

## EDTCE Scrutiny Commission Briefing

**Date:** 18/01/2024

**From:** Martin Fletcher, City Highways Director

**Ext:** 374965

**Subject: Storm Henk Flooding – 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024**

### **1. Purpose of Briefing:**

1.1 To update the EDTCE Scrutiny Committee on the response to the flooding impacts in the City arising from Storm Henk.

### **2. Incident Phase – Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January and Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January:**

2.1 Heavy rainfall over the new year period combined with existing saturated ground conditions saw river levels rise rapidly on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January leading to the Environment Agency issuing flood warnings for eleven areas in Leicester.

2.2 The timeline of key events and information leading up to and during the flooding on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> January is attached at **Appendix A**.

2.3 The Council's Highway and Emergency Management Teams were active during the incident phase monitoring river levels and responding to reports of highway and property flooding, with consideration being given to the establishment of potential rest centres.

2.4 During the incident several streets were affected by flood water from the River Soar and a number of properties had to be evacuated, particularly in the Thurcaston Rd area of the city.

2.5 Council Teams and the Fire Service focussed on supporting affected residents and the Council's Incident Response Plans were activated. A control room was established at City Hall to handle calls and enquiries and co-ordinate our response.

### **3. Recovery Phase – Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January and Ongoing:**

3.1 There has been significant property flooding in the city as a result of Storm Henk, predominantly a result of flooding from the River Soar in the Thurcaston Rd area.

3.2 We have confirmed 137 properties have flooded internally. The details are as follows:

<b>Storm HENK 2-3 January 2024 - Internal Property Flooding list - Leicester City</b>		
<b>Street Names</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Confirmed</b>
Abbey Lane	Abbey	5
Beaumanor Road	Abbey	55
Corporation Road	Abbey	1
Thurcaston Road	Abbey / Belgrave	18
Wesley Street	Abbey	4
Marsden Lane	Aylestone	3
Middleton Street	Aylestone	1
Day Street	Belgrave	9
Marjorie Street	Belgrave	3
Palmer Street	Belgrave	3
Ross Walk	Belgrave	1
Victoria Park Road (Medical Centre and Dentist)	Castle	2
Columbine Road	Humberstone & Hamilton	1
Batten Street	Saffron	3
Gwendolen Road	Spinney Hills	1
Gleneagles Avenue	Rushey Mead	8
Roseway	Rushey Mead	15
Wintersdale Road	Thurncourt	3
Glengarry Close	Western	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>137</b>

These locations are shown on the map at **Appendix B**.

3.3 Key roads affected by flooding during Storm Henk included:

- Braunstone Lane East/Middleton Street
- A6 Abbey Lane between Redhill Circle and Beaumont Leys Lane/Corporation Road
- Thurcaston Road between Abbey Lane and Loughborough Road
- Beaumanor Road
- Wesley Street
- Day Street
- Ross Walk
- Holden Street

3.4 Following the flooding, the Council has established a cross-departmental Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) to manage the Council's response to the issues arising and provide support to affected residents.

3.5 The aims and objectives of the RCG are set out in **Appendix C** but can be summarised as follows:

- Undertake Recovery Impact Assessment.
- Full investigation to identify flooded properties.

- Support vulnerable people.
- Support with temporary accommodation where needed.
- Aid clean-up:
  - 'Bulky item' removals
  - Highway cleansing
  - Parks cleansing
  - Council land/property
- Support local residents and businesses with properties affected by flooding in making flood recovery grant applications where eligible.
- Work with utility companies to ensure all properties services reinstated as soon as possible.
- Assist affected residents with insurance claims and in making contact with landlords.
- Support residents back into homes.
- Promote flood awareness messaging and communications.
- Feed back to the Local Resilience Forum.

