

Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Thursday, 30th July, 2026 at 2.00 pm

Councillors Present

County Councillor Jane Lucas (Chair)
County Councillor (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Louise Brown, Emma Bryn, Tomos Davies, Jackie Strong, Tudor Thomas, Martyn Groucutt, Maria Stevens, Catrin Maby, M. Newell, Meirion Howells and Tony Kear
Martin Newell (Substitution).

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Deb Hill-Howells, Chief Officer Infrastructure
Craig O'Connor, Chief Officer, Place and Community Well-being
Carl Touhig, Head of Neighbourhood Services

Also in attendance County Councillors:
Catrin Maby, Meirion Howells and Tony Kear

APOLOGIES: County Councillors Lisa Dymock (Substitution Sent)

1. Declaration of Interest

None.

Before the meeting's items began there was a temporary election of the Chair, owing to the omission of the appointment and election of Chair and Vice-Chair from the agenda Councillor Lucas was proposed by Councillor Newell, seconded by Councillor Strong.

The formal appointment and election of Chair and Vice Chair will be on the agenda for the next meeting on 1st October.

2. Public Open Forum

None.

3. Presentation of a Petition received on Prohibition of driving except for access, Goldwire Lane, Monmouth - To agree a course of action for the petition.

Councillor Newell presented the petition as the relevant ward member. He emphasised that his presentation of the petition was not to be taken as an endorsement of it.
The committee agreed that no further action was to be taken. The lead petitioner will be notified
– ACTION

4. Local Flood Risk Management Strategy - To scrutinise the strategy in light of the consultation responses received and the Winter flooding in 2025.

Ross Price delivered a presentation and introduced the report, and answered the members' questions with Cabinet Member Catrin Maby, Craig O'Connor and Carl Touhig:

Who owns and maintains the sluice gate/rubbish screen infrastructure near Deep Weir that has been linked to flooding in Caldicot?"

The large rubbish screen on the M4 culvert at the lower end of the Nedern Brook is owned and maintained by National Highways. The Nedern Brook itself is a main river, and the downstream section is managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW), which carries out routine maintenance such as vegetation clearance along the watercourse.

What is being done to prevent the sluice gate/rubbish screen problem from causing flooding again?

Following previous flooding events and the subsequent Section 19 investigation, several measures have been put in place:

- National Highways has strengthened its inspection and maintenance regime for the trash screen.
- The screen is now checked more rigorously during normal conditions and when severe weather warnings are issued.
- Arrangements are in place for additional inspections during significant rainfall events.
- A manual means of operating the screen has been introduced, so it can be lifted in an emergency if debris and water pressure prevent the hydraulic mechanism from working.
- NRW has changed its maintenance practices so that vegetation and debris cleared from the watercourse are removed from the site rather than left on the riverbank, reducing the risk of material being washed downstream and blocking the screen.

How often is the rubbish screen checked, and how quickly would any blockage be cleared?

Exact inspection schedules were not available during the meeting. However, inspections are believed to take place on a routine basis during the winter, potentially weekly, and that additional checks are carried out when amber weather warnings are issued and during significant rainfall events. – **ACTION: to get the exact timings and provide them to Members**

Is there a shorter, more accessible version of the Flood Strategy that residents can use to understand what is being done about flooding?

Yes. A summary version of the strategy has been produced, although it is necessarily quite high-level. The full strategy also contains detailed contents pages and sections that allow readers to focus on information relevant to them. In particular, there is a dedicated section explaining the roles and responsibilities of different flood risk authorities and tables within the strategy show which organisation is responsible for different aspects of flood management. The strategy has been organised around catchments and local flood risk areas, allowing residents to focus on the action plans applicable to their own communities rather than reading the entire document. Officers are willing to help councillors and residents navigate the document and locate relevant information.

What is being done to improve communication and engagement with residents about flooding and flood risk?

