

**MINUTES OF THE WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 22 JANUARY 2025 AT 6.00 PM**

Present: Councillor M McGuffie (Chairman)
C. Booth, C Govier, C Penk, S Pringle-Kosikowsky (from 505)
and K Wheatley

In attendance: Darren Hill, Open Spaces Manager
Stephen Tate, Climate Change Project Officer
Steve Saunders – Footpath Volunteer Coordinator
One member of the press

500 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chair welcomed those present.

501 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor M Lithgow.

502 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

503 MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on the 20 November 2024.

504 QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

505 FOOTPATH UPDATE

Steve Saunders provided an update on the footpath volunteers' work which was noted. He reported that there was a meeting scheduled with Somerset Council and Darren Hill to discuss the future management of footpaths in the town and that Somerset Council had commenced work on repairing the boardwalk in the Nature Reserve although there were concerns about the quality of work being undertaken. It was agreed that Darren Hill would inspect what was being done and liaise with Somerset Council.

Councillor Pringle-Kosikowsky joined the meeting during this item.

506 OPEN SPACES MANAGER UPDATE

The Open Spaces Manager Update Report had been circulated with the agenda and was noted.

507 FUNDING REQUEST – WOODLAND CREATION SCHEME

RESOLVED to agree the additional funding request of £1039.04 plus VAT for tree stakes and chestnut fencing to support the planting of the Woodland Creation Scheme to come from the Green Corridor Budget line.

508 BUDGET 2024/5

The remaining budget for 2024/5 was noted. It was also noted that a number of health and safety related matters in the Green Corridor Development Plan

remained outstanding. It was agreed that the Open Spaces Manager would review these over the next few weeks to prioritise work and develop a plan of action for 2025/6 to be delivered through the new Open Spaces Team. Any urgent work would either be funded by residual balances on other budgets managed by the Committee or through a funding request to Full Council

509 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Climate Change Project Officer provided an update on work he had been undertaking. It was noted that there had been a good take up of the Thermal Imaging Cameras through the Library and that there was a waiting list.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to accept the offer from the Centre for Sustainable Energy to carry out Energy Efficiency Surveys of Council buildings and that subject to the Management Committee’s approval the Community Centre should be included.

510 WELLINGTON COMMUNITY FOOD

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that it supports the erection of the proposed polytunnel on the Community farm site.

511 CROWN LAND PURCHASE

The Town Clerk reported that there was no progress to report. Matters were still with the Crown Estate solicitors. He had met with a contractor earlier in the week to get an estimate of cost of replacing the Linden Drive bridge and they had also offered to do the same for a bridge crossing the weir.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.15pm.

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Councillor M McGuffie
Chairman

Open Spaces Manager Report February 2025

Since our last meeting we have successfully recruited the Open Spaces Team.

As already posted out Zac McAuley is our team leader. Jay Prosser and Alan Wilson will be joining Sheldon to make complete the new open spaces team. They start on the 3rd of March. They have training programmed.

I have purchased the new van to complete the fleet. We are just waiting on sign writing We are awaiting delivery of the new ride on mower and the trailers later this month.

Somerset Council

We had a successful outcome with Somerset Council HRA replacing the fencing by the Basins at Oaken Ground. This has been an ongoing request as it on HRA land, however, I managed to contact Simon Lewis who is responsible for the (HRA), and the fence was replaced in days. I had an estate walk about with Cllr Chris Booth and updated Simon on the state of areas in Priory he has instructed his estate team to tidy the area up and keep a closer eye on all areas in the future.

The Basins

I would like to say a big thank you to the Basins group, following a conversation with Steve Sanders, he offered to help with the flooding on the left of the path as to enter the Basins. We asked Mike Fletcher to cut the path, the basins group dug out the paths and installed a pipe which has taken the excess water directly into the basins.

Bedding Plants

The bedding and baskets plants have all been ordered for the Summer.

Green Flag Update Wellington Park

I have contacted the green flag people to ask some advice before making any plans, the question are one I put to them.

1, if we changed the bins to have recycling bins?

No this would not affect the Heritage status. Before changing them, please make sure that if a heritage design is required the new bins are compliant with this.

2, if we comingled the dog waste with general waste?

No, this will not affect the heritage status.

3, if we stopped locking the park at night?

No, this will not affect the heritage status, however we recommend that you review your risk assessment.

4, if we removed the glass on the shelter, which is above the back panel of the seats. This is continually vandalized which costs thousands, we would continue to repair if this needed.

I would need to understand if the shelter is a heritage feature. If it is then this may affect the status, it depends on what the conservation plan for the site says about the structure.

Tree Planting

Wellington Town Council tree planting is now complete. We are continuing to support the Woodland Trust with their programme of planting throughout the Green Corridor.

Longforth Farm Junior Playing Pitch Site

We have been advised by Somerset Council that, following the ecology survey, the cost of the biodiversity net gain measures required to make use of the site make the project unaffordable given the budget available and that discussions are ongoing with the developer about how that site might be used.

WELLINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE****19 FEBRUARY 2025****SOMERSET COUNCIL SECTION 19 FLOOD INVESTIGATION REPORT****1. Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to seek the Committees views on what role the Town Council should take in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Section 19 Investigation Report published by Somerset Council.

2. Background

2.1 Following the flooding in the town and across Somerset in September 2023 Somerset Council undertook investigations in line with its statutory duties as set out in Section 19 of the Flood and Management Act 2010.

2.2 The report was published on 17 January 2025 and is attached to this paper. It contains a number of recommendations relating to actions for a number of agencies including the Town Council.

2.3 The Climate Change Project Officer and Open Spaces Manager will be reviewing the actions required of the Town Council and developing proposals for how we implement the recommended actions. This will support applications for funding to the Somerset Rivers Authority for small scale flood mitigation projects up to a value of £20,000

2.4 However following discussions with officers at Somerset Council it has become clear that there will be no strategic oversight at that level to ensure that other agencies are implementing the recommendations assigned to them.

2.5 I also believe that there should have been some mention in the report of the need to monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of flood prevention systems on new developments in particular how to ensure that those in place are properly maintained by the management companies responsible for them.

3. Considerations

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee recommend to Ful Council that :

- (i) it agrees that the Climate Change Project Officer and Open Spaces Manager develop an action plan for addressing the recommendations that relate directly to the Town Council.
- (ii) the Town Council though the Chief Executive/Town Clerk take responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations assigned to other agencies and reports on progress to the Environment Committee
- (iii) establishing how the effectiveness of the maintenance of flood mitigation arrangements on new developments is monitored is included in the actions for the Town Council to undertake.

Dave Farrow
Chief Executive/Town Clerk
February 2025



**Somerset
Council**

Flood Investigation Report

***Section 19 Flood and Water
Management Act 2010***

Wellington

17th September 2023

Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	Section 19 Report: Wellington
Author	Anna Meares
Owner	Neil Ogilvie
Protective Marking	None
Primary Legislation	Flood & Water Management Act 2010: Section 19

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Executive summary

The heavy rainfall event on 17th September 2023 led to severe surface water flooding in Wellington, affecting 33 properties. Despite limited data, the flooding's impact was significant, highlighting the need for improved flood reporting and preparedness.

Many homes experienced power outages, some residents had to live in upstairs spaces due to stagnant water downstairs, and those affected included elderly and vulnerable residents. The response included efforts from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and Red Cross, but the event revealed gaps in preparedness and response strategies.

The primary cause was intense rainfall overwhelming the drainage infrastructure, leading to overflowing drains and manhole covers. Surface runoff on Payton Road and the Westford stream's breach contributed significantly. This report will make recommendations, including investigating drainage networks and ownership of flood assets, as well as implementing natural flood management solutions.

Introduction

2010 Flood and Water Management Act

Legislated within the Flood & Water Management Act 2010, the Lead Local Flood Authority (in this locality, Somerset Council) is required to investigate flood events within their jurisdiction. This function and responsibility was inherited from Somerset County Council under whom this policy was first adopted.

Somerset Council has set a threshold of ten internally flooded properties within a locality, this threshold having been exceeded in several instances throughout the throughout the county in 2023.

Flood investigation and reporting are often known as 'Section 19 reports' as under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act. Lead Local Flood Authorities have a responsibility, to the extent it deems necessary, to investigate flood incidents under this item of legislation. The function of a Section 19 report is to gather information on the happenings during a particular flood event. The legislation states:

1. On becoming aware of a flooding in its area, a Lead Local Flood Authority must, to the extent that it considers necessary or appropriate, investigate:
 - a) Which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
 - b) Whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.

2. Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must:
 - a) Publish the results of its investigation, and
 - b) Notify any relevant risk management authorities.

In addition, a Section 19 report will often detail any ongoing work with regards to flooding in the area, and will signpost additional work that should be considered, usually in the form of recommendations.

It is not the function of a Section 19 to provide firm solutions to flooding, this requiring far more detailed technical analysis, liaison with landowners, and decision making about schemes in concert with the public and other stakeholders. A Section 19 report can help in demonstrating the need for this work and act as evidence in any future funding bids.

