Cumberland Council

Glen Willie Cottages and Brook Villa, Great Corby

Flood Investigation Report No.CC3

Flood Event 22 and 23 May 2024

This flood investigation report has been produced by Cumberland Council as a Lead Local Flood Authority under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

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1. Executive Summary

Exceptionally wet weather was experienced across parts of England, North Wales, southern and eastern Scotland between the 21st and 23rd May 2024. A slow-moving weather front associated with low pressure in the North Sea resulted in 50mm of rain over a wide area of northwestern England with 75mm to 100mm experienced in the worst affected locations. On the 22nd May northern England recorded its wettest spring day since 1891, with many stations recording their wettest May day on record.

High rainfall totals in small, agricultural catchments that do not generally experience such high rainfall totals meant that rivers and watercourses rose quickly, with very little warning in some instances. Over 100 properties in and around the Carlisle area were flooded internally during the event and the Section 19 reports investigate the flood event, considers the causes and makes recommendations for further actions.

Cumberland Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority has prepared this report with the assistance of other Flood Risk Management Authorities (FRMA) as it considers necessary to do so under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

Any additional information that residents and others can provide to the Environment Agency and Cumberland Council to help develop our understanding of the flooding is welcomed. Information has already been provided, much of which has been used to inform this report. Any additional information should be provided to **lfrm@cumberland.gov.uk.**

1.1 The Flood Investigation Report

Under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) Cumberland Council, as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), has a statutory duty to produce Flood Investigation Reports for areas affected by flooding. Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act states:

1) *On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it 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.*

This section of the Act leaves the determination of the 'extent' of flood investigation to the LLFA. It is not practical or realistic for Cumberland Council to carry out a detailed investigation into every flood incident that occurs in the County, but every incident with basic details will be recorded by the LLFA. Only those with 5 or more properties/businesses involved will have investigations published.

An investigation will be carried out, and a report prepared and published by the LLFA when the flooding impacts meet the following criteria:

- Where there is ambiguity surrounding the source or responsibility of flood incident
- Internal flooding of one property that has been experienced on more than one occasion
- Internal flooding of five properties has been experienced during one single flood incident
- There is a risk to life as a result of flooding.

As a flood Risk Management Authority (RMA), the Environment Agency have partnered with the Cumberland Council to produce this flood investigation report.

1.2 Scope of this report

This Flood Investigation Report **is**:

- An investigation on the what, when, why, and how the flooding took place resulting from the 22nd to 23rd May 2024.
- A means of identifying potential recommendations for actions to minimise the risk or impact of future flooding.

This Flood Investigation Report **does not**:

- Interpret observations and measurements resulting from this flooding event. (Interpretation will be undertaken as part of any subsequent reports).
- Provide a complete description of what happens next.

The Flood Investigation Reports outline recommendations and actions that various organisations and authorities can do to minimise flood risk in affected areas. Once agreed, the reports can be used by communities and agencies as the basis for developing future plans to help make areas more resilient to flooding in the future.

2. Event Background

This section describes the location of the flood incident and provides details on the rainfall event that occurred at the time.

2.1 Background

The month of May 2024 was relatively dry prior to the event. From the 1st to the 21st May, the north-west region received 46 mm of rainfall which represents 62% of the long term average monthly rainfall for May. Local rain gauges suggest there was no rainfall from 15th May to the 22nd May, and therefore catchment conditions would not have been unusually wet at the start of the event.

The majority of the heavy rainfall associated with this event fell between 21st and 23rd May 2024, (figure 2). Rainfall on 21st May was focused across central England and East Anglia, with 20-30mm falling widely and over 50mm falling in the wettest locations. On 22nd May, the main rain-bearing front tracked north with the focus of the rain across North Wales, much of northern England, southern and eastern Scotland, with over 50mm falling widely.

