 The report documents the impacts of the severe weather events of 2013/14 and provides an evidence base which can be part of the Councils request to government for greater investment in resilience on strategic and local networks.
- 3.3 Devon County Council, Cornwall County Council, Somerset County Council, Plymouth City Council and the Isles of Scilly are all following a similar process to ensure that the impact of these extreme weather events are not forgotten but used to plan for a more resilient future for the South West.

Supporting Information

4. Position

- 4.1 The succession of storm events from December 2013 through to February 2014 highlighted the cost, damage and disruption that extreme weather can cause to homes, businesses and vital services. The severe flooding events, storm surges, coastal tidal issues and high winds experienced in Torbay and the wider South West Peninsula had a significant impact on individual people, communities, infrastructure and economic performance.
- 4.2 In Torbay the storm events damaged coastal defenses and promenades, caused sea front closures, landslides, flooding and damage to public and private property, roads and trees.

Sea front closures	Various sites and locations across Torbay
Sea wall damage	Victoria Breakwater - Brixham, Goodrington, Hollicombe - Paignton Corbyn Head, Meadfoot, Torre Abbey, Princess Pier, Institute Beach, Oddicombe to Babbacombe, Torquay
Land slides	Marldon Road, Goodrington North, Warberry Road
Promenade damage	Torre Abbey
Overtopping	Torre Abbey, Paignton, Preston, Livermead, Goodrington, Meadfoot, Beacon Cove, Oddicombe, The Strand, Brixham
Flooding	Long Road, Clennon Valley, Stoke Gabriel, Cockington , The Strand Tor Hill Road
Property damage	Castle Circus, St Marychurch , Torquay Road, Union Street
Fallen/damaged trees	50 across Torbay

- 4.3 Torbay Council is currently working with Peninsula County and Unitary Authorities to gain a collective understanding of the most urgent extreme weather and climate risks. Working in partnership it is contributing to the development of projects that help the Bay and its communities withstand extremes of weather more robustly.

- 4.4 The extreme weather events and severe disruption to the transport network in 2013-14 had an impact on Council budgets, the economic performance of the Bay and the South West as a whole. The Met Office and Environment Agency agree that these events reflect an increasing likelihood of more frequent and intense storms in the future.
- 4.5 The government has recognised this to some degree through the short-term allocation of increased national funding for the immediate repair of existing flood and coastal protection assets affected by the events of 2013/14. However, what is urgently required is a more sustained programme of investment through regional programmes and local intervention.
- 4.6 There has been an impact of the storms on the local economy both in the short term through operational issues, but perhaps more damagingly, in the longer term through a lack of strategic and local transport infrastructure resilience affecting economic output and investment confidence. There is evidence to suggest that transport improvements will help unleash economic growth in the sub-region which would in turn provide a major contribution towards the national economy.

5. Possibilities and Options

- 5.1 Torbay Council can communicate the impacts of the recent extreme weather events to local, regional and national bodies joining the other Peninsula Unitary and County authorities that have responded by preparing reports.
- 5.2 The Council can decide not to adopt the report or to change the recommendations but there is a risk that the events of 2013/14 will be forgotten and the opportunity to support national resilience investment will be lost.

6. Equal Opportunities

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will not be undertaken on the report. No major effects or significant negative impacts are expected to be identified.

7. Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012

- 7.1 Adoption of the report itself will not require any direct procurement.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Development of the draft report has already involved consultation with Council departments and groups across the Bay. While the report seeks to address many of the issues raised it is acknowledged that these issues are a real challenge and many out of the Council's control.
- 8.2 The report has been presented to elected members.
- 8.3 The report if approved will be available on the Council website.

9. Risks

- 9.1 There could be a reputational loss if Torbay does not approve a response to the Winter 2013/14 storms as other Unitary and County authorities have responded.
- 9.2 By not demonstrating community leadership in this area Torbay could reduce its ability to secure Regional, National and European funding, as well as not taking full advantage of the adaptation opportunities that are occurring nationally and in particular in the South West.
- 9.3 Failure to improve the resilience of the area is also likely to lead to increased pressure on services and infrastructure and therefore higher costs for the Council during an extreme event.

Appendices

Appendix 1 The Extreme Weather Resilience Report: Torbay 2013/14

Additional Information

None