

Flood Investigation (S19) Guidance Note

What are they and why does my community have one?

Suffolk County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority has a duty (under Section 19 of the Flood and Water management Act 2010) to undertake flood investigations following significant flood events.

Investigations following Storm Babet will occur in locations which meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Internal flooding of one property (domestic or business) on more than one occasion
- Internal flooding to five or more properties in a specific location
- Major transport route closed for more than 10 hours.

What can I expect from the report?

S19 Investigations are an independent review of a flood event, designed to provide context as to what happened and recommendations on how flood risk could be managed.

The investigations will:

- highlight the probable causes of flooding;
- identify options to reduce future flood risk and increase property resilience; and
- make recommendations for actions by relevant responsible organisations, landowners or homeowners.

It should be noted that the recommendations provided within a report cannot be enforced and the Council has no powers to require any of the responsible bodies to take action. The results of the investigations may however reveal opportunities for the council and other responsible organisations (such as the Environment Agency), landowners and homeowners to work in partnership to implement works to increase resilience to flooding.

The time to complete an investigation is dependent on a number of factors and may vary between locations. Communities will be contacted directly when an investigation is due to commence and will receive regular updates on the progress of the report.

What is the process?

Investigations comprise of multiple stages that include; data collection, engagement with communities and Risk Management Authorities, option considerations and publication of the final report. Further detail into the different stages is as follows:

Evidence and data Collection – the context behind what is currently within a location i.e drainage assets, topography, planning applications, OS mapping, Geology, predicted and historical flood risk. This also includes specific details relating to the flood event i.e rainfall data, flood depths and flow pathways.

Communication – engaging with communities and RMAs to capture information about where the water came from, what happened during the event, where and how locations were impacted. Community meetings and site visits will be included.

Options consideration/recommendations – assessing what might be possible to implement within the community to reduce flood risk. This could be holistic (range of options that form part of a large project) or individual to property.

Publication – prior to publication, the report will undergo internal quality checks and notification to RMA's and communities of the pending document. Once approved, the report will be published on the council's website.

It must be recognised the sensitivity of published information which may blight an area. However, the whole purpose of publishing is to share information to increase our understanding of local flood risk. Therefore, the proposal is to publish a report that identifies, date of incident, the area of flooding, historical data, photos and plan of location. The report will not publish personal information.

Flood Investigation Template

The template to be used by the LLFA when completing an investigation can be viewed on the councils website. Investigations are completed independently and it should therefore be expected that the content with the report may vary across different locations. An overview of what to expect from key elements of the report are as follows:

Flood Incidences – details the location to be considered as part of the investigation. This section will also detail historical flood records and predicted flood risk.

Flooding Source(s), Pathway(s) and Receptor(s) – this section will capture information about what caused the flooding, where the water came from and travelled to, and the impact. This section will utilise existing data and evidence from the event.

Risk Management Authorities, Non Risk Management Authority and flood risk function(s) – this section will acknowledge both RMA's and Non-RMA's relevant to the location and provide an overview of their flood risk functions. The table is not exhaustive and will be updated in accordance with the investigation.

Action(s) completed to date – to capture resilience works that may have been implemented prior to a report being published.

The scale of the task to complete the number of investigations related to Storm Babet is significant and it will take an extended period of time to complete. We acknowledge that some communities wish to pursue flood resilience works, perhaps sooner than an investigation will be completed, and will therefore ensure this information is captured and detailed within the report.

LLFA Recommended Action(s) – recommends flood mitigation measures that could be implemented to reduce the risk of flooding. These will vary between locations but may include measures such as increased maintenance/inspections, Property Flood Resilience, drainage improvements or natural flood management. Recommendations will be derived from data and evidence and should be considered realistic in their implementation. Time scales for completion will be informed by those whom the action applies and will be established during the investigation.