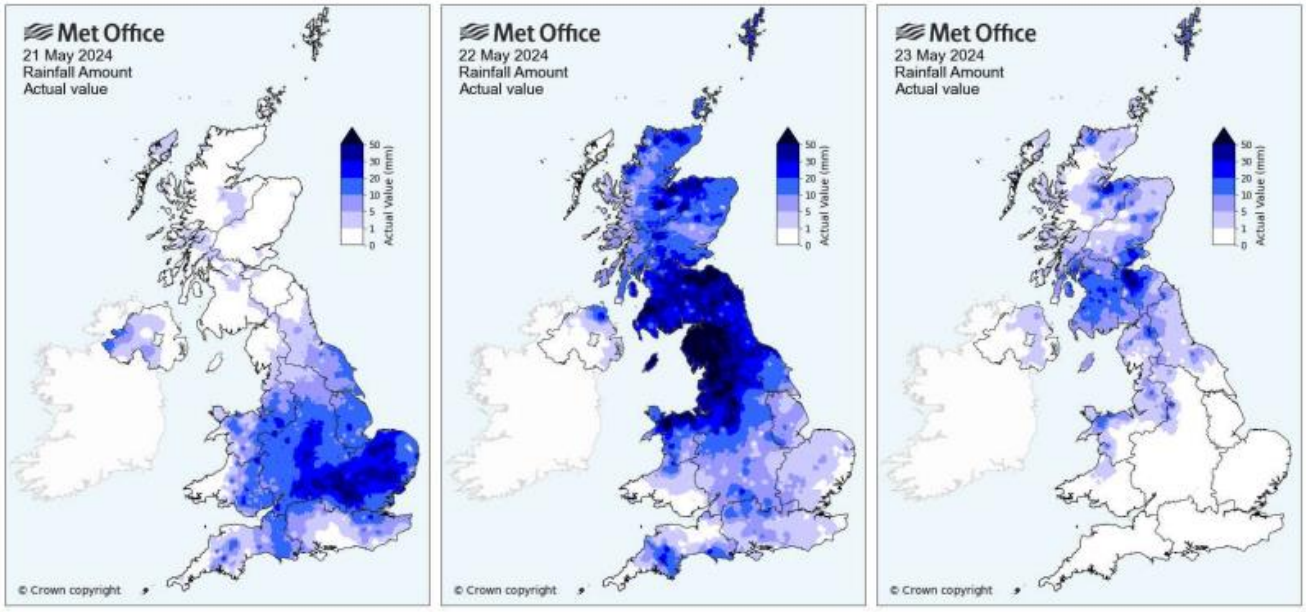

Figure 1: Met Office Rainfall amounts

2.2 Rainfall event

On Wednesday 22nd May to Thursday 23rd May 2024 locations in North-West England experienced heavy rainfall resulting from a slow-moving low-pressure system moving across England and Wales. Rain fell consistently from the morning of 22nd May until the afternoon of 23rd May, with the heaviest totals between 5pm on 22nd May and 2am on 23rd May. 24-hour rainfall totals exceeded 100 mm at several rain gauge sites, approximately twice the long-term average rainfall for the month of May.

The measured total rainfall over a 12 hour period was up to 100mm in the northern fell areas south of Carlisle, equivalent to a 1 in 300 year storm at its peak. The intense and localised

nature of the event meant that the catchments were quick to react and the watercourses rose quickly to unprecedented levels in some locations.

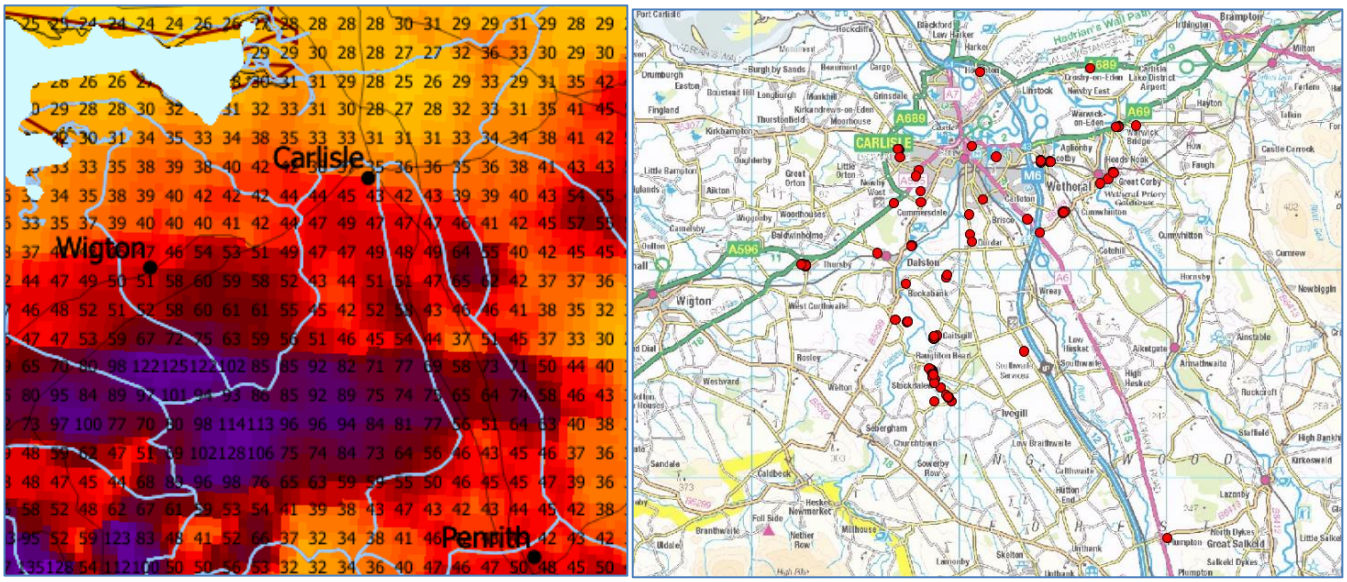

Figure 2. 24 hr rainfall totals and flooded properties from this event

The sheer volume of water in the watercourses and on roads overwhelmed the hydraulic capacity and the riverbanks were breached, and roads flooded in many locations, with very little warning in some instances. Over 100 properties in and around the Carlisle area were flooded internally during the event and these reports investigate the rainfall event, the causes and makes recommendations for further actions.

