

Section 19 Flood Investigation

Addendum to Storm Henk 2024 Flooding, Polesworth

January 2025

Warwickshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority

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1 INTRODUCTION

This report is an addendum to the 2024 Storm Henk Section 19 Report published in December 2024. The 2024 Storm Henk report was produced following large scale county wide flooding in January 2024 which led to a total of 106 reports of internal property in addition to many reports of other flooding to gardens, land and outbuildings. There were also 446 reports of highway flooding received including 28 road closures as a result of the flooding. Of the 106 internal property flood reports received in Warwickshire, 17 of these were in Polesworth, 4 to residential properties and 13 to commercial. Due to the collective number of properties internally flooded, this met Warwickshire County Council's (WCC's) thresholds to trigger a formal investigation under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

A further incident of internal flooding was experienced in January 2025 to 19 properties, consisting of 4 residential properties and 15 commercial properties. This was attributed to a singular rainfall event, Section 2 of this report is intended as an addendum to the original report and provides detail on the January 2025 flooding. Section 3 includes the relevant actions and opportunities that were identified on the back of Storm Henk. These actions and opportunities have been discussed and reviewed by the Flood Risk Management (FRM) team and are still deemed applicable in managing flood risk in Polesworth following the January 2025 flooding.

2 ADDENDUM TO REPORT

Following on from Storm Henk in January 2024, further flooding was reported to have internally flooded 19 properties in Polesworth, North Warwickshire on 6th January 2025. On this date the County of Warwickshire as well as the wider West Midlands area was subject to a yellow warning of thunderstorms and heavy downpours from the Met Office (Figure 1). A flood warning was also issued by the Environment Agency for the River Anker at Polesworth on the 6th January 2025.

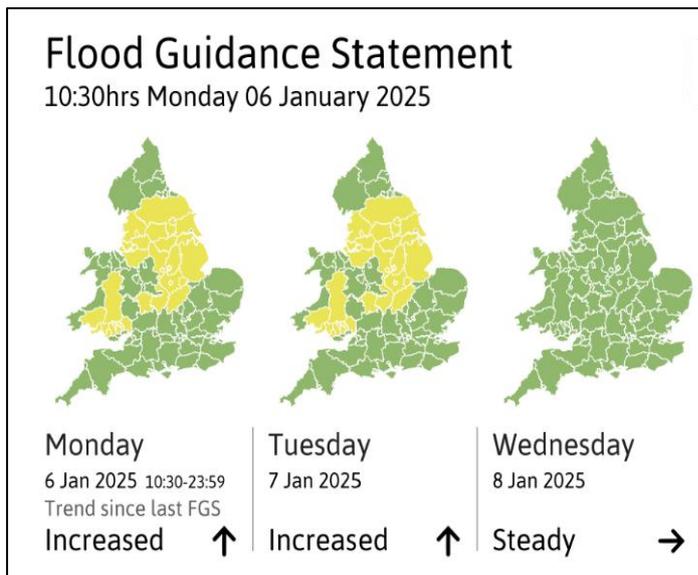


Figure 1: Met Office Flood Guidance Statement

The village of Polesworth experienced heavy rainfall on the morning of the 6th January 2025 during which a max total of 21.2mm of rain fell onto the River Anker catchment from the River Sence to the River Tame (Figure 2).

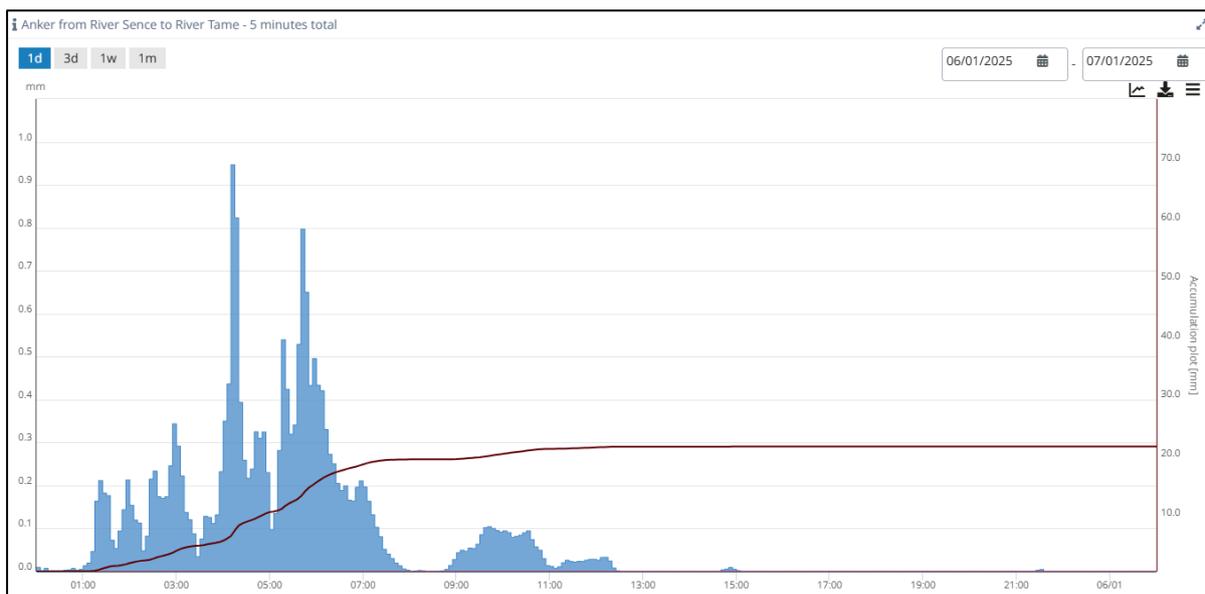


Figure 2: Rainfall data for 06/01/25

This followed a period of wet weather in the month prior, in which a total of 80.2mm of rain fell within the River Anker catchment (Figure 3). As a result the ground was most likely saturated, and river levels were already high prior to the event on the 6th January 2025.

