



# Extreme Weather Events Review Overview of Activity

## Background

In October 2023, Perth and Kinross experienced a series of severe weather events that had a significant impact on people and properties. As a result, the Council conducted a review which has been regularly reported to the Scrutiny and Performance Committee. The review focused on the Council's preparedness, response, and recovery efforts during these events. It identified areas for improvement to enhance the Council's effectiveness in handling similar future events.

For residents and businesses affected as a result of these and other weather events, this has been a very difficult time, with disruption lasting far beyond the periods of weather. The Council continues to acknowledge that we have an important role to play in reassuring residents, building resilience and confidence in our ability to respond effectively to future events. The feedback from residents, internal reviews of activity and scrutiny by Committee members has been a valuable part of identifying areas for improvement.

While the closure timing of flood gates at the North Inch received significant attention, the review and improvement plan extend beyond this factor. In developing the improvement plan we have acknowledged that existing plans and processes need updating to account for the rising frequency and intensity of severe weather events throughout the year. Additionally, it considers the potential impact of losing the expertise of individuals involved in past responses.

This interim report provides a summary of the activity to date.

## Weather events

The three weather events reviewed to develop the improvement plan took place on:

- 6-8 October 2023
- 18-21 October 2023
- 27-29 October 2023

## Acting on feedback

The October 2023 weather events affected communities across Perth and Kinross, many simultaneously. While we heard lots of positive examples from residents who were positive about the approach taken in their area, there were also instances during the response and recovery phase where the Council did not meet the standards of support that residents expect. Our Chief Executive has placed on record his apology for those who experienced this, doing so at a community meeting with impacted residents around the North Inch area, in a public statement issued to the media, and again at the first meeting of Scrutiny and Performance to consider the improvement plan.

Our thanks go to all of the residents who shared their feedback directly and via representatives during one-to-one conversations with our teams, at the resident's meeting and by sharing their experiences with the Scrutiny and Performance Committee. This feedback has informed the improvement plan and subsequent activity.

## Communications

During and immediately after the severe weather events a number of communications were issued to Elected Members and the wider public using different information sharing channels.

Elected Member Briefing Notes issued:

6 October – update on preparations for responding to expected severe weather over the weekend

7-8 October – 5 updates issued about the response to weather

10 October – impact and recovery overview

17 October – update on preparations for expected impact of Storm Babet

18-21 October – 5 updates issues about the response to weather

25 October – impact and recovery overview

27 October – update on preparations for responding to expected severe weather over the weekend

28 October – update on response to weather

News statements issued (regular updates published on social media and website in relation to road closures etc):

9 October 2023 – post flooding update

16 October 2023 – flooding bulletin published

17 October 2023 – preparations for Storm Babet

18 October 2023 – closure of Queen's Bridge

19 October 2023 – Storm Babet update

20 October 2023 – impact of Storm Babet on roads/services

20 October 2023 – post Storm Babet statement from Council Leader

25 October 2023 – update on Storm Babet clean-up in Invergowrie

In addition, various contact and reassurance visits were carried out to affected households. Visits and ongoing contact were carried out with 37 households in Perth City and 10 households in Invergowrie. During these contacts, advice and support, including signposting to relevant services and a single point of contact, was provided. The Housing Service is continuing to provide support to some households regarding ongoing accommodation needs.

## Scrutiny and review

Scrutiny of the circumstances surrounding the initial weather events and progress updates on the improvement plan have taken place across several meetings of the Scrutiny and Performance Committee.

- 22 November 2023 – the committee heard from residents impacted and considered a detailed report and improvement plan. Due to time pressures only activity related to the 6-8 October weather event were considered. The [report](#) presented and a [recording of the meeting](#) are available to review.
- 31 January 2024 – the committee considered the report as it related to the 18-21 October and 27-29 October weather events alongside an updated improvement plan. The [report](#) presented and a [recording of the meeting](#) are available to review.
- 24 April 2024 – the committee considered an update on improvement activities undertaken. The [report](#) presented and a [recording of the meeting](#) are available to review.

Key findings from the severe weather events were included in Section 9 of the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 report, categorised under Preparedness, Response and Impact & Recovery. The following table provides a further update on the Improvement Plan actions arising from the findings.

## Liability Claims

Investigations into the causes of the flooding remain ongoing through the Council's Insurers. Claims for the impact of flooding on affected properties between 6-8 October are being managed through the Council's Insurance team with residents being signposted on how to submit a claim. This will follow due process and is in the hands of the respective Insurance companies and advisors.

## Key improvement areas and activity summary

Improvement area	Update
<b>Preparedness</b>	
<p>Moving from traditional focus on winter weather/snow preparations to recognising that severe weather is increasingly seen through heavy rainfall and flooding throughout the year.</p>	<p>A report on year-round resilience to weather conditions and severe weather events will be presented to Committee in August 2024 including potential options to reduce/mitigate future flood risk. Any financial implications will be considered at Finance and Resources Committee and/or Council as part of the budget setting process.</p>
<p>Working with partners to ensure Perth Flood Scheme Gate Closure Operational Plan reflects recent experience of weather patterns and updates to sources of information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational review undertaken with SEPA with revised operating protocols now in place for better communication and sharing of information. Update to form part of August report.</li> <li>Representatives from SEPA, SSE and Scottish Water attending Scrutiny and Performance Committee in September 2024 about their role in incident preparedness, response and recovery.</li> </ul>
<p>Training to build management capacity in managing/ responding to future incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 senior staff members attended Crisis Management/ Leadership in a Crisis training sessions to add to existing trained and experienced staff.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop undertaken with Strategic Leadership Team on emergency planning duties delivered by Tayside Resilience Group colleagues.</li> <li>• Business continuity training with Strategic Leadership Team planned for w/c 10<sup>th</sup> June.</li> </ul>
<b>Response</b>	
<p>Continue to work with Community Resilience Groups to build on and grow the positive impact of local preparation and response during an incident.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Contingencies team staff member allocated to focus on developing and growing new Community Resilience Groups.</li> <li>• Community Resilience Group conference to take place in 2024 to share learning and best practice between groups and seek funding requests from both new and established CRGs based on their specific needs.</li> <li>• Formal feedback mechanisms are being developed to ensure learning from Community Resilience Groups considered in developing future response arrangements.</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure appropriate mechanisms in place for public reporting out of hours during severe weather.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewed out-of-hours call arrangements with Aberdeen City Council, including sample of calls handled during 6-8 October. Confirmed arrangements remain appropriate and of required standard.</li> </ul>

Improvement area	Update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional actions proposed to reduce call volumes out-of-hours during severe weather incidents to improve capacity for dealing with genuine emergency calls.</li> </ul>
<p>Develop a protocol to share vulnerable people lists during emergencies.</p>	<p>Discussions have taken place with partner organisations who hold existing lists, including NHS and SSE. Protocol for appropriate sharing being developed.</p>
<p>Impact &amp; Recovery</p>	
<p>Ensure appropriate welfare response and engagement with people directly impacted during and following a severe weather incident.</p>	<p>Reviewed welfare response protocol following October events and was successfully implemented in flooding event at the end of December 2023. Rolled out with all teams involved to ensure protocol is followed in all future events.</p>