2.3 River levels

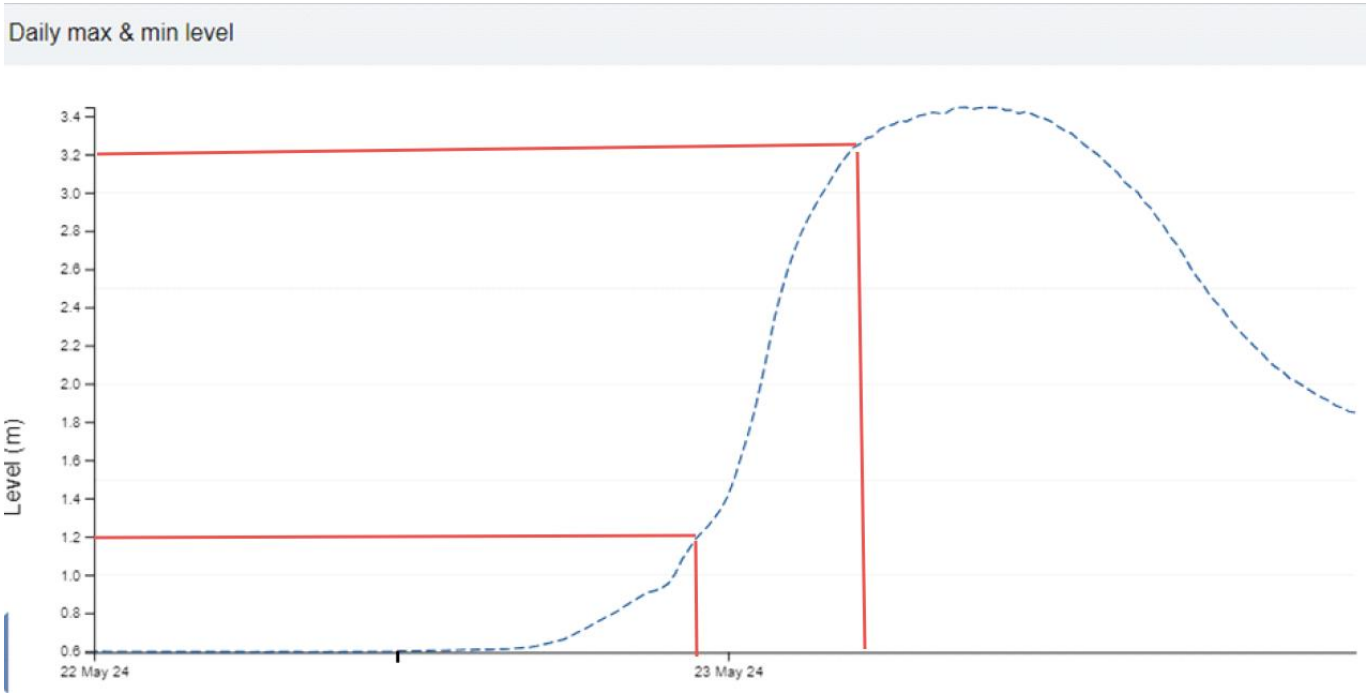

Figure 3. River Level in Eden downstream of Great Corby (nearest river level monitoring station) Note: River level rose 2m in 6hrs from 22.00 – 04.00

2.4 Local weather station records

Brampton Weather Station, Cumbria UK Met Office No 7076		Latitude: N 54° 56' 06" | Longitude: W 02° 44' 04" | Altitude: 117 m
Rainfall		
High Hourly Rainfall	8.1 mm	at 18:29 on 22 May 2024
High Daily Rainfall	66.7 mm	on 22 May 2024

Figure 4. All-time records from the Brampton Weather Station

From the above records it is apparent that this rainfall event was extreme and broke several records. The analysis shows that it was approximately a 1:300 year (0.33 AEP) event. As such, an event having a recurrence interval, or likelihood of occurring in any single year will be 0.33%. Therefore, it is not surprising that houses that have never flooded before were impacted during this event as well as those within mapped flood risk areas (fluvial and pluvial sources as shown below in Figures 7 and 8).

