



Terms of reference

Section 19 Flood Investigation Report on July 2021 flooding events

Background

Section 19 (S19) of the Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 places a statutory duty on Westminster City Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for the area, to investigate flooding incidents in Westminster.

Following exceptional rainfall on 12th July 2021, multiple wards in north Westminster suffered severe flooding. Westminster City Council will now undertake an S19 investigation in accordance with the process set out in Westminster's Local Flood Risk Management Plan, to ensure that future incidents are mitigated and responded to as effectively as possible.

We will also investigate if there were any different contributing factors in the flood event of 25th July 2021.

Purpose and scope

The purpose of the investigation is to understand how the incident occurred and what functions were exercised by Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) in response to the flood.

The investigation will identify the RMAs that have a flood risk management function in Westminster. It will detail what actions each RMA has undertaken or proposed in response to the flooding incident.

The investigation will be undertaken as soon as practical after the flooding incident and will be appropriate to the scale and nature of the incident. The results of these investigations will be published in a Flood Investigation Report (FIR) and made available to the public.

The FIR will provide information regarding the flooding including the flooding mechanisms, flood responses from the risk management authorities and set out recommendations for further future work. The FIR will bring together data from the risk management authorities and other relevant agencies as appropriate such as London Fire Brigade.

The investigation is not an in-depth analysis of the flood risk, event magnitude or flooding mechanisms. Flood investigations additionally do not give the Council powers to require any parties to undertake any work.

Membership

The RMAs required to take part in the investigation include:

- highway authority and LLFA - Westminster City Council
- drainage authority - Thames Water
- strategic authority for flooding - Environment Agency

Westminster City Council's flood risk consultants, WSP, will provide support and analysis of data collected on the floods.



Roles and responsibilities

As the LLFA and highways authority, Westminster City Council are the risk management authority responsible for the management and maintenance of the highway drainage. They are the RMA responsible for managing local flood risk including flooding from surface water, ordinary watercourses and groundwater.

Thames Water are the RMA responsible for managing the risk of flooding from the local sewerage network (including combined sewerage systems) and their water supply network.

The Environment Agency has an overall strategic overview of flood risk from all sources and coastal erosion.

Timeline

A first draft of the FIR will be published in September but this will be subject to further iterations as we gather additional information from the other RMAs.