3.6 In the immediate days following the flooding, the RCG activities included:

- Visits to all known affected properties by the Flooding and Drainage team took place from Thursday afternoon, with known vulnerable adults prioritised.
- City Wardens also knocked on doors of all those affected to offer support and advice on coping with the aftermath.
- City Cleansing organised the collection of flood damaged property (carpets, furniture, etc) that residents were leaving on the footway. Efforts concentrated on Beaumanor Rd area, but all known flooded locations have now been visited and contact leaflets left if residents were not present.
- City Cleansing commenced cleaning the highway in the affected streets.
- City Highways prioritised the cleaning of gullies on flooded streets (concentrating around the Beaumanor Rd area).
- Contact made with utility companies as both electricity and water reported to be off in the Beaumanor Rd/Thurcaston Rd area.
- A significant clean-up operation was implemented at Ellis Meadows, Aylestone Meadows and elsewhere along the River Soar, where unprecedented levels of waste debris and litter were left by the floodwater.

3.7 As we move further into the recovery phase, a key objective of the RCG is to support residents and businesses whose properties have been flooded internally with accessing grant funding through the Governments Flood Recovery Framework scheme. This has been made available to districts affected by Storm Henk where over 50 properties have been flooded. Details of the Government scheme can be found at:

[Government payments for communities affected by flooding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/payments-for-communities-affected-by-flooding)

3.8 We continue to respond to enquiries and support affected residents. The Flooding and Drainage team are consolidating all data collected and responding to requests for service that they have received, prioritising where internal property flooding has occurred. The team are also assisting local ward Councillors with patch walks.

3.9 At this time and from the data available, the primary cause of the flooding is considered to be from the River Soar. However, over the coming weeks, the council will be undertaking a full investigation into the cause of the flooding in liaison with the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water.

3.10 The Environment Agency are the lead organisation with responsibility for managing flood risk from the River Soar. The EA have begun to engage with the affected communities, and we have requested that they continue to liaise with us in doing so.

3.11 For reference purposes, our Councillors' guide to Leicester's flood risk, weather warnings, flood warnings and flood preparedness is attached at **Appendix D**.

3.12 The Council website also contains detailed information about flooding: [Flooding and watercourses \(leicester.gov.uk\)](https://www.leicester.gov.uk/flooding-and-watercourses/)

#### **4. Recommendations.**

4.1 The EDTCE Scrutiny Commission is asked to note the contents of the briefing paper and feedback any comments.

## Appendix A.

### Storm Henk Flooding – Key Information and Chronology

#### EA/Met Office Flood Guidance Statements:

Date	Time	Leicester Risk Category (High Level)
Mon 1/1/24	10.30am	Green – low
Tues 2/1/24	10.30am	Yellow – medium
Tues 2/1/24	15.30pm	Yellow – medium
Weds 3/1/24	10.30am	Green – low

**N.B.** Whilst there was a yellow warning in place for rainfall across the region, there was no specific National Severe Weather Warning Service “heavy rainfall warning” issued for Leicester ahead of, or during, Storm Henk. The rainfall amounts experienced are not unexpected at this time of year, but the saturated ground conditions since Storm Babet in October make catchments extremely flashy and the rainfall run-off quickly reaches watercourses.

#### EA Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings Timeline:

Date	Time	Category	Location
Sat 30/12/23	10.37am	Flood Alert	Upper Soar Catchment (incl. Leicester)
Sun 31/12/23	11.46am	Flood Alert	Leicester Tributaries
Tues 2/1/24	2.24pm	Flood Warning	Thurnby Brook upstream of Dakyn Rd
Tues 2/1/24	2.58pm	Flood Warning	Bushby Brook upstream of Dakyn Rd
Tues 2/1/24	4.39pm	Flood Warning	Bushby Brook downstream of Dakyn Rd
Tues 2/1/24	5.57pm	Flood Warning	Melton Brook in Rushey Mead
Tues 2/1/24	7.03pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at Willow Brook, Melton Brook, Belgrave – Cannock St
Tues 2/1/24	11.54pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at North Aylestone
Tues 2/1/24	11.57pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at Rushey Mead
Tues 2/1/24	11.58pm	Flood Warning	River Soar at Aylestone
Weds 3/1/24	00.01am	Flood Warning	River Soar at Frog Island
Weds 3/1/24	00.17am	Flood Warning	River Soar at Abbey Meadows
Weds 3/1/24	00.18am	Flood Warning	River Soar at Belgrave – Ross Walk