2.5 Theoretical Flood Risk as Indicated by EA Modelling and Mapping

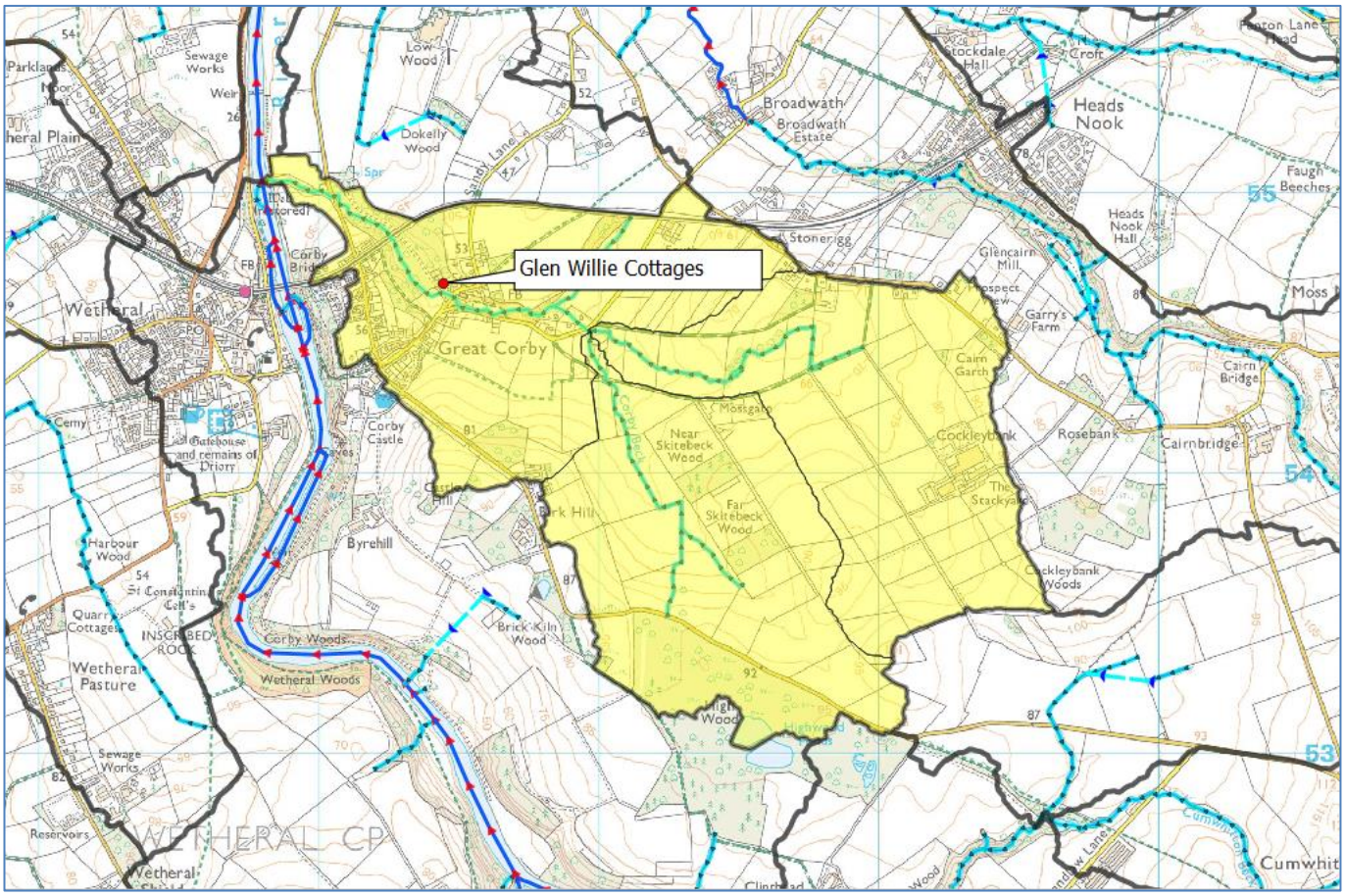

Figure 5 – Great Corby catchment (Corby Beck and tributaries) Approximately 300 Ha

