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## **Sandbag Policy**

### **1 Reason for the Policy**

This Policy is required to give clarity to residents, elected members and Council officers on the Councils priority for the use of sandbags in flood events. It also fulfils Measure M6.2 of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and the recommendations of the Cabinet Working Group on Flooding.

The Council has no statutory duty to provide sandbags for the protection of private property and so will not provide them on demand either by delivery or collection from a Council depot. The distribution of sandbags during a flood event can have a significant impact on limited resources that will already be stretched. With little warning of some types of flooding occurring it is also difficult to get supplies to communities in time to be of any benefit to prevent flooding of property.

This is why instead of reacting to flooding by supplying sandbags, the Council is promoting the benefits of preparing for flooding in advance of it occurring. The Cabinet Working Group found that property owners are in a better position than the Council to respond to the threat of flooding, which can be unpredictable and happen quickly. This means they can deploy their own property protection measures sooner than the Council could provide sandbags or mobilise other resources.

By publishing this policy the Council aims to inform the public about how we prioritise the use of sandbags so that they are aware of the level of help that will be available during a flood event and can prepare themselves accordingly.

### **2 Prioritisation for Sandbag Use**

The use of sandbags will be prioritised for use in the following situations:

1. Prevention of loss of life or serious injury.
2. The maintenance of access for the emergency services.
3. Protection of the primary highway network and transportation routes.
4. Protection of NELC property.
5. Requests from other Category 1 responders (designated under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004).

Sandbags will not be deployed where internal flooding of property has already occurred.

### **3 Protection of Private Property**

The responsibility for the protection of private property rests with the owner as does the chosen method of protection. The Council does not recommend that sandbags are used due to their low success rate in preventing water from entering buildings.

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They can also only be used once as they need to be disposed of when they become contaminated with sewerage.

There are some more effective methods for protecting property such as purpose built door gates/barriers and air brick covers. These are easier to install, form a more effective seal and can be cleaned and re-used.

You will need to consider the type of flooding you are at risk from and the potential depths when choosing which property protection methods to use. Specific advice for property owners has been produced by the 'SMARTeST Project'. This outlines 6 steps for property owners to take in a short booklet called 'Six steps to property level flood protection' which can be found on their website:

- <http://www.smartfloodprotection.com/data-collection-form-2/>

Use of this booklet will guide you through the steps you need to take to protect your property from flooding.

The booklet does not specify where you should purchase any products but more information on what is available can be found on the Blue Pages provided by the National Flood Forum:

- <http://www.bluepages.org.uk/>

Local DIY stores are also starting to stock property level flood protection products in their shops and on websites.

The Council recommends that if property owners are considering using property level protection measures they carefully consider all the potential entry points that floodwater can use and seek professional advice where needed.