Scope of the Investigation

This report covers the heavy rainfall incident on 17th September 2023.

Wellington is a town of approximately 17,000 people in west Somerset. It lies just north of the Blackdown Hills on the border with Devon. The River Tone flows across the north of the town from west to east, with a tributary flowing through the north-west communities of Westford and Tonedale.

This report covers the surface water (pluvial) and river (fluvial) flooding which was experienced during the heavy rainfall event on 17th September 2023. A total of 33 properties reported internal flooding. The report will give an overview of the flooding that occurred, describe the conditions which led to the flooding, consider the response to the flooding thus far and make technical recommendations for the flood risk authorities concerned.



Figure 1 Map highlighting areas impacted by flooding in Wellington on 17th September 2023

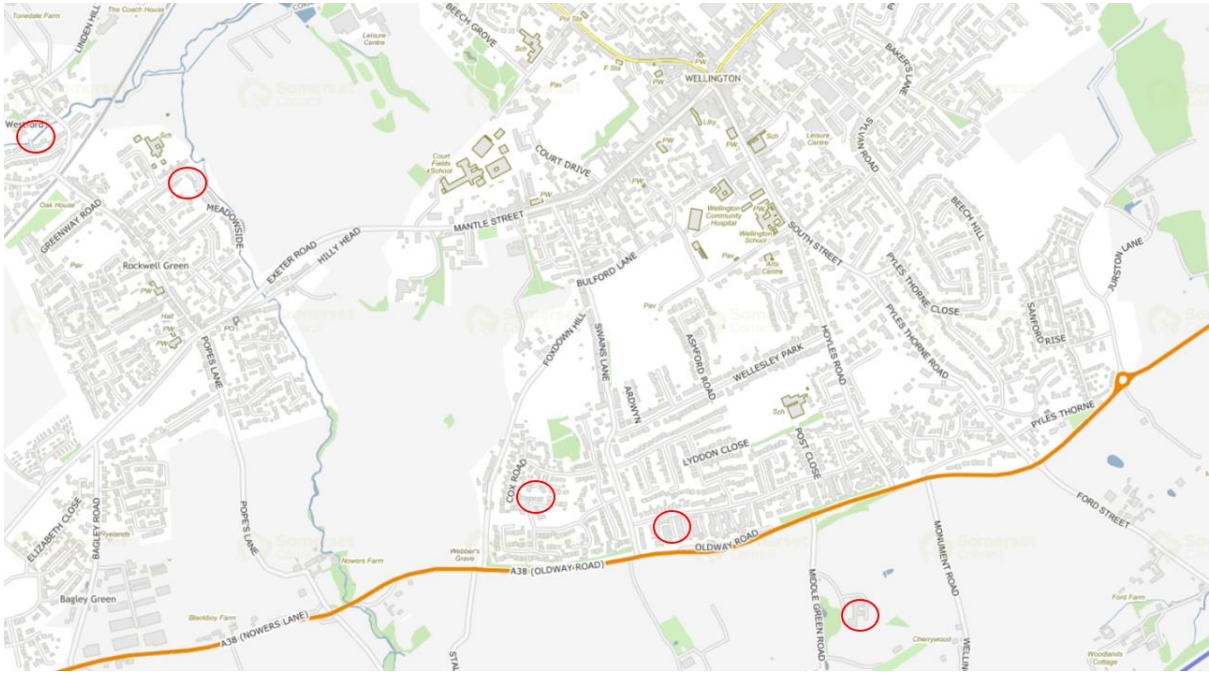


Figure 2 Map highlighting areas impacted by flooding in Wellington on 17th September 2023

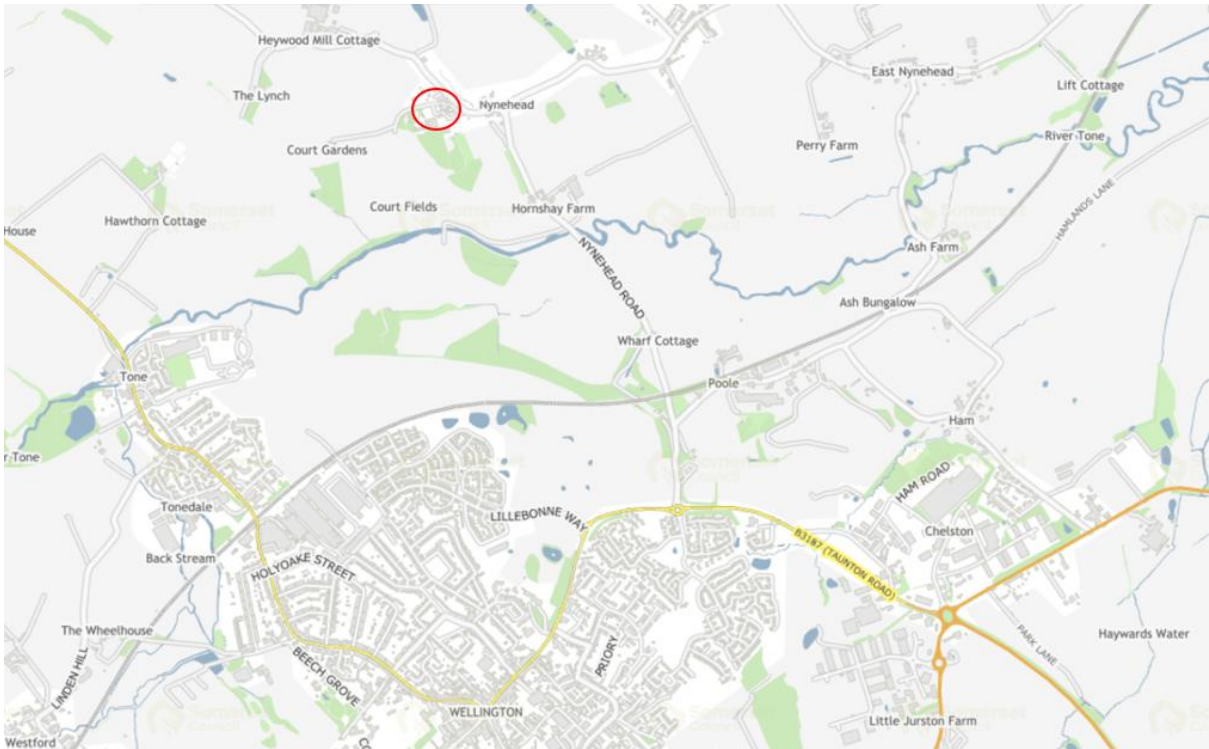


Figure 3 Map highlighting areas impacted by flooding in Wellington on 17th September 2023

Data Collection

Much information has been received from residents and stakeholders, providing a thorough picture of the events that occurred and some indication as to potential causes. This data has been scrutinised, filtered and analysed to support the conclusions in this report. Maps in this report assume north at the top, unless a north arrow is otherwise placed.

Community Engagement Officers

The SRA funds Community Engagement Officers, hosted by the Emergency Planning, Response and Recovery team in Somerset Council. Their role is to support communities to build resilience to flooding. This includes attending community drop-in events following a flooding event to obtain information and provide advice on immediate recovery activity.

Flooding inbox (flooding@somerset.gov.uk)

Members of the Flooding and Coastal Team manage this council-owned email inbox, which receives many enquiries from residents, parishes, and internal communications regarding flooding events, as well as testimonials and evidence of flooding from residents. The inbox often receives images and videos of an event (both during and after), which helps to influence the content of a Section 19 report.

Flood Online Reporting Tool (FORT)

This system allows property owners, flood risk authorities and volunteers to share details of flood reports and observations to assist with flood risk planning. Participants can record current flooding for information or record recent flooding in the last five years. The system is hosted by Dorset Council and is strictly for information, rather than triggering an immediate response from agencies.

FORT reports are the simplest and most suitable way for residents to inform Section 19 investigations. This is how the council will recognise the minimum threshold of internally flooded properties, triggering a Section 19 investigation. The data is recorded automatically and will therefore systematically feed into any report that may be written.

LLFA data

As the LLFA receives reports of flooding via the abovementioned channels, each piece of correspondence is categorised, logged and captured on a shared council-owned drive.

EPRR Reports

The Emergency Planning, Response & Recovery Team (EPRR) is responsible for coordinating the front-line local authority response to an emergency in Somerset. This

includes developing emergency plans, processes, and training to ensure that the local authority can respond promptly and effectively to emergencies to support residents and communities. EPRR debriefs after a flooding event will feed into a Section 19 investigation to help agencies learn how to better respond to future events.

Rainfall data

Both the Met Office and the Environment Agency have provided rainfall data, imagery, and meteorological insight into the event, as well as topographical data, river catchments, information about local flood zones and a detailed river network. The Environment Agency holds data on recorded river levels, which helps form an understanding of the level of water passing through the area on this date. The data is limited, however, due to the geographical constraints of these rainfall gauges. Nonetheless, it has been used to construct a rough picture of the rainfall and water levels during this event.