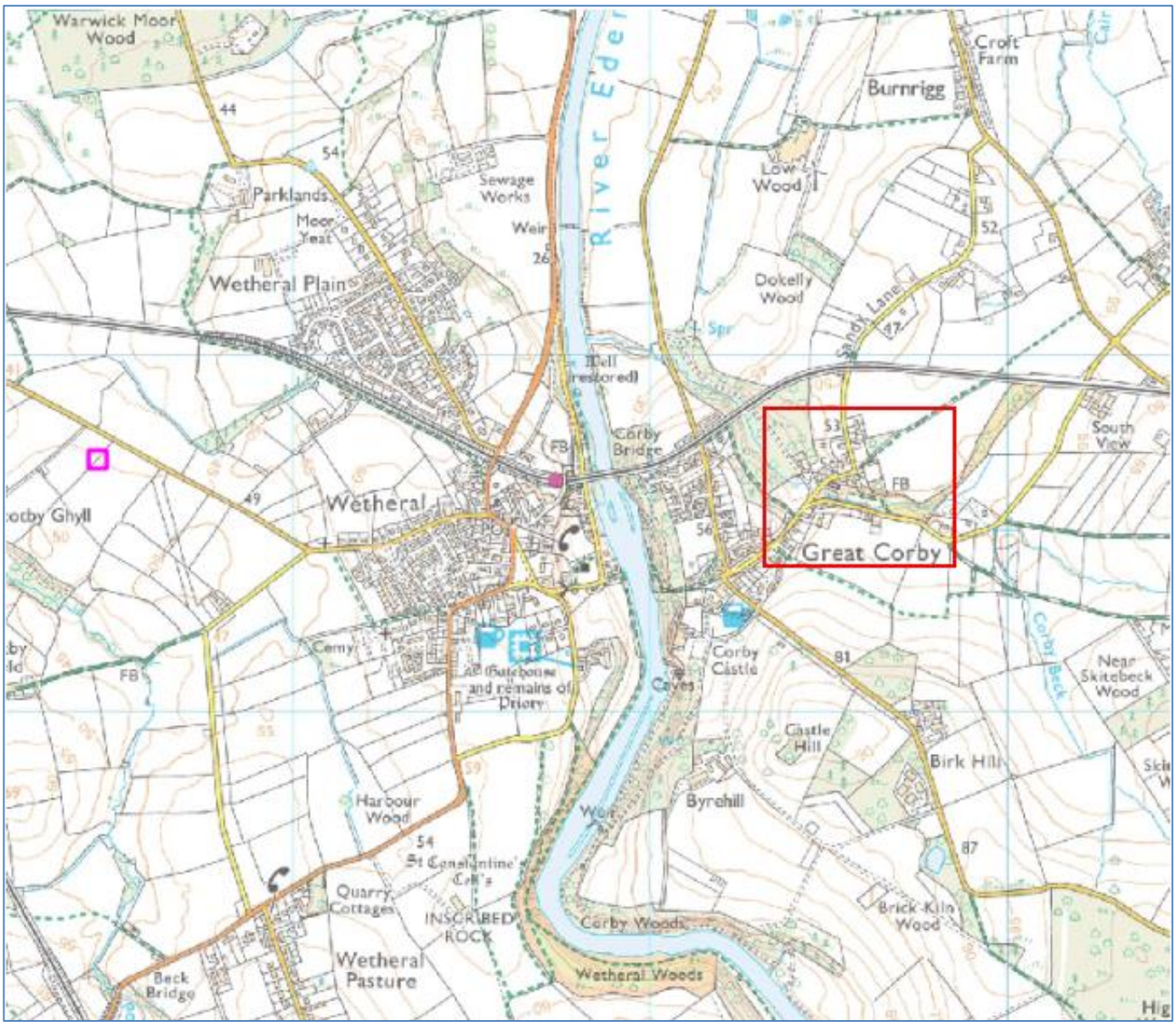

Figure 6 – Location Plan showing study area

As it approaches Glen Willie cottages Corby Beck runs along a sandstone walled channel with the village green on one side and properties on the other. A number of access bridges cross the river and one of the last structures in the villages is a culvert through a raised solid causeway that provides access to a woodland.

2.5.1 Fluvial (River flood risk)

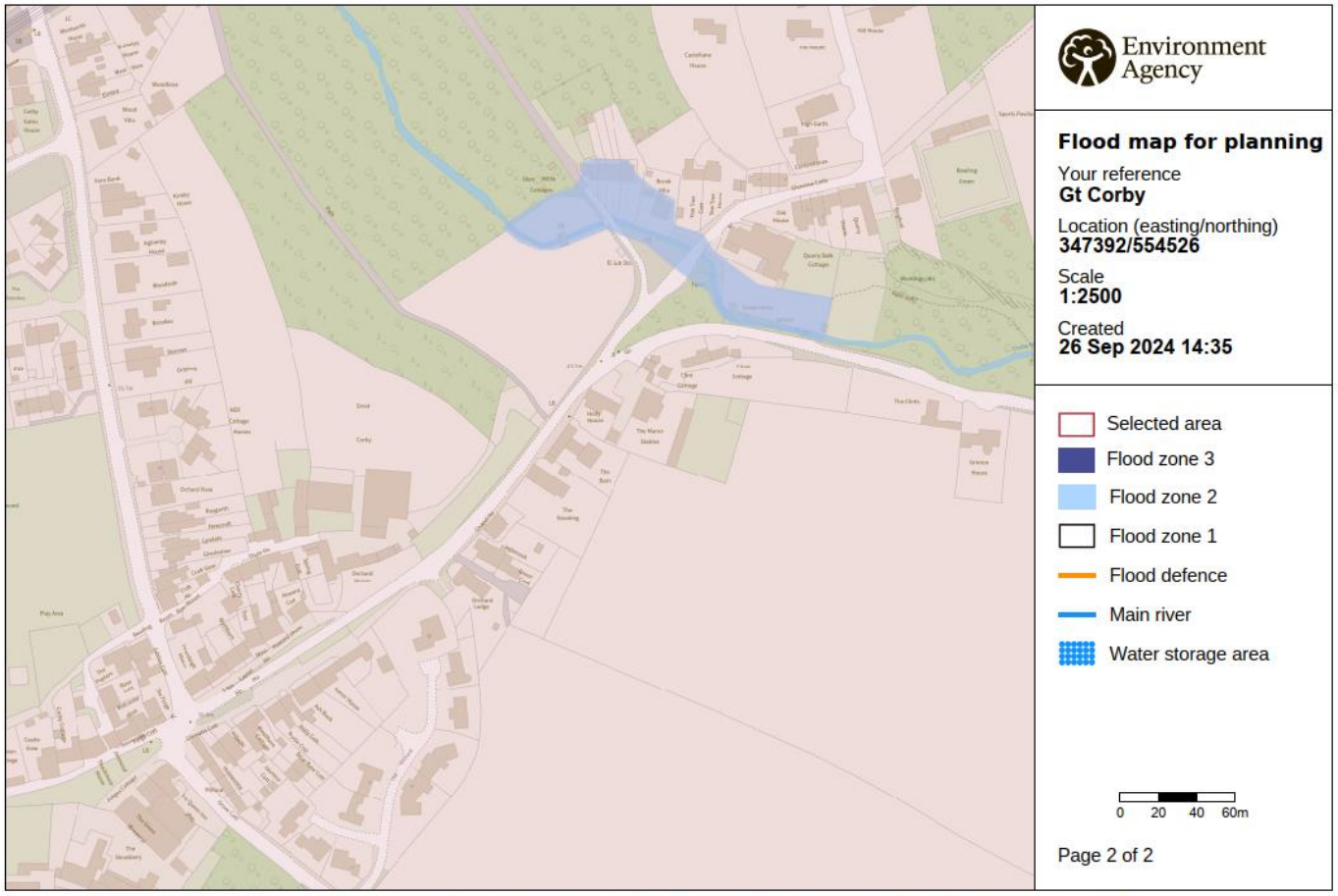

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Figure 7 – Risk of Fluvial Flooding