#### Response Co-ordination Meetings, Key Actions & Issues:

Date	Time	Meetings, Key Actions & Issues	Notes/Issues:
Tues 2/1/24	2.24pm	First flood warning received	Thurnby area
Tues 2/1/24	3.00pm	Highways Flood Response Mtg following receipt of first two flood warnings	Operational Response Planning – activities and resources.
Tues 2/1/24	3.42pm	Escalation Discussion between City Highways Director & director for Corporate Service following receipt of first two flood warnings	Agreed to request multi-agency Tactical Co-ordinating Group meeting (TCG)
Tues 2/1/24	5.00pm	Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland (LLR) Multi-Agency TCG	City Council Chaired

Tues 2/1/24	5.30pm	Leicester City Council (LCC) Incident Log Commenced	
Tues 2/1/24	6.45pm	Emergency Centre (EC) identified in Thurnby and put on standby along with EC volunteers: Thurnby Lodge Community Centre	EC identified in response to Flood Warning for Thurnby and reports of highway flooding in Wintersdale Rd and Abbots Rd.
Tues 2/1/24	11.15pm	LCC Resilience Manager sought advice from Highways Director regarding two calls received relating to residents concerned about flood water rising	Aylestone (Marsden Lane) area
Weds 3/1/24	2.00am	Emergency Centres identified in Aylestone but stood down quickly as no evacuations taking place	
Weds 3/1/24	5.33am	<p><i>Collated summary of key issues provided by Highways Standby Supervisor:</i></p> <p><b>Marsden Lane:</b> Flooded. Including properties. Water surging from gullies. Unable to take positive action to assist at this stage.</p> <p><b>Bath Street:</b> Flooded. Not yet reached properties. Possible manhole covers blow. Sandbags to be deployed outside properties. Road closed.</p> <p><b>Oaklands Avenue:</b> Not flooding.</p> <p><b>Boundary Road:</b> Not flooding.</p> <p><b>Ross Walk:</b> Flooded. Not yet reached properties. Sandbags to be deployed outside properties. Road closed.</p> <p><b>Thurcaston Road:</b> Flooded. Not yet reached properties. Sandbags to be deployed outside properties. Water flowing from park. McDonalds car park flooded.</p> <p><b>Marjorie Street:</b> Not flooding.</p> <p><b>Corporation Road:</b> Beginning to flood.</p> <p><b>St Stephenson's Road / Fosse Road North (beneath Rally bridge):</b> Flooded. Not yet reached properties.</p> <p><b>Middleton Street / Narrow Lane:</b> Flooded. Including properties. Water surging from gullies. Unable to take positive action to assist at this stage.</p> <p><b>Day Street:</b> Flooded. Including properties. Unable to take positive action to assist at this stage. Fire brigade on site.</p> <p><b>Repton Street:</b> Not flooding.</p>	
Weds 3/1/24	8.15am	Highways Flood Response Mtg	
Weds 3/1/24	9.00am	LLR Multi-Agency TCG	City Council Chaired
Weds 3/1/24	10.00am	TCG meeting declared a major incident	
Weds 3/1/24	10.45am	LCC Incident Response Plan triggered and City Hall Control Room established	
Weds 3/1/24	2.00pm	LLR Multi-Agency TCG	City Council Chaired
Weds 3/1/24	2.00pm	Emergency centre established at Belgrave NHC and remained	In response to evacuation of flooded properties in