Flood Estimation Handbook

The Flood Estimation Handbook (FEH) Web Service delivers catchment descriptors and rainfall data to support the methods outlined in the Flood Estimation Handbook, and implemented in the FEH software, for estimating floods and site runoff rates across the UK.

Resilience Direct

Resilience Direct is a secure on-line file sharing platform for use by agencies with an emergency responder function. It includes mapping capabilities.

iShare GIS

This application provides a geographical overview of an affected area, including natural data such as river data, topographical information, and river catchments, as well as structural data on potholes, drains, culverts and other mechanical flood defences.

Engineering analysis

The collated data has been analysed by flood engineering experts to gain insight into the mechanisms, possible solutions and recommendations in this report. This includes a hydraulic and topographical analysis of catchments and desktop studies of surface water sensitivities.

Missing data

Due to the time delay between the flooding events and writing this report, there is a risk that some data could be missing in the final investigation. This is due to a number of factors, including the development of systems for logging flooding reports, data archiving, and a lack of reporting from the community.

There may be more numbers of flooded properties than are reported for a Section 19 investigation. This can be due to the perceived impact on insurance or saleability, as well as a lack of awareness of how to report flooding, or even the necessity of reporting to trigger an investigation.

It must therefore be stressed that a Section 19 investigation may not give a complete picture of all the properties flooded in a major event. Despite this challenge, the report should still provide thorough recommendations based on the available information.

Stakeholder Engagement

The following describes relevant flood risk management authorities, sources of data and affected parties, whose feedback is essential in creating the full picture of a flooding event, feeding into the Section 19 report.

Residents

Many households flooded internally during this event, with varying levels of recovery.

The community impacted by this flooding have participated in local community drop-in events, which have helped local response authorities to understand what support is required and have also been a source of data for the report, through providing testimonies and images.

Some residents and Flood Wardens have contributed significantly to the Section 19 investigation by providing comprehensive reports into the flooding event.

Local Flood Wardens and Flood Groups

Many communities have designated Flood Wardens, who are volunteers responsible for supporting a cluster of homes and linking with local authority co-ordinators on the ground during a flood event. Flood Wardens may also provide information on the flooding event and collate information from residents to support a Section 19 investigation.

Flood Groups lead on community resilience by working with Parish Councils to create Community Flood Resilience Plans that aim to reduce the severity of future events and aid residents in improving their property flood resilience.

Parish and Town Councils

Local councils play an important role in managing flood risk at the community level, through the preparation of community flood plans and Flood Warden schemes. The Parish Council has been invaluable in gathering information on the flooding and reporting on the flood incident.

Somerset Council

Somerset Council is the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) responsible for managing flood risk from surface runoff, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, development of a Local Flood Risk Strategy, Asset Plans and investigations under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Somerset Council also has responsibility for some coastal erosion risk management. The LLFA **is not** a **response team** but has several

statutory roles including the following responsibilities in helping to manage a flood event.

As Highways Authority, the council is responsible for helping to manage flooding through planning, investigation and supporting community recovery by maintaining and effectively draining the public highway.

Within the council, the Emergency Planning, Response & Recovery Team (EPRR) is responsible for coordinating the front-line local authority response to an emergency in Somerset. This includes developing emergency plans, processes, and training to ensure that the local authority can respond promptly and effectively to emergencies to support residents and communities.

Shortly after the event, officers from Somerset Council visited the site to speak to residents and listen to their experiences of the flood and their impressions of possible causes, as well as to understand the impact of the event on the community.

[Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group \(FWAG\)](#)

This charity supports farmers and landowners by providing environmental advice, conducting research into Natural Flood Management (NFM) and “Slow the Flow”. They aim to help improve land management and soil husbandry in order to manage flooding.

[Environment Agency](#)

The Environment Agency (EA) manages the risk of flooding from main rivers, estuaries, the sea and reservoirs, as well as coastal erosion, across England on behalf of central Government. The EA has permissive powers to undertake main river and coastal risk management work. It issues flood warnings, has a strategic overview of all forms of flooding and maintains a National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy. The EA is arranged into areas and Somerset is covered by its Wessex area teams.

[Water & Sewerage Companies](#)

Water supply and sanitation in Somerset is provided by companies including Wessex Water, Southwest Water and Bristol Water, who deliver many of the water services across the southwest of England. They also provide funding for projects which safeguard homes and businesses from flooding. Sewer flooding from public sewers is also managed by water companies.

[Emergency response](#)

Within the Avon and Somerset police force area, agencies with emergency response responsibilities come together for planning and emergency response under the banner of the Avon and Somerset Local Resilience Forum

Under the *Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004*, English and Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) have a power to respond to floods. However, they do not have a statutory duty to do so. [Part 2](#) of the Act contains statutory duties to provide for fire safety, fire-fighting and dealing with road traffic accidents.

Riparian landowners

Riparian landowners are those who own land adjoining a watercourse and have certain responsibilities, including the following:

- They must maintain the bed and banks of an open watercourse, and the trees and shrubs growing on the banks.
- They must clear any debris, even if it did not originate from their land. This debris may be natural or man-made.
- They must keep any structures that they own clear of debris. These structures include culverts, trash screens, weirs and mill gates.

If they do not carry out their responsibilities, they could face legal action under the Land Drainage Act 1991. Details of a riparian landowners' responsibilities can be found on the Environmental Agency website: www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse

Hydrological Analysis

Rainfall

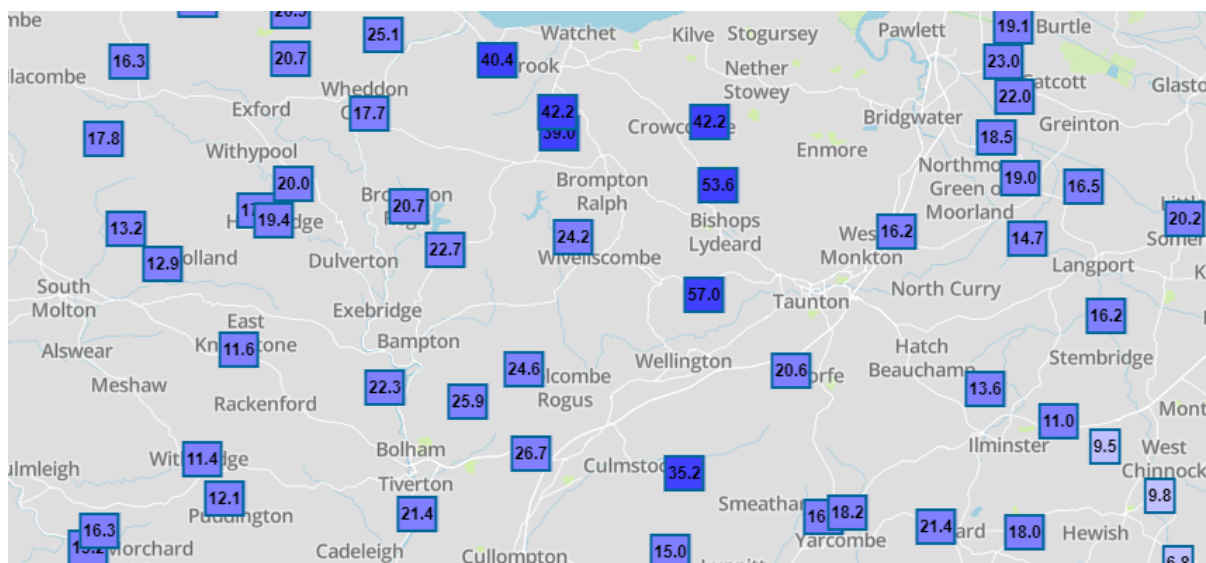


Figure 4 Daily Rainfall Totals in millimetres from 00:00 to 23:59 for 17 September 2023 (Met Office)

