

Rossendale 3 Tier Forum Making Space For Water Group Meetings.

Background

The Making Space for Water groups form part of the way in which Lancashire County Council communicates and engages with other Flood Risk Management Authorities and organisations. This is a vital part of our strategic leadership role as Lead Local Flood Authority to ensure that flood risk is successfully managed throughout Lancashire.

There are 12 Making Space for Water Groups throughout the County which meet at an operational level to identify local hotspots and discuss potential solutions. Issues from these meetings are taken forward to the Partnership Management Group where matters that are relevant to the whole of the County are discussed. This then feeds into the Lancashire Strategic Partnership Group and then into the North West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. This hierarchy is in place to ensure that the flood risk management function is undertaken at all levels and that decisions are taken at the relevant levels to deliver effective management of flood risk throughout the region.

General Overview – purpose of the Making Space For Water Group

The purpose of the MSfW group is to develop integrated partnership working in water management in order to achieve: accurate assessments of the risk, nature and scale of flooding; a reduction in the risk of all types of flooding incidents; and mitigation of the effects of flooding incidents within Lancashire.

These meetings additionally enable partners to identify and discuss potential larger schemes which can be put forward for alternative funding opportunities, such as Flood Defence Grant in Aid or Local Levy funding.

The Rossendale Making Space for Water Group

The Rossendale MSfW group meetings take place quarterly to bring together the all the Risk Management Authorities responsible for water and flood risk management in the District of Rossendale. This includes Lancashire County Council, the Environment Agency, Rossendale Borough Council and United Utilities.

The meeting is a technical meeting where issues are discussed openly in a confidential environment so that an efficient, collaborative approach to resolving issues can be taken forward. This is working extremely well in Rossendale and we have a number of examples, listed below, to demonstrate this. Sometimes it is not the responsibility of the Risk Management Authority to take forward actions to

resolve issues that are outside of our jurisdiction - perhaps on private land for example; however we will assist land owners and communities in these situations where we can. This can be demonstrated by the number of flood action groups, business and community groups that exist throughout Rossendale that all the RMA's are actively involved with.

Completed investigations are discussed and options for funding are considered by the group where further work is necessary to resolve the flood risk issues. This includes funding from Rossendale, Lancashire County Council, United Utilities, Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA), Local Levy etc.

Record of incidents for the period June 2013 – June 2014

Since June 2013 Lancashire County Council Flood Risk Management (FRM) Team has been notified of 44 flooding incidents in Rossendale. Of these 44 incidents, 37 have been assessed to determine whether any further action is required and 7 are currently under assessment by the delegated officer.

Of the 37 incidents that have been assessed:

- 7 incidents have met the criteria for further investigation (requiring either a formal investigation under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, or a minor investigation to record the extent of the investigations done and the findings of those investigations). The purpose of an investigation is to determine the likely cause and source of the flooding incident and to identify the relevant Flood Risk Management Authority responsible for resolving the issue. 6 of the 7 investigations are now complete, with 1 of the 7 incidents currently under investigation.
- 30 incidents have not met the criteria for further investigation by the FRM team, as they have not involved internal flooding to either property or critical infrastructure. Based on the findings from the initial assessment, these incidents have been referred to the relevant Flood Risk Management Authority (or landowner if applicable) for further investigation or remedial action, as required.

All 44 incidents recorded have been discussed at the quarterly Making Space for Water meetings for Rossendale. They have been the subject of confidential discussions and investigations that have involved Rossendale District Council, Lancashire County Council, the Environment Agency and United Utilities.

Completed investigations and enforcements

There have been a significant number of investigations that have been completed which have involved several of the partners of this group working collaboratively to identify potential issues and provide suitable resolutions to the flooding issues that have been raised. This is very necessary to ensuring that relevant recourses are

efficiently utilised for the benefit of the group and for the benefit of the public in Rossendale.

This would include a situation where the potential source of flooding is uncertain and the relevant Risk Management Authorities with infrastructure in the vicinity of the incident would carry out joint investigation works. For example; there are United Utility sewers and Lancashire County Council Highway drainage systems within the Highway and it is often not immediately clear which system is defective. The two Authorities will work together to identify the problems and provide any remedial action that may be necessary. Further investigations may be necessary if the solution is not straight forward and this could be taken forward by the relevant Authority.

In Rossendale, there have been a number of consenting and enforcement issues resolved which have been identified through the Making Space for Water meetings. In Rossendale there have been 21 No. Enforcements taken forward that will help resolve flood risk issues.

Major Schemes

- Irwell Vale - FDGiA funded scheme to reduce surface water flooding is being progressed.
- Crawshawbooth – The Environment Agency are currently undertaking various improvements to reduce flooding from the main river in Crawshawbooth.
- Stongstry – Environment Agency capital programme to reduce risk of flooding from the main river.
- Rising Bridge Road – highway drainage system has been renewed to resolve surface water flooding.

Flood Action community and action Groups

There are a number of flood action and community groups that have been set up within Rossendale which have been supported by the Members of the Making Space for Water Group. These groups include:

- Crawshawbooth
- Stronstry
- Shawforth
- Irwell Vale
- Bacup residents group
- Bacup Traders group