

Background and Context

On the night of Friday 7 / Saturday 8 January 2005, severe storms and unprecedented rainfall on already saturated ground fell across Cumbria. Over the Friday night and into Saturday, this caused extensive flooding and storm damage particularly in the Carlisle area.

The impacts of this included:

- 3 deaths
- 1,925 homes and business flooded - to 2 metres
- 3,000+ people homeless for up to 12 months+
- 40,000 addresses without power
- 3,000 jobs put at risk.

Additional activity by Carlisle City Council street cleansing and refuse collection teams:

- 8 - 21 January - 124 City Council employees worked 5,832 hours on street cleaning.
- 11 - 27 January - in addition to normal refuse collections, we collected 400 tonnes of freezer waste.
- 2,800 tonnes of damaged household goods collected.
- 5,000 fridges, freezers, cookers and washing machines collected.

Cumbria County Council suffered severe impacts on:

- Bridges
- Highways
- Lighting
- Rights of Way
- Carlisle Secondary Schools:
 - Newman - Severe Flood Damage
 - St Aidan's - Severe Flood Damage
 - Morton - Extensive Storm Damage
 - Trinity - Extensive Storm Damage

How the Topic was Handled

The Infrastructure / Public Assets sub group (established as part of the recovery structure) was co-chaired by Carlisle City Council Director of Community Services and Cumbria County Council Director of Client Services.

Schools were a particular issue and had their own sub group initially.

The extent of focus on flood recovery by Carlisle City Council generally delayed programmes and projects and adversely impacted on performance to a much greater extent than was initially anticipated, even with additional resources being applied where this was possible.

Waste

Additional waste collection had significant impacts on national best value performance indicators (BVPIs). Relaxations were sought via Government Office for the North West, and special dispensation for flood-related waste was obtained. 'Flood' waste was separated from the 'normal' waste and not included in the BVPI information. Cumbria County Council paid for the extra collection of flood-related waste.

Housing

Carlisle City Council's housing capital programme had to be re-profiled to exclusively address flood related housing issues for a 2 year period, resulting in delay to the existing programme established under the housing strategy.

Schools

There was severe disruption to students who not only had their schools severely damaged and were relocated due to their homes being flooded, but many also lost coursework and revision notes when their homes were flooded. Schools applied for dispensation to the various examination boards, but there are no reports of this being accepted by the boards as a valid reason for any extension of submission times or special consideration in relation to examination results.

The extent of damage to secondary schools brought forward the major issue of surplus school places and tied in with the severe damage to schools. Extra resources were forthcoming from Central Government.

Highways

Meeting the capital cost (£2.5 million) from highways capital maintenance had an adverse impact on existing programmes and therefore the condition of the network, and had a knock on effect to BVPIs.

Lessons Identified

Don't expect any special favours! However it is noted that lessons have been learned and recent flooding has resulted in some further relaxations in relation to BVPI's.

Contacts for Further Information

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