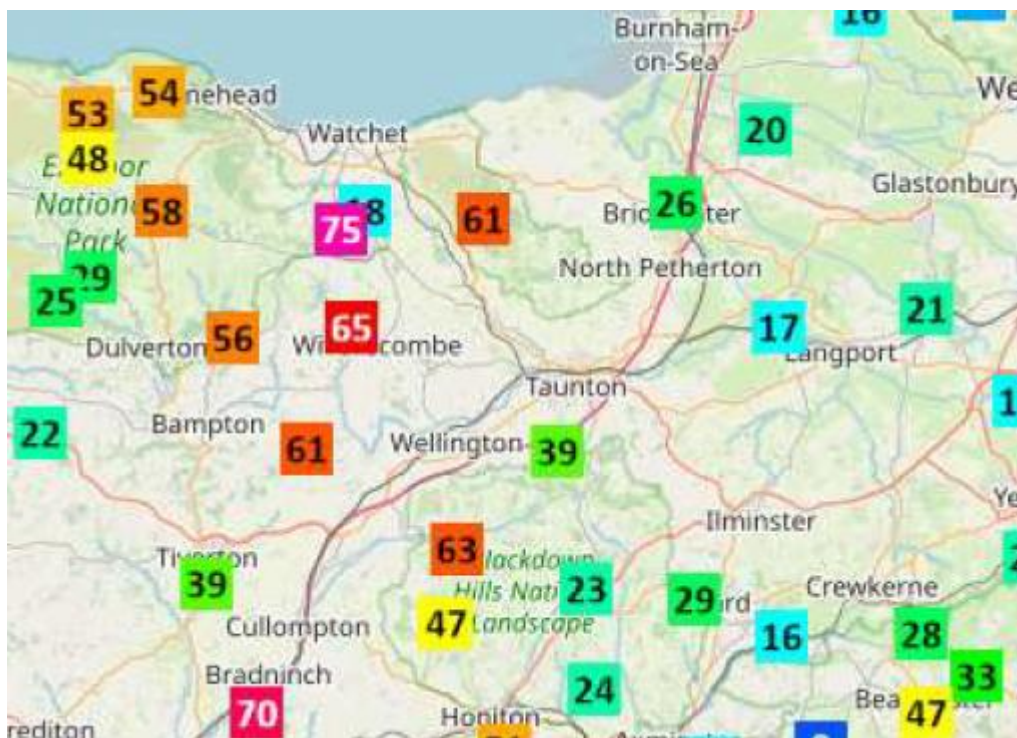


Figure 5 Met Office 24-hour rainfall totals across Somerset in mm from 00:00 17 September to 00:00 18 September GMT/UTC

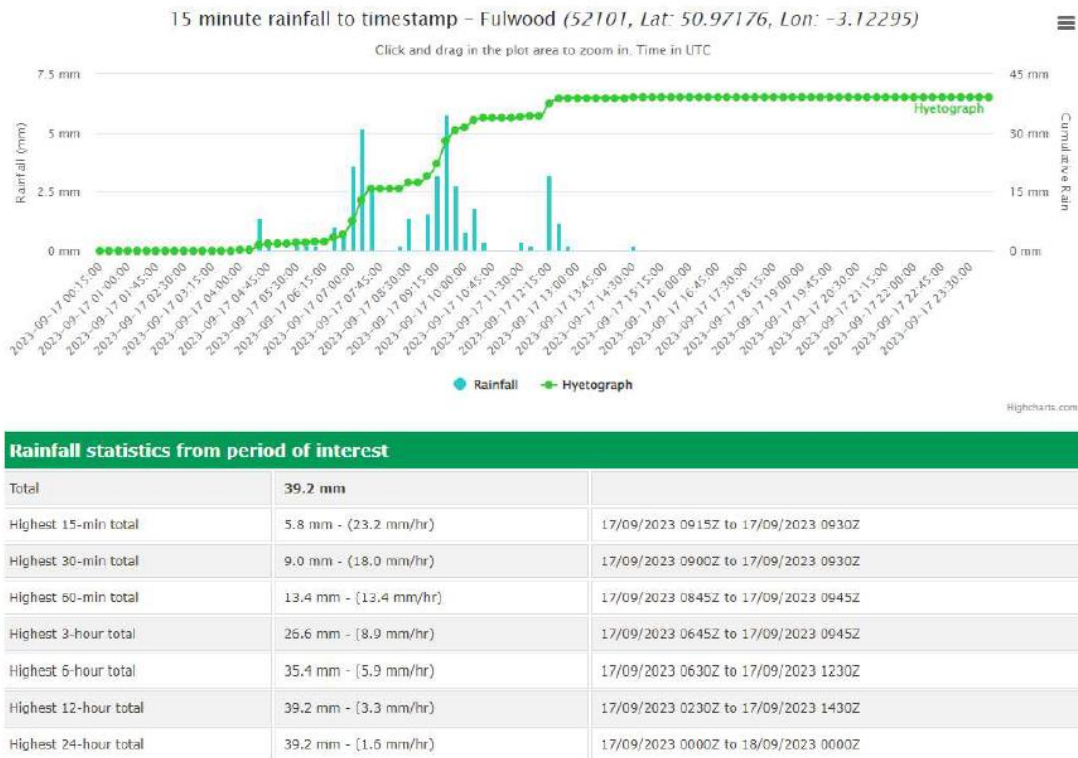


Figure 6 17th September 2023 – Fulwood, nr Wellington. Location information – in lat and long – can be found at the top of the rainfall data alongside the name of the rainfall data site

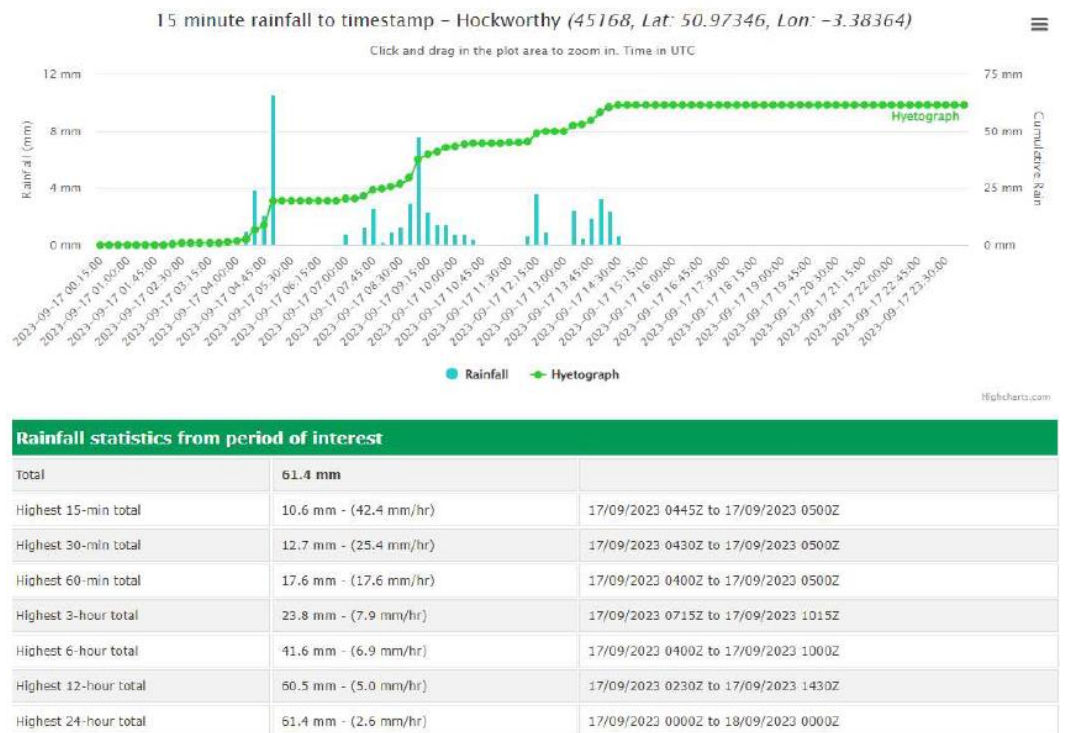


Figure 7 17th September 2023 – Hockworthy, between Tiverton and Wellington. Location information – in lat and long – can be found at the top of the rainfall data alongside the name of the rainfall data site



Rainfall statistics from period of interest		
Total	64.8 mm	
Highest 15-min total	8.4 mm - (33.6 mm/hr)	17/09/2023 0445Z to 17/09/2023 0500Z
Highest 30-min total	13.0 mm - (26.0 mm/hr)	17/09/2023 0445Z to 17/09/2023 0515Z
Highest 60-min total	18.2 mm - (18.2 mm/hr)	17/09/2023 0700Z to 17/09/2023 0800Z
Highest 3-hour total	35.2 mm - (11.7 mm/hr)	17/09/2023 0700Z to 17/09/2023 1000Z
Highest 6-hour total	50.8 mm - (8.5 mm/hr)	17/09/2023 0430Z to 17/09/2023 1030Z
Highest 12-hour total	64.4 mm - (5.4 mm/hr)	17/09/2023 0230Z to 17/09/2023 1430Z
Highest 24-hour total	64.8 mm - (2.7 mm/hr)	17/09/2023 0000Z to 18/09/2023 0000Z

Figure 8 17th September 2023 – Maundown, nr Wiveliscombe Location information – in lat and long – can be found at the top of the rainfall data alongside the name of the rainfall data site

