

Media Brief

Worcestershire Floods 2007



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Background

The 2007 summer floods were made up of flash (pluvial) and river (fluvial) flooding, the impact of this flooding impacted upon the County's economy and residents. In the summer of 2007 the floods were a result of exceptionally heavy rainfall on Friday, July 20 leading to the River Severn, Teme and Avon flooding and extensive flash flooding throughout the county. The saturated land following flooding in the June 2007 made the flooding worst.

Affected area

1735km²

Affected Local Authorities

Worcestershire County Council
Wychavon District Council
Wyre Forest District Council
Malvern Hills District Council
Worcester City Council
Redditch Borough Council
Bromsgrove District Council

Affected population

552,900

Houses flooded

3,366

Businesses flooded

747

Impact on Communities

Summer 2007 flooding was exceptional with approximately 6,000 buildings, 3,500 residential properties suffering flooding. The economic cost to the county was estimated at £6.4 million per week during the height of the flooding.

Approximately 10% of the land area of Worcestershire is at risk of flooding the second highest percentage of total land at risk from flooding in the West Midlands. In Worcestershire there are over 9,146 properties at risk of flooding approximately 4% of the total number of properties.

The Emergency response

Declaration of a Major Incident was made on Friday, July 20. Strategic Gold and Tactical Silver (*1) multi agency coordinating groups were set up at Hindlip Police HQ and Worcester Police station. Worcestershire County Council set up an emergency response centre to coordinate the response of local authorities. A public Emergency Helpline was set up by the County Council and also a specific business helpline.

The effect on infrastructure and essential services

The Health Authority, Ambulance Service and the County Council worked together to carefully evacuate two residential care homes. Over 90 long-term care patients were moved to temporary alternative accommodation. Numerous roads and bridges across the county were impassable and closed including the

M5 Gloucestershire, which resulted in traffic backing up in Worcestershire, and rail services disrupted.

Recovery

The recovery process following the floods was coordinated through Worcestershire Local Strategic Partnership at the suggestion of the County Council. The Strategic Gold Coordinating Group was initially tasked with the recovery process. A short-term multi agency recovery group was set up and chaired by the County Council to coordinate an immediate response. This was achieved using the concept of 'mini hubs' located in the worst hit areas. Officers from Worcestershire Hub call centres and other multi agency staff, provided residents with much needed reassurance and expert help and advice.

The longer-term strategic recovery was coordinated through the Worcestershire Partnership through an Economic Recovery Plan prepared by Worcestershire County Council's Economic Development Unit. This plan drew in over £750k funding for county flood relief initiatives.

Work carried forward since 2007 flooding

The County Council's Emergency Planning Team organised a series of awareness events across the county as part of Business Continuity Week warning and informing residents about the importance of being prepared in an emergency.

After the summer floods of 2007 all of the Worcestershire partner organisations agreed to work together to plan the county's recovery in areas such as the economy, tourism, infrastructure and the environment. The Worcestershire Partnership (*) put together a recovery plan that was successful in securing £725,000 from the £1 million regional Flooded Areas Recovery Programme established by Advantage West Midlands.

This money was divided up, with £600,000 used to fund short-term projects to help the economies of affected towns recover. Some of the areas to benefit from this money were:

- Tenbury and Upton Clean Up and Recovery
- Worcester Riverside
- Open Air Art Gallery - Evesham and Droitwich
- Evesham Riverside
- Evesham Port Street/Waterside
- Pershore Riverside Droitwich High Street
- Stourport Meadows
- Bewdley Watercourse Flood Management Plan
- Wolverley Watercourse Flood Management Plan
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The remaining £125,000 was allocated to support additional promotion and support for activities and events that would assist the tourism economy: £51,500 has been committed to support events in the immediate and short-term and the remaining £73,500 will be allocated to longer-term events that will help rebuild the visitor market for next year. The short-term funding was used to fund:

- Upton campaign

- Droitwich Salt Day
- Worcester Festival
- Plums and Angling
- Upton Peppercorns
- Severn Valley Steam Gala
- Tenbury Applefest
- Worcester Artists and Crafts market

Professor Michael Clarke, Chair of the Worcestershire Partnership, says:

“I am proud that in Worcestershire there is a long and successful tradition of different organisations working together through the Worcestershire Partnership for the benefit of residents. The Worcestershire Partnership led the county’s flood recovery and by our joint efforts we were able to secure this funding, which has provided a short-term boost to the economies of some of the worst affected areas of Worcestershire.

“We are now doing what we can through our Local Area Agreement, which is an agreement between the partnership and government, to address the issue of climate change, develop flood risk management plans and improve flood-warning systems.”

Councillor Simon Geraghty, Worcestershire County Council’s Cabinet Member for Planning, Economy and Performance with responsibility for Emergency Planning, said: “Worcestershire County Council led a wide range of initiatives to try to help the County recover from the devastating floods of last summer. We have been working with our partners to ensure that residents and businesses are better informed and prepared to deal with major incidents in the future. We also inputted our experiences into the national "Pitt" review and continue to support the local scrutiny of the floods to seek to ensure we improve our collective ability to respond to these major events.”

Councillor Derek Prodger, Worcestershire County Council’s Cabinet Member the Environment, said: “ The County Council is moving forward and are working to repair the widespread damage to infrastructure that was caused by the floods with the funds that were available to us at the time.”

The County Council submitted a £5.935million bid against the Restoration Fund, which is open to councils and police and fire and rescue authorities throughout the country for further funding.

To date the Government have allocated a total of £3.667million to the Council:

- £2.311 million from the department for transport
- £662,000 from the Restoration Fund

In addition to these figures the County Council has received £694,000 from the Government for schools. The total funding allocated to date by the Government is £3.667million.

Following the floods last summer, the Government announced an initial funding package of up to £88million to help affected people and areas. And on May 6 this year, Floods Recovery Minister, John Healey, announced the total funding package available had been brought up to £118million.

Councillor Adrian Hardman, Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member for Finance, said: " While we have had some help from the Government, we decided not to wait for reports, and action from them. We have slightly raised the Council Tax in last years budget to fund a £6 million two year flood mitigation plan, which I am sure will run for another two years after that. The County is moving forward"

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Website links

www.worcestershire.gov.uk/emergencyplanning
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/pressoffice
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/partnership

(*1) **Strategic Gold** - each agency will provide a level of strategic management, normally at executive level that will operate remotely from the incident in an emergency centre designated before, or at the start of an incident.

Tactical Silver - each agency will provide a suitable level of operational management to form a Silver Command Team. This team will operate remotely from the incident and be responsible for providing tactical guidance and adequate resources for the successful conclusion of the incident.

(*2) The Worcestershire Partnership is the countywide Local Strategic Partnership for Worcestershire and brings together local government, public services such as health, police and the fire service, voluntary and community organisations and local businesses within Worcestershire. The work of the partnership is based on a shared common purpose.