The study area adjacent to Corby Beck in the area of Glen Willie Cottages, as shown in the above Figure 7 above, is shown to be in Flood Zone 2 – Medium risk of fluvial or tidal flooding (i.e. has an annual probability of flooding from rivers or sea between 0.1% and 1.0%.) However, this information is not specific to a property and should be used as a course tool to assess the flood risk to an area in general.

As can be seen from the mapped observed flood extent below (Figure 9), the FZ 2 extent appears to be an accurate representation of the actual flood extent.

2.5.2 Surface Water Flood Risk Map

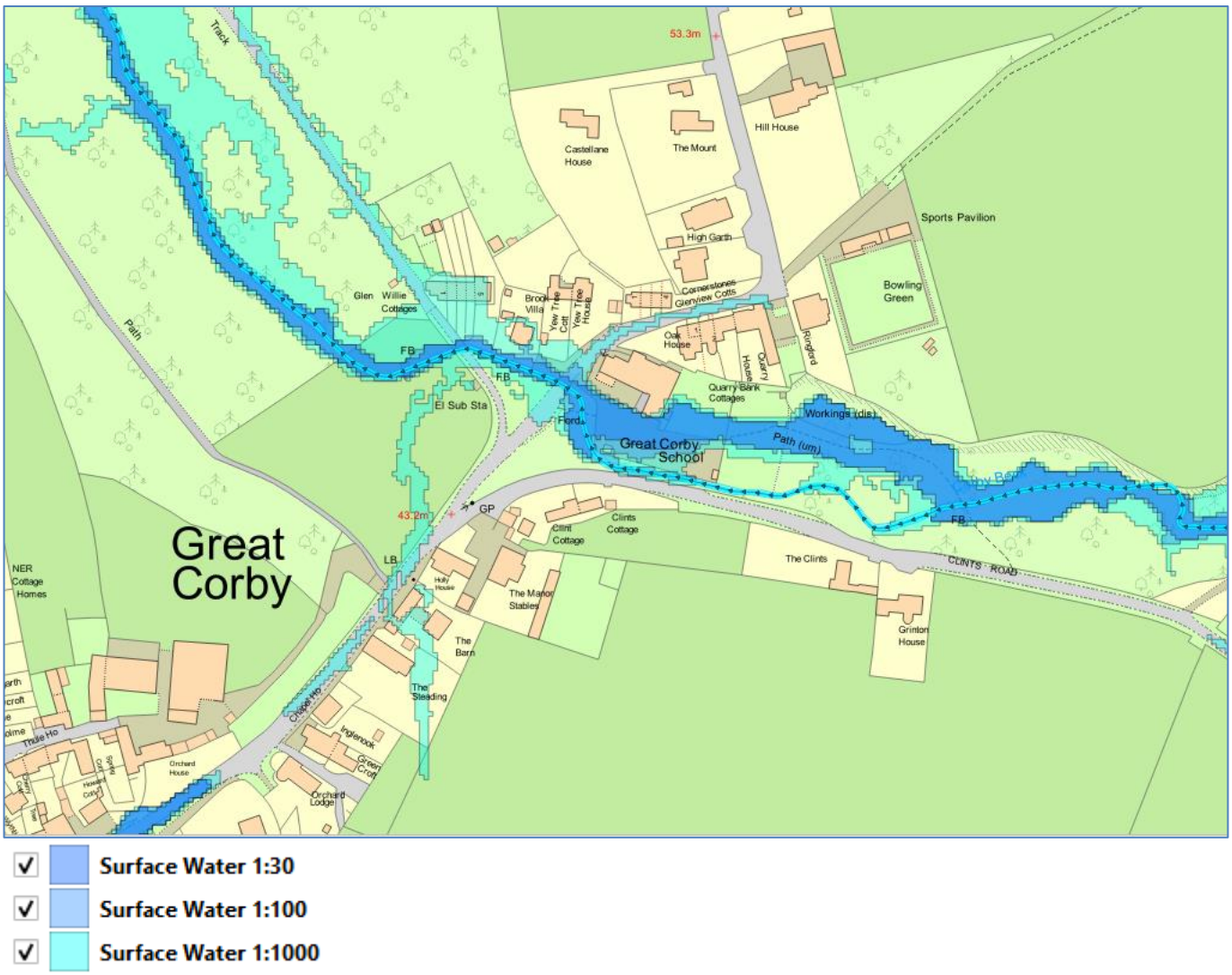


Figure 8 - EA Surface Water risk of flooding

3. Investigation

This investigation has been compiled by the LLFA and Environment Agency using information collected on the ground after the event, residents accounts, where available, and a post-flood event desk-top study. Whilst every effort has been made to establish the precise flow routes and flood mechanisms, the event occurred in the middle of the night and, with some areas not visible from the affected properties, it is not possible to say this is a definitive picture of exactly what happened.