Drainage Features

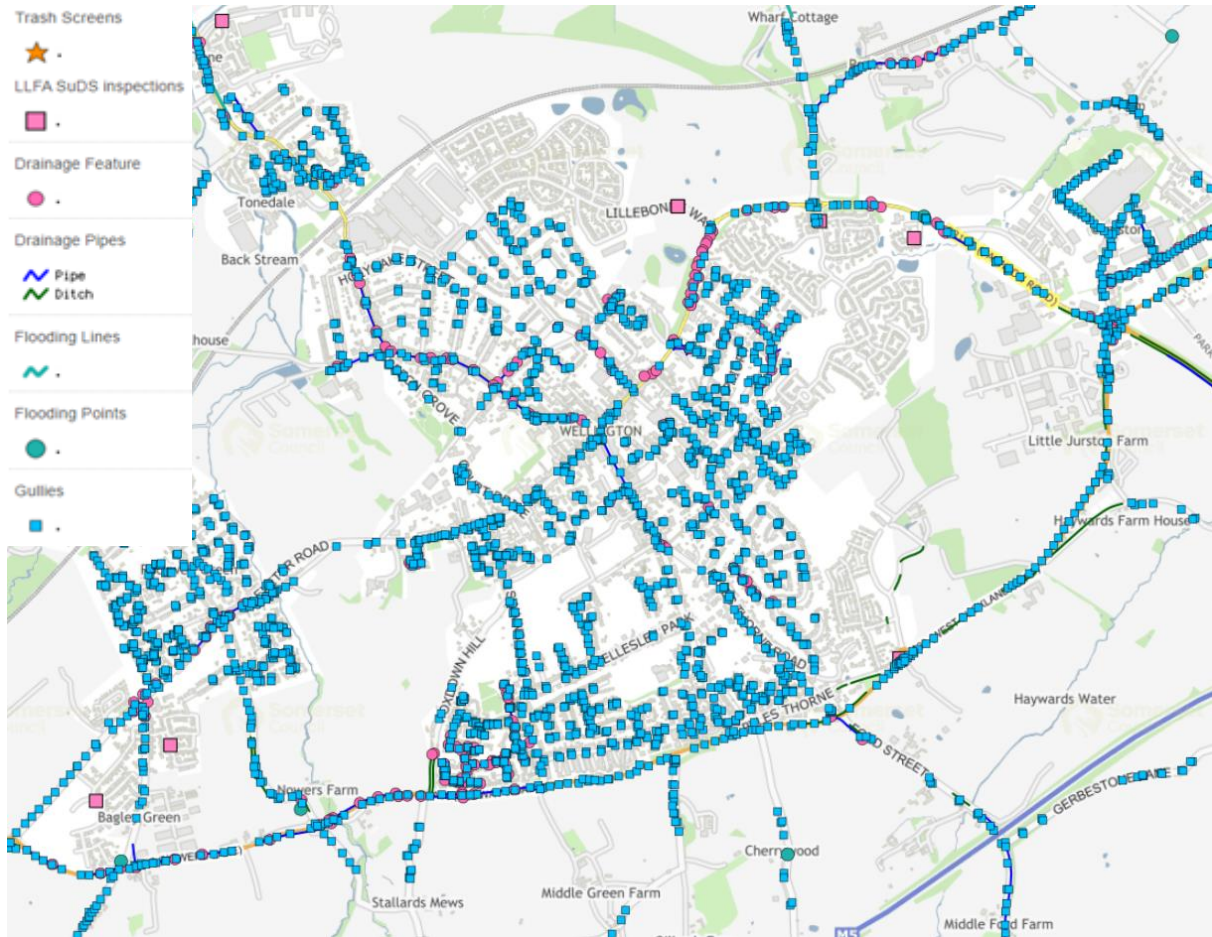


Figure 9 Map showing drainage features within Wellington (iShare)

Geography

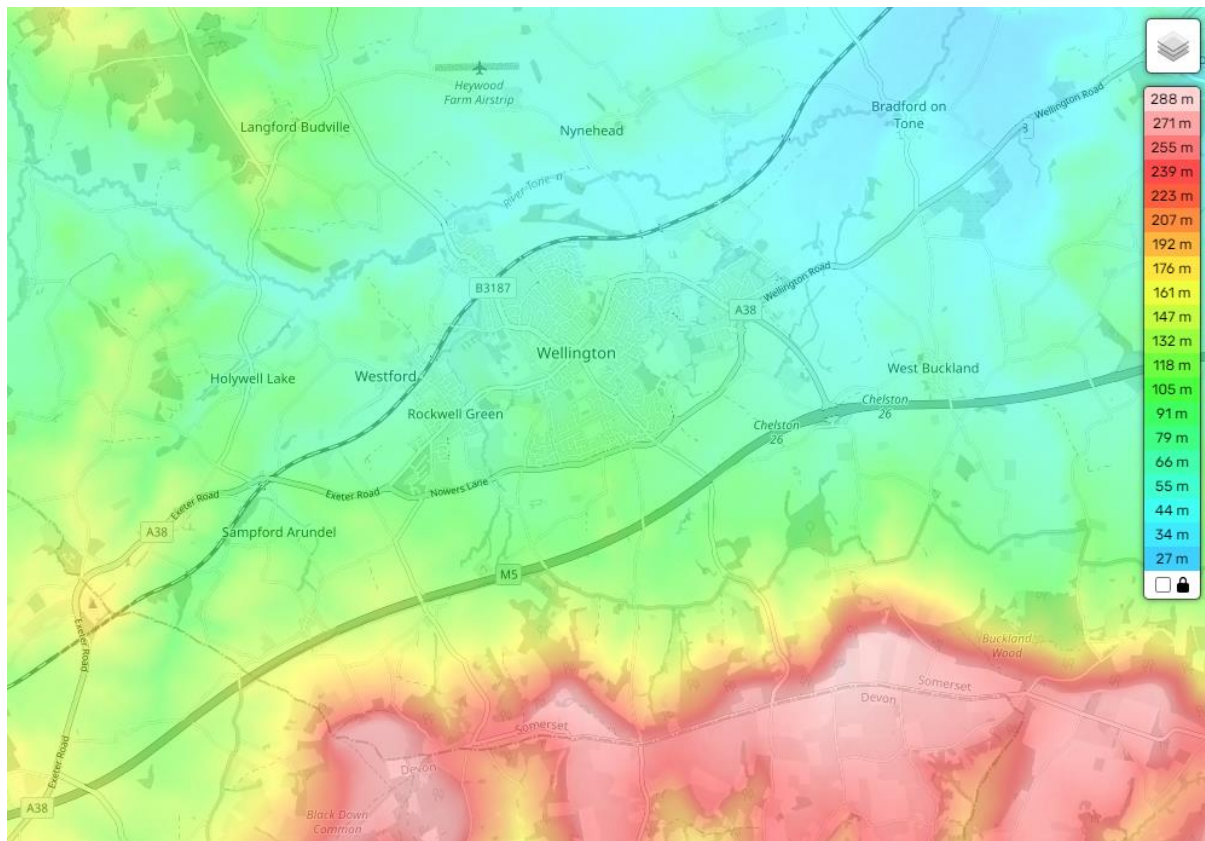


Figure 10 Topographic Map of Wellington and surrounding area (Topographic-Map.com)

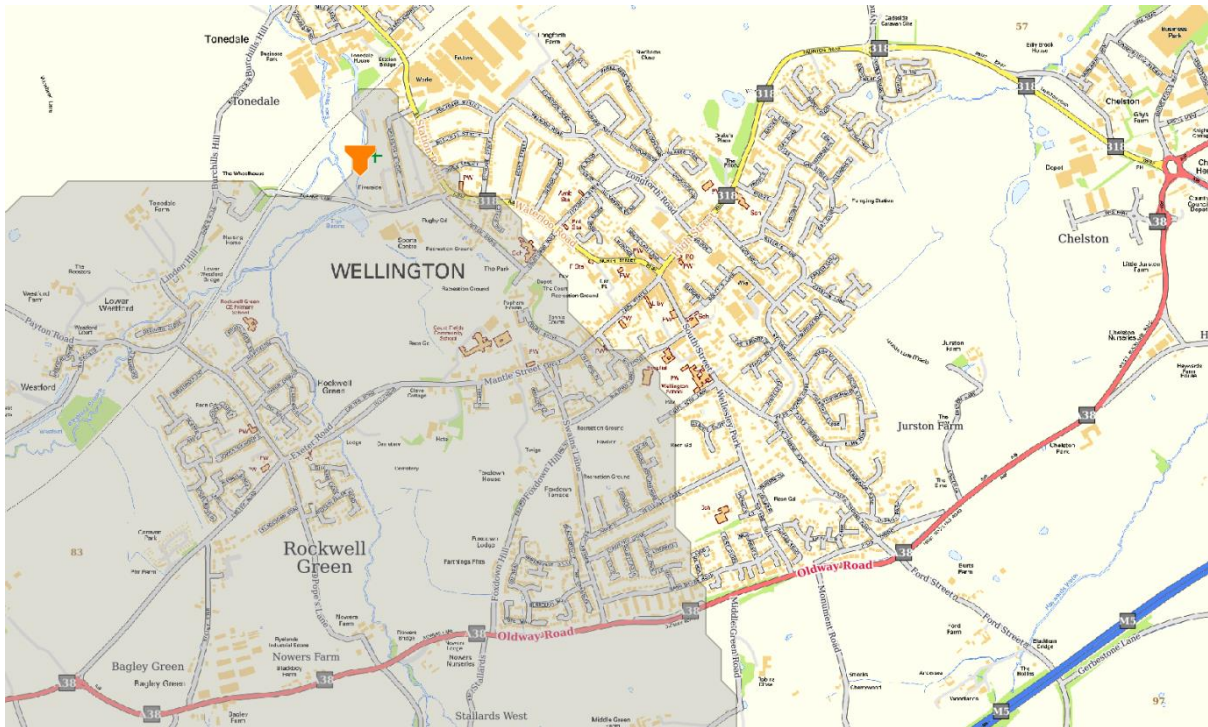


Figure 11 Flood Estimating Handbook: catchment boundary for northwest Wellington

According to the flood Estimating Handbook, the catchment drainage area for site is 19.81 km², based on National Grid Reference ST 12950 20950. (Derived using an Integrated Hydrology Digital Terrain Model (GDTM) developed at UKCEH Wallingford).