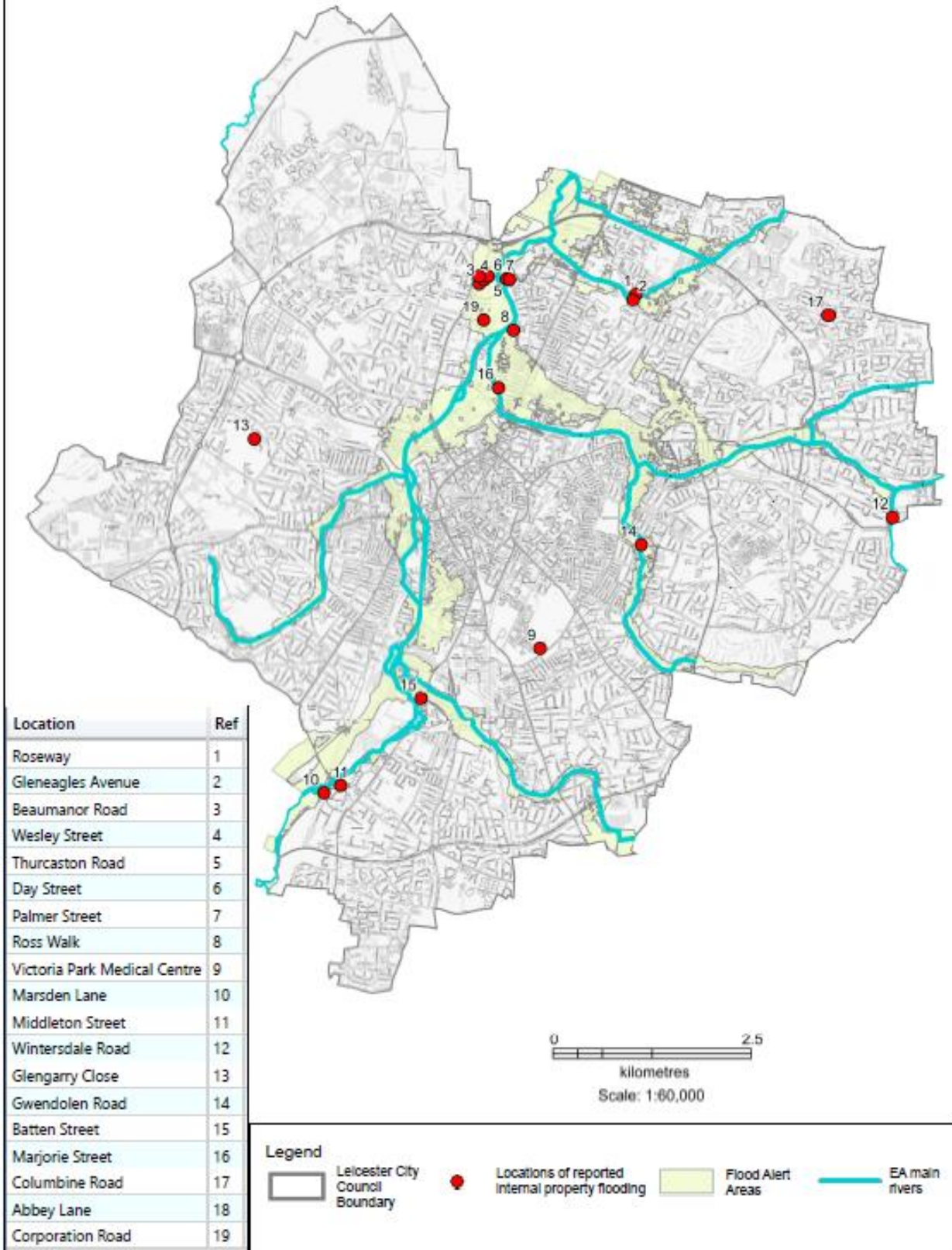
		open until 9.00pm but nobody attended	Day Street, Thurcaston Road and Beaumanor Rd
Weds 3/1/24	4.00pm	Highways Flood Response Mtg	
Weds 3/1/24	4.30pm	LLR Multi-Agency Strategic Co-ordinating Group meeting	County Council Chaired. Chief Operating Officer rep for LCC
Weds 3/1/24	6.00pm	LLR Multi-Agency TCG	County Council Chaired
Weds 3/1/24	7.00pm	LCC Internal Flood Response Meeting Review	