Engagement has continued beyond the formal consultation process. In addition to the public drop-in sessions held during consultation, flood risk officers have been meeting regularly with individual residents and community groups across the county since Storm Claudia. Further engagement opportunities may be provided through the National Flood Forum. Discussions have taken place with Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association about bringing the Forum back into

Monmouthshire. Welsh Government has made funding available, and if approved, the National Flood Forum could hold additional community sessions on topics such as:

- Flood recovery
- Preparedness for future flooding
- Community resilience

Once the strategy is submitted to Welsh Government, how long will it take before actions are implemented?

The timing of Welsh Government approval is currently uncertain, particularly following changes within Welsh Government. However, actions identified within the strategy and associated reports do not have to wait until formal approval is received. Work can continue on recommendations and actions in the meantime, including holding discussions with partner organisations, progressing investigations and recommendations arising from flood events, and developing and advancing local flood management measures. The absence of formal sign-off does not prevent practical work from moving forward.

How well is Monmouthshire County Council working with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on flood risk issues?

Relationships with NRW officers are generally positive and constructive, with strong working relationships having developed over many years. However, NRW has recently experienced staff retirements within its flood risk teams, which has affected capacity, and it is facing resource pressures similar to those experienced by local authorities. There also remains a need to continue pressing NRW to take ownership of major main-river flooding issues affecting Monmouthshire, while recognising that the organisation must balance Monmouthshire's concerns against flood risks elsewhere across Wales. Despite these challenges, cooperation between officers is generally good.

How can residents better understand which organisation is responsible for different flood-related issues?

The strategy contains clear information setting out the responsibilities of different risk management authorities, including NRW, Welsh Water and the Council. This information is also available on the Council's flood risk management webpages. Residents and councillors who are unsure which organisation is responsible for a particular issue can contact the flood risk management team directly for advice. The intention is to provide clearer information so that concerns are directed to the appropriate organisation and residents better understand who is responsible for different aspects of flood management.

How have the lessons from the major flooding events of winter 2025 been incorporated into the final Flood Strategy?

The strategy was originally developed using detailed flood-risk assessments, local knowledge and flood mapping data. Feedback from consultation and subsequent flooding events has led to additional actions being included in several catchment action plans. One example is the Mountain Brook catchment, where residents highlighted significant flooding issues during consultation. This resulted in a new action being added to investigate the potential for a natural flood management scheme in that area. The strategy and action plans have also been updated to reflect flooding associated with Storm Claudia and other recent flood events.

Why has it taken almost a year between the public consultation and the strategy returning to Scrutiny Committee?

The timetable was significantly affected by the severe flooding events that occurred between November 2025 and early 2026. Flood-risk staff had to divert their attention and resources away from finalising the strategy in order to respond to and manage those flood emergencies. As a result, work on the strategy had to be paused while the team dealt with the immediate impacts of the flooding. The delay was unavoidable given the scale of the events that occurred.

How does the Flood Strategy take account of future development proposed through the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)?

Surface-water management for new developments is now governed through the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) approval process, which operates separately from planning permission. Developers must demonstrate that surface-water drainage proposals meet Welsh Government technical standards before approval is granted. Developments are required to manage runoff through approved sustainable drainage systems, ensure surface-water discharge does not exceed the rate that would occur from the site in its undeveloped, greenfield condition, and comply with technical drainage requirements assessed by the Council's SuDS Approving Body. In addition, all RLDP candidate sites have been assessed in relation to flood risk, and no built development is intended within floodplains.

What is the overall cost of delivering all of the actions contained within the strategy?

An aggregate cost figure was not available during the meeting.– **ACTION: to provide Members with cumulative costs outside the meeting.** The actions have been developed on the basis of what is considered realistically deliverable using existing statutory flood-risk management resources, available Council capacity, and additional grant funding where appropriate. The strategy has not been written on the assumption that unrealistic or unattainable projects will be undertaken.

How confident is the Council that it can secure the Welsh Government funding needed to deliver the proposed actions?