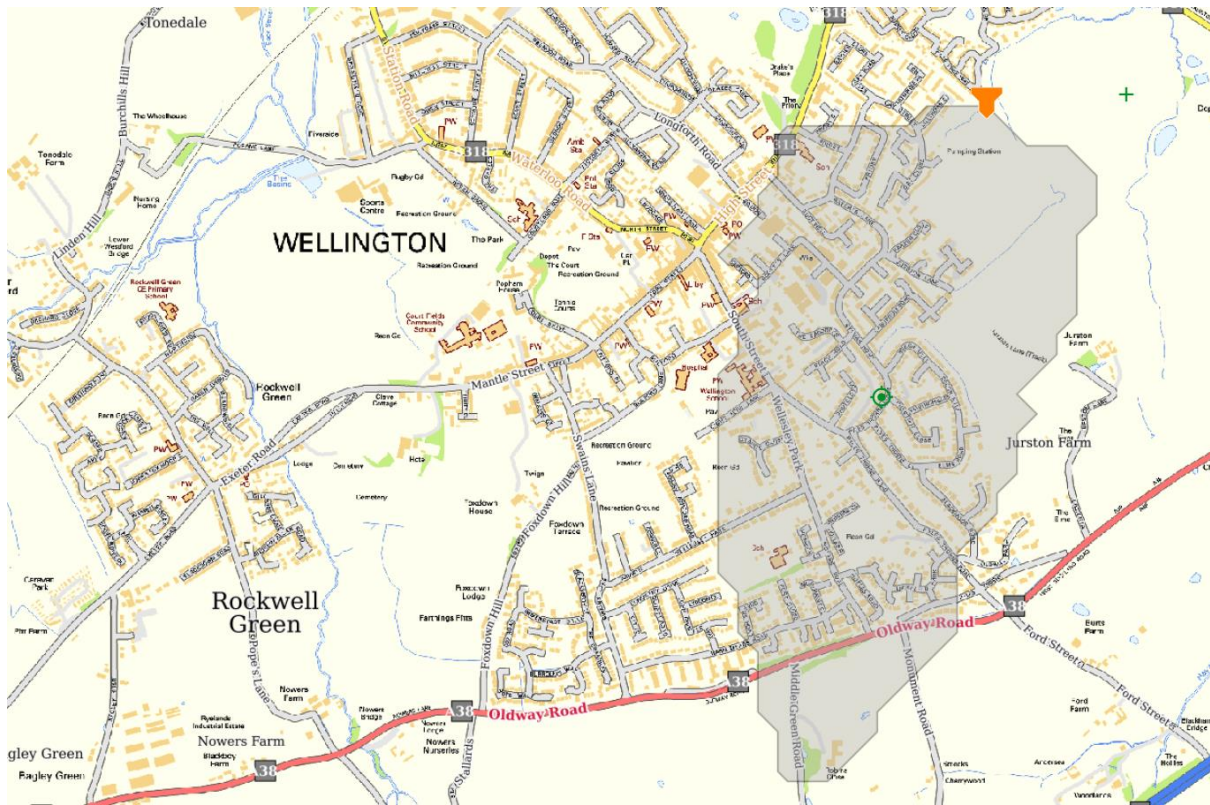


Figure 12 Flood Estimating Handbook: catchment boundary for southeast Wellington

According to the flood Estimating Handbook, the catchment drainage area for site is 1.07 km², based on National Grid Reference ST 14650 20950. (Derived using an Integrated Hydrology Digital Terrain Model (GDTM) developed at UKCEH Wallingford).

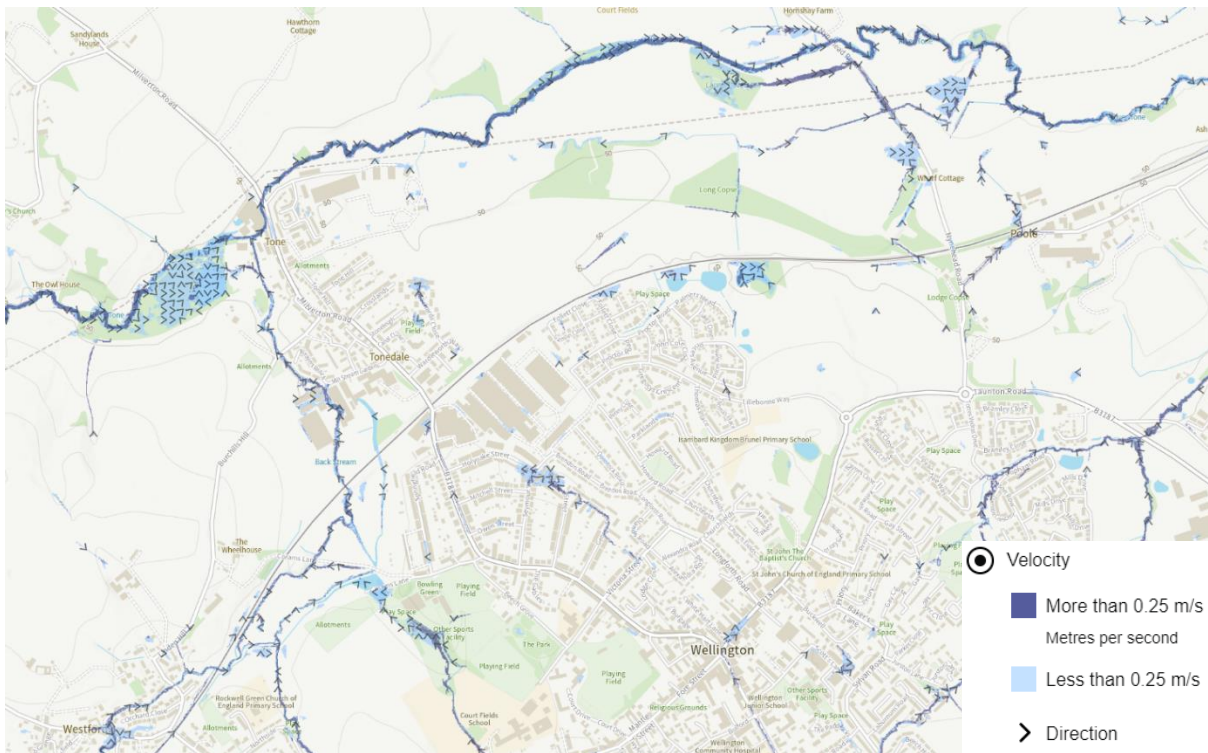


Figure 13 Surface water velocity for Wellington (Check-long-term-flood-risk.gov.uk)