Weds 3/1/23 – Core Actions and Activities Summary:

- City Hall Control Room collated information and responded in coordination with partners to people stranded in homes / evacuated / vulnerable people. Last of these centred on Day Street which was resolved by LF&RS and LCC about 7-00 pm
- Ongoing multiagency oversight and coordination with series of LRF TCG's / SCG's. Limited LF&RS specialist water response teams made prioritisation of people stranded necessary. Lives at risk in County areas and intensity of issues in Charnwood relevant to Leicester response context
- Ongoing operational response by Highways teams to reports of flooding, continuous monitoring of watercourse and areas at risk.

Appendix B – Map of Locations of Property Level Flooding during Storm Henk

### Locations of reported property flooding locations - 2nd and 3rd January 2024





## **Appendix C – RCG Aims & Objectives**

### Leicester City Council Flood Recovery Coordinating Group Strategy

The aim of the Leicester City Council Flood Recovery Coordinating Group is to support those directly affected by the serious flooding that occurred in Leicester during 03/01/24 and thereby return the community to a state of normality, mitigating the worst impacts of the flooding where possible.

This will be achieved by:

- Coordinating the provision of appropriate advice, guidance, and where appropriate, signposting to Council Services and other organisations.
- Coordinating the provision of appropriate material, and psychological support to victims in line with the Council's responsibilities.
- Monitoring impacts and ensuring these, and actions to mitigate them are recorded.
- Coordinating communications to the public, councillors, and other organisations.
- Cooperating with Local Resilience Forum partner organisations engaged in the recovery process across Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland. Coordinating their direct engagement in Leicester where value can be added to the local recovery process.
- Attend LRF Recovery Groups when relevant and requested.
- Provide relevant data to the Multi Agency Information Cell (MAIC) to allow an LRF wide impact / recovery picture to be developed.
- Coordinate information to allow a bid to secure financial support from Central Government.

# Appendix D: Councillors' guide to Leicester's flood risk, weather warnings, flood warnings and flood preparedness

This Guide is designed to provide flood risk advice to members in their community leadership role:

- to give general information about flood risk in the city
- to give advice which can be passed to residents
- to provide important information about the council's preparedness for major flooding events
- to provide information about how to sign up to the Environment Agency's flood alerts and warnings

## Leicester's flood risk

Leicester is a nationally significant flood risk area because of the number of people at risk from a severe rainfall event. As climate change leads to more frequent intense rainfall, addressing flood risk is a key part of our work to make Leicester a climate-adapted city.

Historic interventions, such as canalising the mile straight of the River Soar and the many brooks throughout the city, have no doubt prevented previous heavy rainfall events from damaging property and therefore negatively impacting on residents' lives.

Recent interventions including high quality sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) in new developments, increasing of the capacity of the flood plain along the river corridor and a schools campaign to reduce the amount of litter entering water courses, have all helped to reduced flood risk. Work with our partners like this will continue, but given Leicester's geography and the threat of severe weather events (exacerbated by climate change), there will always be a need to be prepared for a major flooding event in parts of Leicester.

## Being prepared for flooding

Residents can become more prepared for flooding by:

- Understanding the flood risk to their property
- Signing up to the EA's flood warning service if they are at risk.
- Having sufficient buildings and contents insurance to cover their flood risk
- Having a flood plan in place listing what to do should a flood warning be issued
- Storing important documents in a safe place such as upstairs or off the floor
- Ensuring that valuables and sentimental items are safe from flooding
- The plan should include how you will move family and pets to safety.