The strategy relies heavily on Welsh Government flood-risk grants, particularly the Small Scale Works Grant, which is used to deliver local flood mitigation schemes. The team has confidence in the continued availability of this funding because the grant was originally developed in response to requests from local authorities for support in addressing local flood-risk issues. In addition, every application submitted by Monmouthshire under this grant scheme since its introduction has been approved, and there is currently no indication that the programme will cease. While future funding decisions remain outside the Council's control, the strategy has been developed on the basis that the Council will continue to be able to apply for and access these funding streams.

What assurances are there that future development will not increase flood risk in Monmouthshire?

New developments must be designed so that they do not increase surface-water runoff compared with the site's existing greenfield condition. To achieve this, every development proposal is required to include a sustainable drainage system, and the associated drainage proposals are scrutinised through a technical approval process. The flood-risk team also works closely with planning officers when assessing proposed development sites, and no built development is planned within flood zones. In addition, drainage systems that serve two or more properties are adopted and maintained by the Council,

providing long-term oversight and maintenance. Together, these measures are intended to ensure that future development does not create additional surface-water flooding problems.

What is being done to address flooding issues in the Moun-ton Brook and Mathern areas, including the Welsh Water pumping station at Pwllmeyric and flooding beneath the bridge in Mathern?

Both of these issues are already known to the flood-risk management team and are the subject of ongoing land-drainage investigations. The flooding affecting the Welsh Water pumping station at Pwllmeyric has previously been raised with officers, and work is continuing to understand the causes and identify potential solutions. Likewise, the recurring flooding beneath the bridge in Mathern, which can effectively cut off part of the village during severe weather, is also being investigated. These site-specific issues are not individually listed within the strategy because doing so would make the document substantially larger, but work on both locations is continuing and that a further update could be provided.

How are highway drainage problems dealt with, and how do they fit into flood management work?

Flooding concerns are typically reported first to the flood-risk management team, which then investigates the causes. Where an investigation identifies highway drainage as a contributing factor, the team works directly with Highways officers and requests drainage clearance or other remedial action. Detailed surveys are also undertaken to record drainage assets in a growing council-wide database. This database is gradually providing a much clearer picture of the location, size and condition of drainage infrastructure across Monmouthshire, helping to inform future maintenance and flood-risk management decisions.

Where can residents find information about flood-prone areas and flood mapping?

The strategy contains links to Natural Resources Wales flood-risk maps and related online resources. Residents can use these maps to identify areas at risk of flooding and view flood-risk information relevant to their local communities. Similar links are also available through the Council's flood-risk management webpages, making it easier for residents to access up-to-date information about flood risk in their area.

Can measures such as ditches on farmland be used to reduce flood risk, and is support available for that type of work?

In some circumstances, yes, but it depends on local conditions. While creating a ditch can sometimes help reduce flood risk, it can also create new problems if it simply redirects water elsewhere. Any proposal must therefore consider where the water will ultimately flow and whether it could increase flooding in another location. There are farming schemes that support measures such as hedgerow planting and buffer strips, and where investigations identify that drainage works could help protect properties, officers can work with landowners to explore options. In some cases, Welsh Government flood funding may be available to help fund such interventions.

How is the value of natural floodplains taken into account when considering development?

Areas that regularly flood can play an important role in managing flood risk because they provide natural storage for floodwater and help protect homes and infrastructure elsewhere. Where development proposals affect areas that perform this function, developers may be required to provide compensatory

flood storage to replace the lost capacity. This could involve creating new storage areas, such as basins or lowered ground levels, capable of accommodating the displaced water. These matters are assessed through planning processes, flood consequence assessments and consultation with both Natural Resources Wales and the Council's flood-risk specialists.

How significant is the problem of blocked culverts, and what is being done to manage it?

Blocked culverts are a significant cause of flooding, particularly in rural parts of Monmouthshire. A culvert can be operating normally one day and become blocked the next, leading quickly to local flooding problems. To reduce this risk, the Council now operates a proactive inspection programme covering around 30 to 35 high-risk locations. These sites are typically inspected twice each year, usually ahead of and during the winter period. Officers also work with riparian landowners to encourage the maintenance of watercourses feeding into culverts. This more proactive approach has already helped reduce flooding incidents in a number of locations that previously experienced recurring problems.