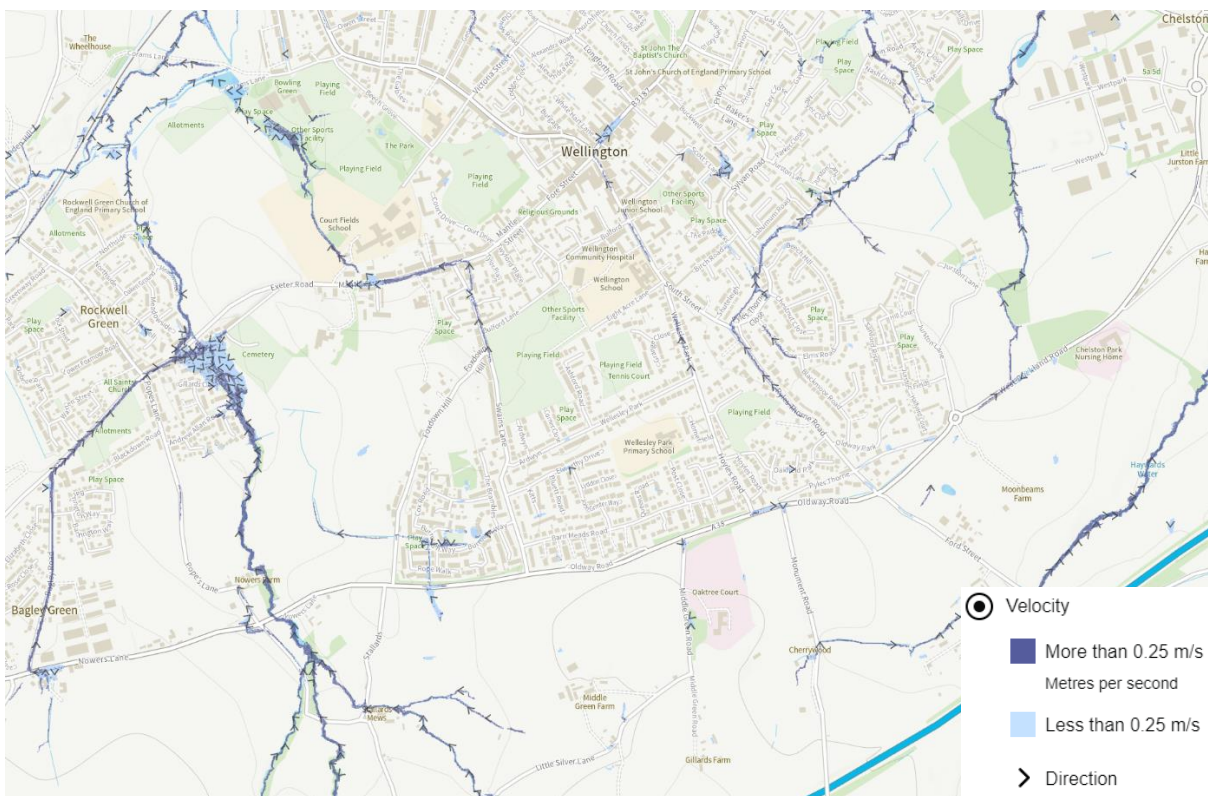


Figure 14 Surface water velocity for Wellington (Check-long-term-flood-risk.gov.uk)

Flood Risk

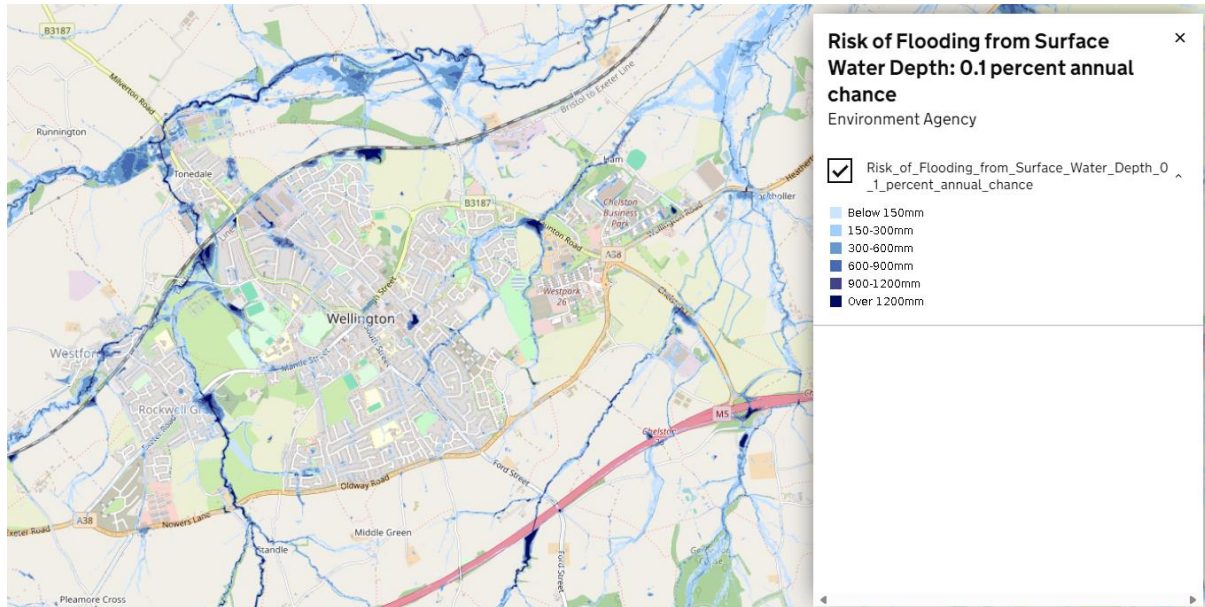


Figure 15 Defra OGC Risk of flooding from Surface Water for Wellington

Event summary

Summary

Despite limited data, it is clear that significant flooding occurred in Wellington as a result of heavy rainfall on 17th September 2023. However, due to underreporting and investigative challenges, comprehensive information remains scarce. To address this, promoting flood reporting is essential for better understanding and preparedness in the future.

Probable Causes

Intense rainfall overwhelmed drainage infrastructure, causing drains and manhole covers to overflow. Residents reported that Coram's bridge had been blocked with debris flowing downstream, which caused the stream to overflow upstream of the blockage. Residents also suspect a blocked culvert on Coram's Lane may have caused water to backup and flood. Analysis of the surface water flows did not indicate specific failure of infrastructure, beyond drains being overwhelmed by the mass of water resulting in the inundation of existing systems beyond design limits. Residents reported overflowing drains and manhole covers leading to a significant volume of water flowing into properties.

Surface runoff on Payton Road and the Westford stream's breach contributed to the flooding, as well as runoff from Jurston Fields. Residents speculated that the closure of sluice gates may have led to rapid stream rise, breaching its banks and flooding nearby properties. The engineering analysis found no evidence of a sluice gate opening, but this report recommends investigation into ownership of flood assets.

Source of flooding surface runoff on Payton Road which is a well-known issue to residents. Also, Westford stream breaching due to higher flow. This stream is in need of maintenance and possibly dredging.

Impact

The flooding affected residents across Wellington, including some in sheltered accommodation, as well as elderly and vulnerable individuals. Many residents believed sandbags would have helped prevent further flooding to their properties. In many homes, electricity was cut off. Some residents reported living with children in the upstairs space of their property while stagnant water remained in the downstairs living space. At least one property received a cascade of mud from a nearby playing field with insufficient drainage.

Risk Management Authorities

The fire brigade Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service and Red Cross attended on the night.

Following the event, Somerset Council provided dehumidifiers to some affected property owners. Flood damaged waste was collected by depot staff from the Somerset Waste Partnership. Depot staff also provided manual labour to help households with clear up. Temporary accommodation was found for some residents by the Somerset Council Housing Team. Financial assistance was provided in the form of council tax rebates and flood grants. Public Health coordinated emotional support including Mindline and specialist voluntary agencies present in the community.

A series of multi-agency drop in events followed the flooding, which provided residents and businesses with the opportunity to share their experiences and raise any issues that needed to be addressed.

It is worth noting that this flood event occurred within the first few months of the vesting of the new local authority, following the unification of Somerset's District and County Councils. Local Community Networks (LCNs) were still being set up at this stage, resulting in disjointed communication between the new authority, town councils and communities. This may also have resulted in unclear distinction of roles during such an emergency event. During the 'Lessons Learned' exercise following this response, steps were taken to ensure improvements could be made, many of which continue to be developed upon and implemented.

The following lessons learned were identified by the Emergency Planning, Response & Recovery Team (EPRR). There was a difficulty in getting situational information from the Fire and Rescue Service, resulting in delayed assistance to certain areas. Information on the council website was unclear on how residents could access sandbags. As a result, the Web Team, Depots & Contact Centre have carried out a check of the process and suggested a review of all flooding related content on the Somerset Council website. There was a sense that council staff were unavailable to provide an immediate presence on the ground during the flooding. To ensure assistance is provided in a timely manner by the correct authority, a complete information flow chart including responsibilities is now being included within the Flood Incident Response Plan.

Recommended Actions

These recommendations stand alone and are subject to each action holder's ability to resource them

Action by	Recommended Action
LLFA	Further develop understanding of flood risk assets in Wellington. For instance, unclear ownership of sluice gate in Westford
Highways	Investigate the drainage network to assess the asset condition status, to ensure that drains meet current standards regarding clearing and maintenance
LLFA, town council	Investigate and implement Natural Flood Management solutions, using natural processes to reduce the risk of flooding.
LLFA, EA	Engage with the EA to ensure current maintenance practices are adequate. Maintenance and dredging may be needed for Westford stream
Parish and Town Councils, SRA, Householders	Property owners need to consider their own preparedness for flooding events and potential mitigations through Property-level Flood Resilience (PFR). Parish Councils can help raise awareness of PFR and riparian responsibilities to ensure that the systems are as fit as they can be for any future flood events.
Communities, Residents, Parish and Town Councils	<p>Communities must be prepared for the inevitable increase in frequency and severity of flooding events due to climate change and increasing exposure. Residents can prepare for and adapt to future flooding to prevent them from becoming disasters, like the flooding experienced in 2023.</p> <p>Parish and Town Councils can create a Climate Adaptation Plan with resources available through organisations like the Somerset Wildlife Trust, Somerset Prepared. These plans must remain fresh and understood by residents.</p> <p>Communities can form Flood Warden groups to prepare for future events and reduce the risk of flooding through adopt-a-drain schemes.</p>

Planning authority, LLFA	Investigate whether any Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) are effective and whether retrofitting across the community is appropriate
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Conclusion

This investigation into the flooding event on 17th September 2023 in Wellington reveals the severe nature of this rainfall event. The intensity of the rainfall far exceeded typical patterns, overwhelming drainage infrastructure and causing property damage. This event was an extreme weather occurrence that tested the limits of existing flood management systems.