3.1 Flow Routes and mechanisms

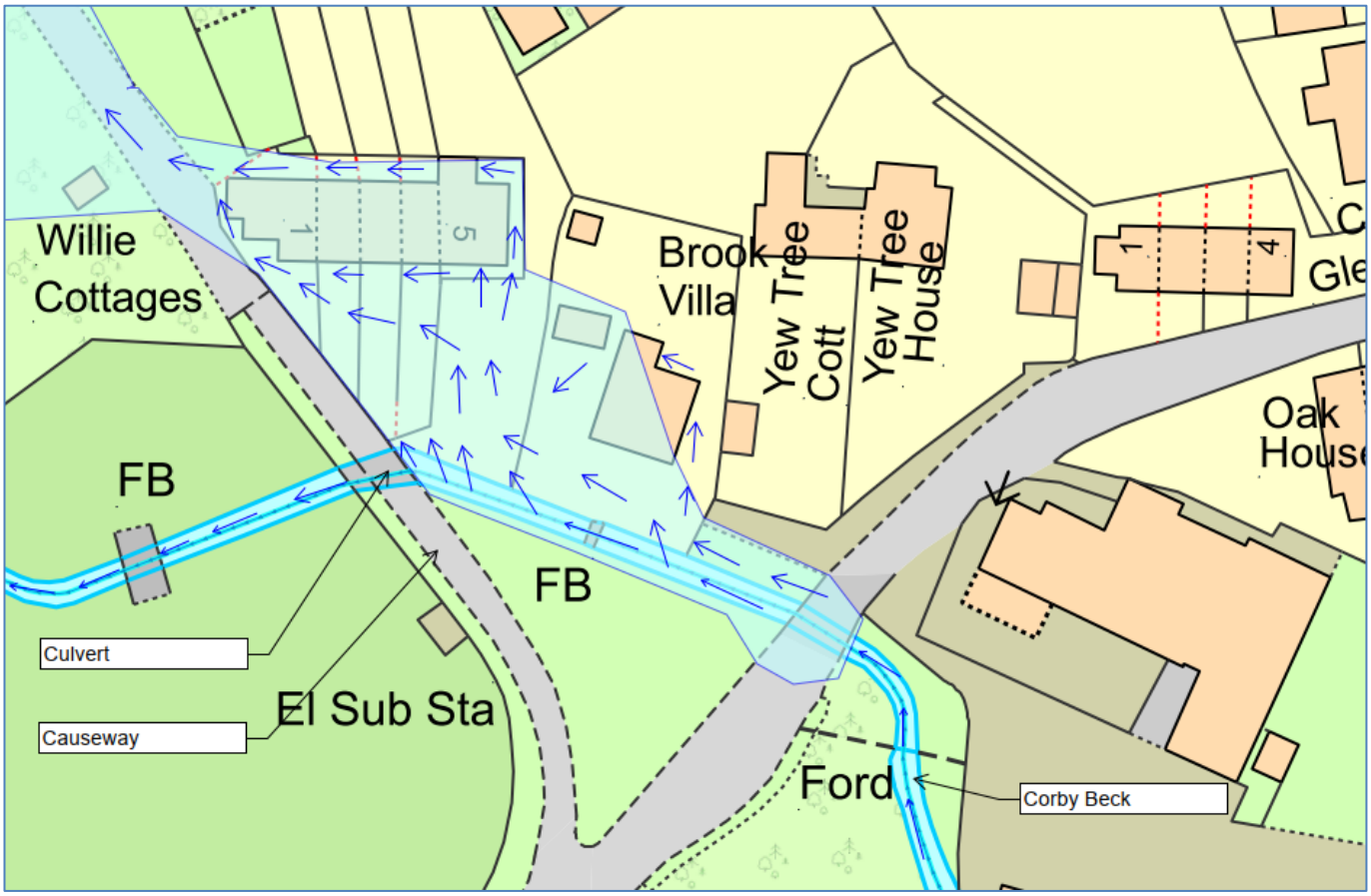


Figure 9 – Diagram of flood water flow routes and recorded flood extents

The blue shaded area represents the reported flood extent at the event peak. Glen Willie cottages (1 -5) are on the edge of Great Corby and are on the right-hand bank of Corby Beck, a small tributary of the River Eden. Brook Villa is just upstream of Glen Willie cottages on the same bank of the river.

Water level in the river channel increased as the flood event progressed. At a point in the event the water level in the channel was higher that the soffit of the culvert and levels upstream of the culvert inlet continued to rise. As levels rose, they began to exceed the riverbank level on the right-hand side of the channel and flow towards Glenwillie Cottages and Brook Villa.

As levels rose further the depth of flow over the right-hand bank increased and water began to flow to the rear of the properties via the access path to the right of number 5. Water flowed down the back alley and then flowed round to the front, via number 1.

Water was unable to leave this area as the causeway levels and ground levels on the right-hand bank are higher and as such flood depths continued to increase as the flow increased. Once the causeway threshold level was exceeded, the water flowed over the causeway and across the field or through the wood to rejoin the beck.