Why has a specific flooding policy been removed from the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), and does that weaken protection against flood risk?

No. Flood risk remains an important consideration in planning decisions, but Welsh Government guidance advises local authorities not to duplicate policies that are already covered comprehensively at national level. Flooding is addressed through national planning policy and Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN 15), both of which carry significant weight when planning applications are assessed. Flood-risk issues will continue to be scrutinised through consultations with Natural Resources Wales and the Council's own flood-risk specialists, and development proposals in flood-prone areas will remain subject to detailed examination. The removal of a local policy therefore does not reduce the protections that exist or diminish the importance of flood-risk assessments.

What proactive measures is the Council taking to monitor flood-risk infrastructure before problems occur?

The Council has significantly expanded its proactive monitoring arrangements in recent years. In addition to the inspection programme covering high-risk culverts and drainage assets, a network of cameras has been installed at key flood-risk locations around the county. These cameras allow officers to monitor river levels, watercourse conditions and the build-up of debris on critical structures in real time. This provides earlier warning of developing problems and enables operational teams to be deployed more quickly when intervention is required. The overall aim is to identify and address issues before they develop into significant flooding incidents.

What arrangements are in place to warn residents about flooding and help them prepare when a flood event occurs?

Residents can access a range of information and support before, during and after a flood event. The Council maintains dedicated flood-risk webpages containing guidance and information on how to prepare for flooding and what actions to take when flooding occurs. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) also provides extensive advice through its website. The key warning system is NRW's Floodline Warning Service, which residents in flood-risk areas can subscribe to in order to receive flood alerts and warnings by text message or email. Residents are encouraged not only to sign up to the service but also to understand what each warning level means and what actions they should take at each stage.

When should residents act on flood warnings, and is there a misunderstanding about how the warning system works?

Yes. There is often a misconception that people should wait for the most severe flood warning before taking action. However, when a flood warning is issued, that is already the point at which flooding is expected and residents should begin taking protective measures. The warning system is designed to provide increasing levels of notice as risk escalates, and residents should understand the difference between a flood alert, a flood warning and a severe flood warning so that they can respond appropriately and in good time.

What is being done to improve community preparedness and resilience to future flooding?

A significant part of the strategy is focused on improving community awareness of flood risk and helping communities become more resilient. Officers regularly engage with residents who have experienced flooding or are at risk of flooding and direct them to appropriate sources of information and advice. Looking ahead, one of the key objectives is the development of additional community flood plans. These plans are intended to help local communities understand the specific flood risks in their area, identify vulnerable locations and assets, and know what actions should be taken before and during a flood event. By building this local knowledge and preparedness, communities can respond more effectively when flooding occurs.

What progress is being made on property-level flood protection measures for residents in Forge Road, and when can residents expect to see action?

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is now progressing a Property Flood Resilience (PFR) scheme for residents in Forge Road. This follows previous Section 19 investigations after the 2019 and 2020 flood events, both of which recommended that NRW assess potential mitigation measures for the area. Individual property surveys are expected to be undertaken in December 2026, with installation of resilience measures planned for the following summer. These measures could include flood doors, flood barriers and sealed air bricks. While such measures can help prevent flooding during less severe events, their primary purpose is to improve resilience rather than provide complete flood prevention, particularly during extreme events such as Storm Claudia, which overtopped existing flood defences at some properties.

What is being done to improve road closures during flood events, particularly in places such as Skenfrith and Forge Road where vehicles driving through floodwater can make conditions worse?

Work is underway to develop more formalised road closure plans for locations including Skenfrith and Forge Road. The intention is to have pre-prepared traffic management arrangements that can be put into operation when flood conditions reach agreed trigger levels. These plans will allow roads to be closed more quickly and consistently during flood events. The Council also intends to provide support and training for suitable local residents so they can assist with the deployment and management of road closure measures. The aim is to reduce the problem of vehicles driving through floodwater and creating bow waves, which can worsen flooding and damage nearby properties.