The impact on the community was significant, with many residents, including the elderly and vulnerable, experiencing prolonged damage to properties. The rapid rise of the Westford stream and the subsequent breach, coupled with surface runoff on Payton Road, led to widespread flooding across Wellington.

This report recommends actions investigating drainage networks, clarifying ownership of flood assets, and adopting natural flood management solutions. The unusually severe nature of this flooding serves as a reminder of the importance of proactive flood risk management to protect communities from future extreme weather events.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Community feedback on final draft

These investigations were created with community input from FORT reports, emailed testimonies, images, and consultation events. Final drafts were sent to key community contacts (e.g., flood wardens, parish councils) for final comments, though Communities were informed that significant amendments were not possible and additional information and comments would be included in the appendices. They were also asked to correct any inconsistencies and to provide correct data such as internally flooded property numbers (addresses excluded) or details of Risk Management Authority responses. Some of these amendments have been corrected in the report. Other amendments have been kept as an appendix due to necessity to the report, time limitations, or lack of technical support to substantiate their addition. Large number of photographs and data were also received, though not all were included in the report due to time constraints and their limited additional value to the investigation.

The following comments were received from the community, as wrote (the author of this report includes these for completeness, but does not necessarily endorse the accuracy of their assessments and recommendations):

1. The Recommended Actions are formulaic and apart from a reference to Westford Stream could have been written for any flood event. We would like to have seen more specificity for Wellington.
2. There is mention of a particular issue of surface run off on Payton Road and Jurston Field but no specific recommended action to address that. If the general recommendations do relate to these issues it would be useful to know which do.
3. Similarly mention of a 'cascade of mud from a nearby playing field with insufficient drainage but no specific recommended action – the playing field is owned by Wellington School. Again if the general recommendations do relate to these issues it would be useful to know which do
4. There is no mention of Ditchford Cottages on Hilly Head. These cottages were all flooded out and the last residents have only recently been able to move back in. This was probably the most severe impact of the flooding alongside those properties on Oaken Ground. They raised concerns about the impact of the development at Monument View and the lack of effectiveness of the SUDs on that development.

5. A question I asked was who is responsible for 'policing' the maintenance of SUDs once they are in place? On new developments the responsibility for maintenance of them sits with a management company but which organisation is responsible for ensuring that they are carrying out their responsibilities and is it clear what those responsibilities are?
6. Having identified the actions it would be useful to know what the next steps are and who is responsible for leading them. The report identifies those agencies involved but not who leads. Can I also suggest that to make the actions less generic you change parish council to town council or even better be specific and name Wellington Town Council.

Appendix 2: EA comments

NB This was predominantly surface water and non-main river flooding only, except for the Westford Stream.

There are many localised incidents of flooding shown on the summary map in the report, but which are not referenced or described in the text of the report.

NB – 33 properties reported flooded.

The following actions include the EA (NMCC comments in red):

- LLFA, EA - Engage with the EA to ensure current maintenance practices are adequate. Maintenance and dredging may be needed for Westford stream. **This may be challenging due to significant maintenance budget constraints. Also, the mechanisms of flooding in Westford need to be better understood in terms of how the significant surface water component from Payton Road combines with and compounds the flows within the Westford Stream. The Westford Stream flow is attenuated by the flood storage reservoir immediately upstream of Westford, which is managed by the EA, and throttles the flows back to reduce the risk of flooding in the village downstream. Therefore, it may be that it is the surface water component that is compounding the situation. Needs some consultation with the EA's asset performance team regarding reservoir and river channel performance and whether the downstream river channel is reduced in capacity due to siltation.**

References

[Adopted Local Plans \(somerset.gov.uk\)](https://www.somerset.gov.uk)

[Flood map for planning - GOV.UK \(flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk)

[Flood risk information for this location - Flood map for planning - GOV.UK \(flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk)

[Hydrology Data Explorer](#)

[Local Weather Forecast, News and Conditions | Weather Underground \(wunderground.com\)](https://www.wunderground.com)

[Map - FEH Web Service \(ceh.ac.uk\)](https://www.ceh.ac.uk)

[Natural Flood Management Advice | FWAG SW](#)

[Natural flood management programme - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[PWSWeather - Bring Your Weather to Life](#)

[Risk of Flooding from Surface Water Depth: 0.1 percent annual chance \(data.gov.uk\)](https://data.gov.uk)

[See flood risk on a map - Check your long term flood risk - GOV.UK \(check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.flood-risk.service.gov.uk)

[Topographic maps, elevation, terrain \(topographic-map.com\)](https://www.topographic-map.com)

Responsible	Flood Impact Reporting Officer
Accountable	Service Manager Flood & Water Management
Consulted	Parish & Town Councils, Flood Wardens & Flood Groups, Environment Agency, Wessex Water, Somerset Flood & Water Management Team (LLFA), Somerset Rivers Authority, Somerset Highways
Informed	Climate & Place Scrutiny

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
02/10/24	Anna Meares	1	Internal consultation
24/10/2024	Anna Meares	2	External consultation
17/01/2025	Anna Meares	3	Final version

Summary of Receipts and Payments

Cost Centre Group - Environment Committee

Allotments

Code Title	Receipts		Payments					Available
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Forecast to YE	Committed Spends		
44 Allotments	£ 2,910.00	£ 2,830.00	£ 2,910.00	£ 1,288.36	£ 1,144.64	£ 175.00	£ -	318.72
92 Longforth Allotment	£ 3,000.00	£ -	£ 3,000.00	£ 4,650.00	£ 4,650.00	£ 90.00	£ -	90.00
148 Allotment Deposits	£ -	£ 800.00	£ -	£ 100.00	£ 100.00	£ -	£ -	-
SUB TOTAL	£ 5,910.00	£ 3,630.00	£ 5,910.00	£ 6,038.36	£ 5,894.64	£ 265.00	£ -	408.72

Earmarked Reserves

Code Title	Receipts		Payments					Available
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Forecast to YE	Committed Spends		
75 Railway Station	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	-
77 Playing Pitch Strategy	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 4,350.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	4,350.00
SUB TOTAL	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 4,350.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	4,350.00

Environment and Planning

Code Title	Receipts		Payments					Available
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Forecast to YE	Committed Spends		
46 Footpaths PRoW Maintenance	£ -	£ 33.30	£ 500.00	£ 323.85	£ 323.85	£ -	£ -	-
49 Emptying Dog Bins	£ -	£ -	£ 12,600.00	£ 7,929.48	£ 11,586.32	£ 2,643.16	£ -	1,013.68
50 Provision of Benches & Litter/Dog Bins	£ -	£ -	£ 2,500.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	-
51 Planning Administration	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	-
52 Environmental Improvements	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ 23,827.82	£ 25,000.00	£ 390.00	£ -	782.18
113 Electricity for Street Light	£ -	£ -	£ 850.00	£ 1,230.87	£ 1,259.80	£ 300.00	£ -	271.07
129 Additional Street Lighting	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	-
131 Green Corridor	£ -	£ -	£ 30,000.00	£ 19,344.32	£ 20,000.00	£ 280.00	£ -	375.68
168 Cycle Route Cont.	£ -	£ -	£ 10,000.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	-
SUB TOTAL	£ -	£ 33.30	£ 56,450.00	£ 52,656.34	£ 58,169.97	£ 3,613.16	£ -	1,900.47

Play Areas

Code Title	Receipts		Payments					Available
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Forecast to YE	Committed Spends		
45 Tone Play Area	£ -	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 1,401.14	£ 1,787.46	£ 375.70	£ -	10.62
145 Weavers Reach Play Area	£ -	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 4,914.27	£ 5,107.27	£ 193.00	£ -	-
146 Annual Play Inspections	£ -	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 455.00	£ 455.00	£ -	£ -	-
SUB TOTAL	£ -	£ -	£ 10,500.00	£ 6,770.41	£ 7,349.73	£ 568.70	£ -	10.62

Unitary Devolution

Code Title	Receipts		Payments					Available
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Forecast to YE	Committed Spends		
172 Play Area	£ -	£ -	£ 10,500.00	£ -	£ -	£ -	£ -	-
174 TC Planting	£ -	£ -	£ 15,000.00	£ 13,704.12	£ 13,704.12	£ -	£ -	-
175 Park Planting & Security	£ -	£ -	£ 25,000.00	£ 12,350.75	£ 13,250.00	£ 505.00	£ -	394.25
SUB TOTAL	£ -	£ -	£ 50,500.00	£ 26,054.87	£ 26,954.12	£ 505.00	£ -	394.25