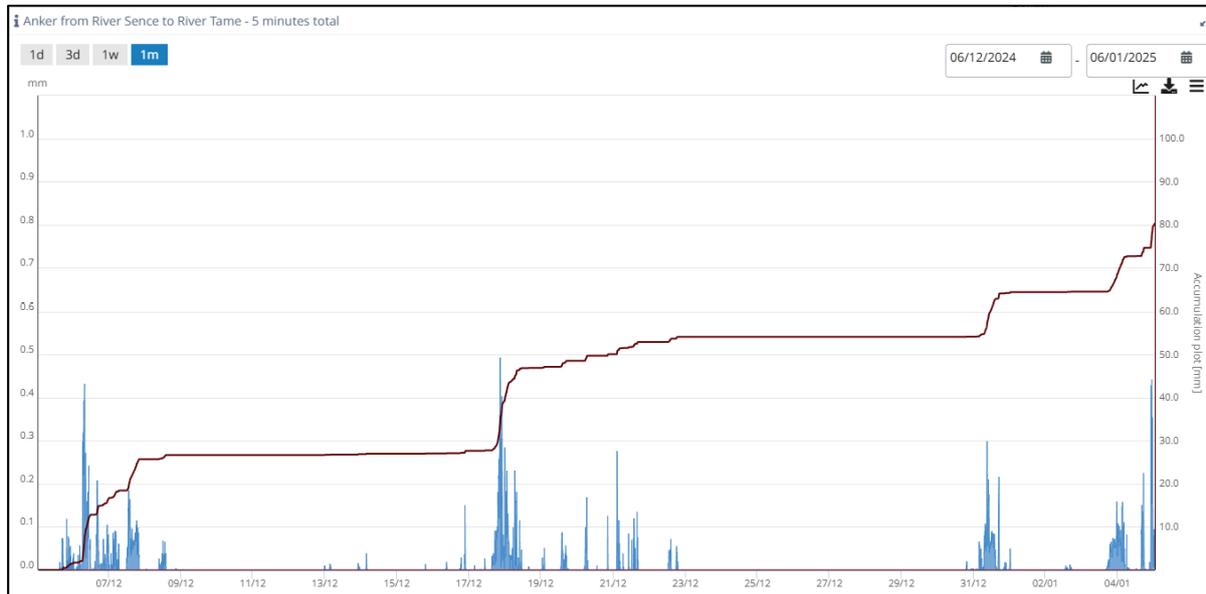


Figure 3: Rainfall data for 1 month from 06/12/2024 to 06/01/25

All rainfall data has been calculated using Hydromaster. There are no local rain gauges within the vicinity of Polesworth which would provide further data and verification.

Flooding was reported to the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) by the Polesworth Flood Action Group, local parish council and North Warwickshire Borough Council. Conversations were had with partners, Severn Trent Water (STW) and Warwickshire County Council Highways, to verify flood reports and better understand the cause of flooding. From these discussions it was concluded that there had been no apparent asset failure or blockages/restriction within any drainage network.

Both the highway drainage system and STW surface water sewers within the village discharge into the River Anker. When river levels rise significantly, the outfalls to these systems become submerged, both systems were unable to discharge surface water into the River Anker as freely as during dry conditions. Due to this, both the highway drainage system and surface water reached capacity and surcharged during the event on 6th January 2025. Therefore, it is understood that the flooding occurred as a result of high intensity rainfall exceeding the capacity of the artificial drainage network combined with the inability of flows to discharge into the River Anker due to its high water level.

Much like Storm Henk, the WCC FRM team did not receive reports of internal flooding as a result of direct impact of the River Anker. The internal flood reports received were largely located on Bridge Street, where it is understood flood water accumulated as a result of back up and surface of the sewer and highway systems. The effects of the flooding were exacerbated by bow waves caused by cars being driven through the flood water despite attempted road closures and diversions by members of the public, resulting in water entering largely from the front of several businesses and properties. At least one car was abandoned due to water damage as a result of attempting to drive through flood water.

3 ACTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The actions taken and progress against these actions are outlined overleaf. Future opportunities within the vicinity of Polesworth are also set out.

What actions are being taken?

| No. | Action | Responsible party | Progress |
|-----|--|---|----------|
| 1 | Set up central government Property Flood Resilience (PFR) Grant Scheme framework and work with the community to administer the relevant funding. | LLFA/Residents | Ongoing |
| 1 | Polesworth Flood Action Group to produce an Emergency Flood Action Plan. | Polesworth residents and business owners | Ongoing |
| 2 | Work with County Highways and CSW resilience to better manage road closures and driver behaviours | LLFA/ County Highways / CSW Resilience / Parish Council | Ongoing |
| 3 | Ensure River Anker is maintained as required and associated flood alarms are triggered at suitable thresholds | Environment Agency | Ongoing |
| 4 | Consider the potential for a PFR scheme for the properties and businesses that flooded internally | LLFA | Ongoing |
| 5 | Cyclic cleansing of the highway network also ensuring outfalls are kept clear | County Highways | Ongoing |
| | Cyclic cleansing of the STW surface water sewer, also ensuring outfalls are kept clear | Severn Trent Water | Ongoing |
| 6 | Offer advice to residents that have been internally flooded from this event | LLFA | Complete |

What are the future opportunities that may reduce flood risk in this location?