Can more be done to proactively maintain drains and other drainage assets in locations that are known to flood regularly?

The Council is seeking to take an increasingly proactive approach to drainage maintenance. Additional funding has recently been secured for drainage-related work, including extra resources for drainage maintenance and cleansing. As knowledge of local flood-risk locations has improved, programmes of work are being targeted more specifically at areas known to be vulnerable to flooding. Inspections and maintenance activities are concentrated on higher-risk locations, particularly during the autumn and winter period when flooding risks increase. The intention is to identify and address issues before heavy rainfall occurs.

Can the Council do more to support farmers and landowners in slowing the flow of water upstream through measures such as leaky dams, improved land management and other natural flood management techniques?

Yes. The Council is already working with the Wye and Usk Foundation and other partner organisations through projects such as the Resilient Rivers Monnow Project. This work focuses on encouraging and supporting landowners to implement natural flood management measures that improve the ability of soils to absorb and hold water. Examples include changes to land management practices, reducing soil compaction, altering crop rotations, reducing winter grazing pressure, and creating buffer strips. The objective is to reduce the speed and volume of runoff entering watercourses during heavy rainfall, thereby reducing peak flood levels downstream.

In addition, Welsh Government funding is available specifically for natural flood management projects. The Council has secured around £170,000 of grant funding in the current year to work with landowners on a range of measures within affected catchments. These schemes are already being implemented and that further opportunities will continue to be identified and pursued in partnership with organisations such as NRW, Network Rail and local landowners.

What progress has been made on the Woodside Flood Mitigation Scheme in Usk, and is there an update on the business case submitted to Welsh Government?

Work on the Woodside Flood Mitigation Scheme is continuing, and the Full Business Case is close to being completed. The scheme has proved technically challenging because of the very flat nature of the site, which has made the hydraulic modelling more complex. However, consultants have been working through those challenges and progress is continuing. The expectation is that the business case will be finalised within the coming weeks and then submitted to Welsh Government for consideration.

What are the new actions that have been added to the Usk catchment action plan following consultation?

Several amendments were made to the Usk catchment action plan as a result of consultation feedback and flooding experiences during Storm Claudia. In addition to a minor amendment to an existing action, new actions have been included relating to Abergavenny and Little Mill. One of the key additions concerns flooding associated with the Cibi Brook in Abergavenny, where blockages contributed to significant flooding. An action has therefore been included to work with the local community to raise awareness of flood risk and to develop a Community Flood Plan for the area. Officers have already been working with residents and local members and that the first draft of that flood plan had recently been produced.

Are there templates or guidance available to help town and community councils develop their own flood emergency plans?

Yes. Natural Resources Wales has developed a template for Community Flood Plans, which can be used by town and community councils as the basis for developing local arrangements. While NRW's approach is that these plans should be community-led and maintained by the community itself, Monmouthshire County Council is willing to provide support and add value by helping communities develop and refine their plans. Work already undertaken in places such as Abergavenny could also provide a useful model for other communities looking to develop similar plans. – **ACTION: to provide a copy of the template**

Can flood warnings and emergency communications be improved so that residents receive clearer, more direct information during flood events?

Yes. Feedback about the lack of direct communication during Storm Claudia has already been shared with emergency planning colleagues. Following discussions between the Council, emergency planning officers and the Fire Service, work is underway to develop emergency response arrangements specifically for Monmouth. As part of this work, a public information leaflet is being prepared for flood-prone areas. This could include practical information such as where residents can move vehicles during a flood event, where to obtain assistance, and what actions to take before, during and after flooding. Lessons learned from Storm Claudia should help to improve how information is communicated during future emergencies.

How can residents be helped to build resilience and better protect themselves before flooding occurs?