The Environment Agency has further guidance on what to do when the flood warnings are received here: [What to do in a flood - GOV.UK \(flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-to-do-in-a-flood).

## The Council's role

Leicester City Council typically carry out the following as part of the emergency planning procedure for events such as flooding:

- We liaise with our colleagues in the county, the Emergency Services and the Environment Agency on a regular basis and when the risk of severe weather or flooding is predicted.
- We monitor river levels through our own river gauges and the network of partner agencies.
- We deploy resources to address localised flooding issues during severe weather events, such as clearing trash screens, reacting to blocked gullies, closing roads when flooded.
- For major flooding events where properties may be at risk of flooding, a multi-agency response may include evacuating residents to temporary accommodation.
- Work together through the recovery stage. Review the response.

During a major flooding event, sandbags are placed by Leicester City Council on a priority basis based on the flooding situation as it develops. The supply of sandbags is limited and in the event of significant flooding it is unlikely that we would be able to supply to private residences. **Key infrastructure (e.g. Health Centres) will be prioritised.** Property owners who wish to protect their property can do so by purchasing flood defence products from their local builders' merchants or other providers.

**When weather forecasts and flood warnings indicate that a weather event is very likely to severely impact on residents and businesses in the city, the lead member and city mayor will be informed and ward members will then be contacted and briefed accordingly. However, it is also advised that members sign up for flood alerts and warnings. A 'step-by-step' guide is set out below.**

## Surface water flood risk

Surface water flooding occurs when the amount of rainfall is too great for the drains or the ground to cope with. This can occur very quickly and therefore it is important to monitor weather forecasts of potential heavy rainfall. The city council is responsible for highway drainage, however most of the highway drainage in the city is connected to the public sewers. During heavy rainfall events, the capacity of the highway drainage and sewer systems can be overwhelmed, leading to water backing up, flowing out of manholes and standing water accumulating in streets. Heavy rainfall causing surface water flooding can also mean that drainage ditches, streams and minor watercourses overflow.

Flood alerts and warnings warn of the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater. National flood warnings don't currently cover surface water flooding, however warnings of extreme weather (including thunderstorms) are issued by the Met Office. Residents can also find out if they are at flood risk, including the risk from surface water flood flooding, here: [Check the long term flood risk for an area in England - GOV.UK \(flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/met-office/pages/check-the-long-term-flood-risk-for-an-area-in-england)

## Weather forecasts and warnings

Weather forecasts and weather warnings are issued by the Met Office, which warn of possible impacts caused by severe weather. The warnings are designed to let people, businesses, emergency responders and governments know what weather is predicted and what impacts that weather may have. The Met Office operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year so warnings can be issued at any time, day or night. The weather warnings are provided up to seven days ahead for rain, thunderstorms, wind, snow, lightning, ice and fog.

These warnings are given a colour (yellow, amber or red) depending on a combination of both the impact the weather may have and the likelihood of those impacts occurring. More information can be found at: [Weather warnings guide - Met Office](#)

Current weather warnings can be also found on the Met Office website here: [UK weather warnings - Met Office](#).

## A Guide for signing up for the Environment Agency's Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings

Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings are issued in the UK by the Environment Agency and inform members of the public via phone, email or text when flooding is expected.

There are three levels of Flood Warnings that can be issued:

1. Flood Alert – this means you need to prepare; flooding is possible.



2. Flood Warning – this means you need to act; flooding is expected

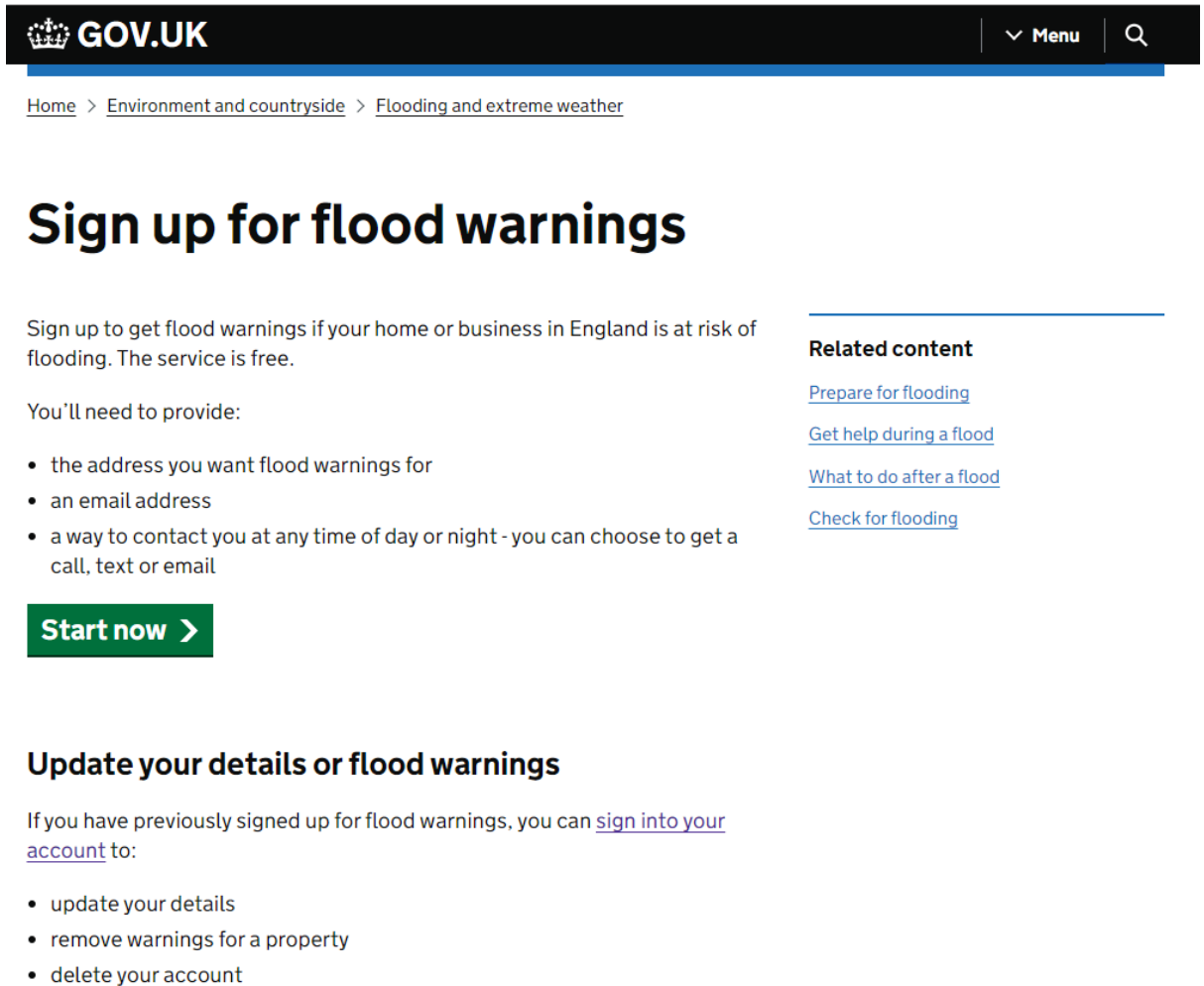


3. Severe Flood Warning - this means there is danger to life; you must act now



A step-by-step guide to signing up for the Environment Agency's Flood Alerts and Warnings is set out below:

1. Navigate to: <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> and click on "Start now"



The screenshot shows the GOV.UK website interface. At the top, there is a black header with the GOV.UK logo on the left, a 'Menu' dropdown on the right, and a search icon. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Environment and countryside > Flooding and extreme weather'. The main heading is 'Sign up for flood warnings'. The text below the heading states: 'Sign up to get flood warnings if your home or business in England is at risk of flooding. The service is free.' It then lists requirements: 'You'll need to provide:' followed by a bulleted list: 'the address you want flood warnings for', 'an email address', and 'a way to contact you at any time of day or night - you can choose to get a call, text or email'. A prominent green button with white text says 'Start now >'. To the right, under the heading 'Related content', there are four blue links: 'Prepare for flooding', 'Get help during a flood', 'What to do after a flood', and 'Check for flooding'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Update your details or flood warnings' with the text: 'If you have previously signed up for flood warnings, you can [sign into your account](#) to:' followed by a bulleted list: 'update your details', 'remove warnings for a property', and 'delete your account'.

2. Click on "Sign up for flood warnings"

**BETA** This is a new service - your [feedback](#) will help us to improve it

# Sign up for flood warnings

## Get flood warnings

[Sign up for flood warnings](#)

## Update your details or cancel warnings

[Sign in to your flood warnings account](#)

3. On the next page, select “Search by town or city” rather than entering a postcode

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## Check if you can get flood warnings for your address

We'll check if the address is near an area that we give warnings for.

Postcode

**Find address**

[Or search by town or city](#)

4. Type “Leicester” on the next page and click “Find town or city”

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## Check if you can get flood warnings for your area

We'll find the nearest flood risk areas that we give warnings for.

Town or city

**Find town or city**

- When given the options on the next page, click on "LEICESTER"

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## Choose an area for flood warnings

Town or city

**LEICESTER**

[LEICESTER FOREST EAST, LEICESTER](#)

[LEICESTER FOREST WEST, LEICESTER](#)

- Click "Sign up to Flood Warnings" for the areas you want to sign up for. For Leicester, the following areas are given:
  - River Soar at Aylestone
  - River Soar at Belgrave
  - River Soar at Braunstone
  - River Soar at Frog Island and riverside areas of Leicester
  - River Soar at Leicester Abbey Meadows
  - River Soar at Leicester City
  - River Soar at North Aylestone
  - River Soar at Rushey Mead
  - River Soar at Thurmaston
  - Upper Soar catchment

You can look at the map to see which area it covers. Then sign up.

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## Areas you can get warnings for

Area	Warning type	Map	Sign up
Black Brook at Thorpe Acre	Flood Warning	<a href="#">View map</a>	<a href="#">Sign up for this area</a>
Medbourne Brook in Medbourne	Flood Warning	<a href="#">View map</a>	<a href="#">Sign up for this area</a>
River Sence at Blaby and Glen Parva	Flood Warning	<a href="#">View map</a>	<a href="#">Sign up for this area</a>
River Sence at Great Glen	Flood Warning	<a href="#">View map</a>	<a href="#">Sign up for this area</a>
River Soar at Aylestone	Flood Warning	<a href="#">View map</a>	<a href="#">Sign up for this area</a>
River Soar at Barrow upon Soar	Flood Warning	<a href="#">View map</a>	<a href="#">Sign up for this area</a>

### 7. Enter your name and email address

## What is your name and email address?

Area or address

**River Soar at Aylestone**

Flood Warning

River Soar at Aylestone including properties on the riverside of Aylestone Road

[Change location](#)

First name

Last name

Email

We'll send a confirmation to this email address



8. Enter your phone number (this can be a mobile or landline)

## Telephone numbers for warning calls

Flood messages can be sent at any time so we need numbers where we can reach you 24 hours a day.

Telephone number for warning calls

This can be landline or mobile.

Make sure this number has no inbound call barring.

Second telephone number (optional)

Continue

### Further information and guidance

More information is provided on the council's web pages <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-environment/flooding-and-watercourses/>

Leaflet <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/media/178256/1flood-a5-for-appro-2.pdf>

And Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland resilience forum <https://www.llrprepared.org.uk/>