



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL MAJOR INCIDENT RECOVERY BOARD - FEBRUARY 2020 'STORM DENNIS' FLOODING EVENT

Minutes of the meeting of the Major Incident Recovery Board - February 2020 'Storm Dennis'
Flooding Event meeting held on Thursday, 27 February 2020 at 1.00 pm at the Conference Room,
Sardis House, Sardis Road, Pontypridd, CF37 1DU.

County Borough Councillors - Major Incident Recovery Board - February 2020 'Storm Dennis' Flooding Event Members in attendance:-

Councillor A Morgan Councillor M Webber
Councillor A Crimmings

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr N Wheeler, Group Director – Prosperity, Development & Frontline Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mr P Mee, Director, Public Health, Protection & Community Services
Mr S Gale, Director of Prosperity & Development

Others in attendance

Police Sergeant S Williams – South Wales Police
Mr J Hogg – Natural Resources Wales
Mr J Payne – Pontypridd BID
Ms S John – Pontypridd BID
Mr T Graham - Pontypridd Town Council
Mr S Prichard – Pontypridd Town Council

15 Welcome and Apology

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and an apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillor M. Norris.

16 Declaration of Interest

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

17 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 27th February 2020 as an accurate reflection.

18 Service Recovery Update

The following updates were provided by Council Officers and Key Partners in respect of the major weather incident 'Storm Dennis':

Highways, Infrastructure and Frontline Services

- Work was underway in respect of Llanwonno tip;
- Not all damage to bridges had been identified;
- The majority of the residential properties had been cleaned, except for Trehafod and Taffs Well – Taffs Well was in the process of being cleaned that day;
- Skips had been provided to businesses on Treforest Industrial Estate;
- Food donations were being delivered to the central location in Tonypany;
- The current bill for damage to bridges, structures and culverts was approximately 50M but would likely increase once all formal inspections have been undertaken;
- The Leader confirmed that he would be writing to the Minister for Economy, Transport and North Wales to request emergency powers to demolish two bridges (Castle Inn and White Bridge) due to the high risk they pose. Natural Resources Wales confirmed that they would take a pragmatic approach and allow the Local Authority access to the rivers; and
- All category C and D tips had been inspected and a report would be sent to Welsh Government for assurance.

Natural Resources Wales

- NRW were in the process of carrying out inspections of the rivers, but would know more when the water levels lower;
- A report of Pentre had been commissioned with various partners invited to ensure an objective review is taken, which could be learned from;
- All tips had been inspected with remedial work undertaken in Clydach;
- A contractor was inspecting Pentre grid and the 12-14 similar grids in the Rhondda were being routinely checked;
- There had been a slippage in Treherbert, which the Coal Authority were inspecting; and
- More rainfall was being predicted, which would likely call for an amber warning, but not a red warning. As such, there was a need for NRW to liaise with the Local Authority to work in partnership and jointly manage social media and anxiety levels.

Businesses

- To date, 164 claims for the hardship fund had been processed;
- An issue had emerged in relation to a lack of skips at Treforest Industrial Estate and as such, 9 skips would be delivered by the end of the day; and
- Over 400 businesses had been visited and verified and of the few left, they were closed or uncontactable but officers would continue attempting to contact them.

Pontypridd BID

- The majority of the shops within the town centre had reopened including Barclays Bank;
- The businesses were pleased with the footfall in the town centre, which had arisen from the RCT CBC Jobs Fayre which took place in Llŷs Cadwyn;
- There were concerns regarding parking in the town centre as workers were unintentionally blocking customer access;

- There was a need for more events to promote the town centre; and
- The Leader addressed the parking concerns, advising that the closure of Berw Road Bridge was causing congestion and that the introduction of free parking would exacerbate the issues;

Pontypridd Town Council

- The Town Council were looking at releasing reserves to help the businesses.

Housing

- All of the 671 residential properties, which had been affected by the flood, had been visited;
- 144 of the properties were households with children;
- The properties identified as having vulnerable residents were directed to Social Services as a priority;
- Approximately 1500 E-forms had been received;
- Of the 35 households provided with temporary accommodation, 27 have children;
- There had been a number of cases of bad practices arising from the private renting sector, which included tenants being evicted and landlords attempting to receive the hardship fund for personal use. The Director confirmed that where such cases were identified, there were laws which allow for the Council to intervene;
- Environmental Health Officers were still providing advice to residents in respect of food etc;
- The vast amount of community support remained a challenge to co-ordinate but there would be a combination of staff and 157 organisations/volunteers assigned to the key centres to help pack the food donations;
- The Council's procurement and other contacts had been used well, with suitable boxes for food donations sourced from archives;
- The hardship payments were going well and by the end of the week, the majority of residents would be in receipt of the payment, with the Council following up on any further payments; and
- Arrangements had been put in place for the Welsh Government payment to be provided to the residents verified on the Council's database, to avoid unnecessary duplication of work.

South Wales Police

- Awareness had been raised in relation to potential fraudsters; and
- The patrol strategy was in place and was targeting the flood affected areas in particular.

Discussions ensued around Pontypridd town centre, with the Steering Group agreeing that investments such as the YMCA development, Muni Arts Centre and Lido, along with the recent Cabinet decision to demolish the former Bingo Hall had been significant in promoting the town centre and increasing footfall. It was acknowledged that the flood repercussions of Storm Dennis had substantial impact on the town centre and that all practical and viable solutions to get the town centre back on track were welcomed.

The Leader spoke of his request to Welsh Government for business rate relief for occupied businesses for a period of three months and advised that he was still awaiting confirmation.

In respect of the Leader's decision to allocate £800,000 to provide grant funding for the renovation of flood impacted properties following Storm Dennis, the Leader advised that a fair approach would be undertaken and that each application would be considered on a case by case basis.

The Steering Group **RESOLVED**:

- That the opening of Ynysangharad park and bridge would be prioritised for the opening of Pontypridd park as soon as possible;
- That events would be organised to take place in Pontypridd to promote the town centre;
- That in approximately 6/8 weeks, the Council would attend flood affected areas to inform residents of the flood re-insurance schemes available to them;
- That the Leader would write to a letter to the Welsh Secretary of State for an opportunity to establish a flood re-insurance scheme for commercial buildings;
- That the Local Authority would liaise with Natural Resources Wales to undertake joint media work to alert residents of future weather warnings consistently and provide assurance to residents around water levels and the meaning of the alerts; and
- To invite a representative from RCT Citizens Advice Bureaux to the next meeting of the Recovery Board due to their substantial support provided to residents in recent weeks.

19 Urgent Decision of the Leader of the Council

The Steering Group **RESOLVED** to note the Urgent Decision taken by the Leader of the Council.

This meeting closed at 2.15 pm

**A Morgan
Chairman.**