There is scope to improve preparedness information for residents. The proposed public information leaflet is intended to provide practical advice for people living in areas at risk of flooding. Consideration will also be given to wider communications ahead of the winter season, directing residents to flood-risk information, warning services and preparedness guidance. The aim is to ensure that residents have access to the information they need before severe weather arrives rather than only responding during an emergency.

Can more be done to support vulnerable residents and improve emergency planning following the experiences of Storm Claudia?

The experiences of Storm Claudia have led to significant learning for emergency services and the Council. Meetings have been held with emergency planning teams and local fire service representatives to review operational arrangements, identify difficult-to-access locations and improve future emergency responses. The emergency services were considered to have performed exceptionally well during the event, but lessons learned will help improve support for vulnerable residents and make future responses more effective if similar events occur again.

What progress is being made on property flood resilience and “Build Back Better” measures for residents affected by flooding in Monmouth?

The immediate focus in Monmouth is the completion of the Section 19 investigation report and understanding what that reveals about the causes and consequences of flooding. Future measures may include improvements to existing flood defences, the consideration of property flood resilience schemes and wider mitigation measures where these are shown to be necessary. The Council will continue to work closely with Natural Resources Wales in considering options once the findings of the Section 19

report have been finalised. Similar resilience schemes are already progressing in places such as Forge Road and Skenfrith and could help inform future approaches elsewhere.

Could officers carry out ward-based site visits with local councillors to identify drainage and flood-risk issues before winter?

Yes, such visits would be valuable and stated that they would be happy to undertake a walkabout with local members and, where appropriate, involve Highways officers as well. These visits could be used to review drainage assets, watercourses, highway drainage and other local issues that residents have identified. The intention would be to identify potential problems and address them proactively ahead of the winter period.

When will the Section 19 report on the recent flooding be completed, and how will it inform future work?

A draft version of the Section 19 report has been completed and is currently being reviewed. Following review, it will be shared with Natural Resources Wales for comment before being finalised. Publication is expected later in the year, subject to discussions with NRW and Welsh Government. Unlike previous reports, this Section 19 investigation is being undertaken on a catchment basis and will cover flooding in several locations, including Skenfrith, Rockfield, Forge Road and Monmouth Town. Although this broader approach has taken longer to complete, it is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of flood risk and future mitigation options across the catchment.

What is being done to ensure that road closures during flood events do not simply divert vehicles onto other roads that are also vulnerable to flooding?

This is an important issue. We recognise that closing major roads can unintentionally divert traffic, often using sat nav systems, onto smaller roads that may themselves be unsafe during flood events. Particular reference was made to the flooding at Panteg Goetre, where floodwater can cross the road with significant force. While traffic management arrangements already exist for some locations and further road-closure plans are being developed, more consideration needs to be given to the wider road network and to ensuring that diversion routes do not direct drivers into dangerous conditions. This will be taken away as an action to review existing arrangements and consider whether additional signage or measures are needed around affected areas when roads are closed.

What can be done to address recurring flooding at locations such as Panteg Goetre, where roads flood repeatedly and create risks for motorists?

Officers are very familiar with the location and the risks it presents. Panteg Goetre was described as particularly concerning because floodwater can flow across the road very rapidly, creating dangerous conditions for vehicles. The location is already being considered as part of the Council's work on road-closure and traffic-management arrangements for flood events. Managing these locations safely is a priority, particularly where motorists may not appreciate the depth or force of floodwater.

How can drivers be prevented from ignoring road closures or driving into floodwater during severe weather?

This remains a significant challenge. Even where road-closure signs, cones and warning measures are in place, some drivers still choose to continue through flooded areas. There are locations elsewhere in the county where motorists have driven past road-closure signs and even police tape. While additional

consideration will be given to signage and traffic-management arrangements, preventing risky behaviour entirely can be difficult and that public awareness remains an important part of flood-risk management.

How often are flood walls, flood banks and flood defences inspected, and who is responsible for maintaining them?

Flood defences such as the Usk Town flood-defence system are maintained by Natural Resources Wales (NRW). These assets are inspected through a formal inspection regime known as T98 inspections, which identify defects and help determine future maintenance requirements. Specific inspection frequencies were not available during the meeting, but NRW's inspection arrangements cover the formal flood defences that they maintain. – **ACTION: to obtain further details regarding the inspection schedule**

In relation to the wall behind the former police station in Usk, this forms part of the wider Usk flood-defence system and is therefore also an NRW-maintained asset. Information on maintained flood-defence assets is available through NRW's National Flood Asset Database.

What is being done to assess the long-term integrity of flood-protection structures in Usk?

Particular attention is being given to a section of wall associated with Usk Bridge opposite Woodside Cottages. Although it functions as part of the flood-defence system, it was not originally designed specifically as a flood wall. While it has successfully withstood recent flood events, including Storm Dennis, there remains a desire to obtain greater assurance regarding its long-term structural integrity. An action has therefore been included within the Usk catchment action plan to undertake further investigation and assessment of this structure so that the issue remains formally recorded and can be progressed.

Could a local stock of sandbags be established in Little Mill to help residents respond more quickly to flooding?

Yes. There is scope to establish a local sandbag store in Little Mill. Similar arrangements already exist elsewhere in Monmouthshire, although the model varies between communities. In some places the Council provides the storage facility and sandbags; in others the local community provides the storage infrastructure and the Council stocks it when required. Local discussions can take place to determine the most appropriate arrangement for Little Mill.

Who is responsible for removing self-seeded trees, gravel build-up and other obstructions from the River Usk?

Responsibility for managing the River Usk as a main river rests with Natural Resources Wales. Matters such as self-seeded trees, gravel shoals and other obstructions that may affect river flow should therefore be raised with NRW. Intervention usually takes place where NRW considers there to be a significant flood-risk issue. Specific concern was raised about areas downstream of Usk where vegetation and gravel deposits have accumulated. These concerns will be raised with NRW, although local members are also encouraged to contact NRW directly regarding those issues.

How is the additional drainage maintenance resource being prioritised, and how are flooding hotspots identified?

The additional drainage crews and equipment secured by the Council are already in operation. Priority is being given to locations where experience has shown there is a higher risk of flooding, particularly those

affected during recent flood events. As understanding of local flood risks improves, drainage maintenance programmes are becoming increasingly targeted towards known problem locations. The Council's knowledge base has expanded considerably through recent flood events, enabling a more informed approach to prioritising culverts, drains, road closures and other interventions. However, managing drainage remains challenging because many assets can become blocked very quickly during severe weather.

Can ward members help identify local flooding hotspots that should receive additional attention?

Yes. Local councillors are encouraged to report known hotspots and drainage concerns. The preferred route is through the Council's reporting systems, as this ensures there is an audit trail and that requests are logged formally. Officers are also willing to receive additional information directly from members where there are particular concerns that may not yet be reflected in existing records. While it is not possible to proactively inspect every drainage asset across the county, local knowledge is considered valuable in helping to identify and prioritise locations where additional preventative work may be beneficial.

Chair's Summary:

In her closing remarks, the Chair thanked the officers for their work and acknowledged that flooding is an emotional and highly personal issue for many residents who have experienced its effects directly. She also highlighted that while the discussion had focused on flooding, the county was simultaneously experiencing prolonged hot weather and drought conditions, underlining the wider challenges posed by climate change. She urged continued vigilance regarding wildfire risks and responsible behaviour by residents during dry conditions.

The Chair concluded by thanking members and officers for their contributions and recognised the considerable amount of work being undertaken by the flood-risk team. She noted that residents continue to need support, information and reassurance, and welcomed the officers' commitment to engagement and communication as the county approaches another winter season.

5. Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action List

Noted.

6. Cabinet and Council Work Planner

Noted.

7. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were confirmed.

8. Next Meeting: 01st October 2026

The meeting ended at **4.00 pm**