Only once the rain had stopped and flows in the river decreased did the levels start to drop. This happened within a couple of hours.

The culvert under the causeway appears to be a constriction to flow. During higher flows the water builds up behind the culvert on the upstream side to a level that is above threshold level of the properties, on this flood occasion the properties were flooded to about 600mm internally. However, there was no sign of blockage in the channel or culverts/access bridges on this occasion.

There appeared to have been minor by-passing of the road bridge adjacent to the school. This did not seem to have contributed to what was seen at the cottages. There was very little exceedance from the river channel on the left-hand bank of the river and the surface water flow coming down the road from the village was not significant in this event either.

3.2 Impact of the flood event

From the information we have gathered we understand that six residential properties suffered internal flooding from this flood event linked to Corby Beck.

The rapid onset of the flooding along with the fact that it occurred overnight and had not been forecast the previous day meant that many residents were unable to take measures to protect their property (such as moving furniture etc).

3.3 Photographs (post flooding)

Image 1. Flooding depth 600mm. This was typical of the flood depths in the area.

Image 2. Approach to culvert from garden of number 5 Glen Willie Cottages. Note the acute angle that river has to go through to pass through culvert. Water over topped the walls to the right, towards the properties.

Image 3. Photo through culvert, it has a solid concrete invert, raised above the natural invert. The solid concrete bed extends some distance downstream towards the bridge crossing in the distance. This concrete invert was installed by the residents as a measure to prevent erosion or scour.

Image 4. Downstream end of culvert on the causeway.

Image 5. Footbridge outside Brook Villa. Note that the river overtopped the footbridge deck and flowed towards the house, eventually surrounding the house on all sides to a depth of approximately 50cm.

Image 6. Driveway from Road to Brook Villa. Exceedance water flowed down the driveway and entered the grounds of Brook Villa

3.4 Flooding History

The same area flooded on 17 July 2011. Below is an extract and a flood mechanism plan from the records made at the time:

Intense rainfall over the Corby Beck catchment on Sunday 17th July caused flood water to exceed channel and bridge capacity in the village of Corby Hill. This resulted in six properties adjacent to Corby Beck flooding – five at Glen Willie Cottages and also Brook Villa. A resident of Glen Willie Cottages observed that from the time of water entering their garden until it returned to the watercourse was three hours. The Great Corby School playground suffered extensive damage but no water entered the school building.

There was a surface water flooding aspect to the flood incident as well. The roads that head down to the watercourse road crossings in the village acted as conduits for surface water that was running in from surrounding farm land and tracks. Once on to the roads the road gulleys and drains were quickly overwhelmed and water began to pond in low spots and also flood over into gardens and properties at Glen Willie Cottages. This aspect of the flooding occurred first, residents report this happening at approximately 15:00 hrs with the fluvial flooding taking place later at nearer 15:30 hrs. Residents also describe two peaks in the rainfall events but the relative timings of these are not known.

One of the primary concerns of residents was the boundary wall between the access track to Glen Willie Cottages and the field immediately to the north. Historically it is believed that this wall contained a number of holes and arches through which water could flow during heavy rainfall and high stream levels.

When this wall was rebuilt recently these flood arches and holes were not constructed. This had the effect of blocking off an historic flow path to the north. The effect of this was to increase the volume of water collecting on the upstream side of the wall and along the access causeway to Glen Willie Cottages. The causeway structure itself doesn't contain any additional flood arches which makes the small culvert carrying the watercourse through the causeway the only means by which water can move past this structure. This culvert is at an angle to the main watercourse channel which reduces the hydraulic efficiency. There is also a constriction in the channel immediately upstream of the culvert which reduces the hydraulic efficiency further.

A section of the wall on the downstream side of the bridge next to Glen Willie Cottages collapsed due to the force of the water building up behind it as described in the above paragraph. Stony Beck Bridge, downstream of Great Corby on the road to Warwick Bridge, collapsed into the watercourse. This resulted in the closure of the main access road into Great Corby from the A69 at Warwick Bridge.

About 50 metres downstream of Glen Willie Cottages is a wire mesh fence crossing Crosby Beck that looks to have been causing a blockage during the flood event. The fencing is encroaching into the beck channel and is visibly reducing channel capacity. During post-event asset inspection the fencing had a large amount of wrack and debris caught in it which would suggest that it was causing a blockage. Immediately upstream of the fence a large tree was felled which again is causing a blockage in the channel (now removed).

Upstream of the village at 'Rowan Dell' an access bridge was damaged by the high flows. This structure remains in the channel and represents a significant obstruction. Upstream of 'Rowan Dell' a riverbank was badly eroded next to a garage at 'Collingford'.

There were also reports of localised surface water flooding to various properties in the village remote from the Corby Beck flooding location. The properties affected were The Shrubbery, Mulcaster Cottage, Sunnyside and The Queen Inn. Depths of flooding are not known but the Fire Service did attend at the Shrubbery at 15:30 hrs.
Flooding was also reported at Ringford. Surface water flowed from surrounding farm land onto the bowling green. This filled to form a pond which then weired over into the property at Ringford.

Figure 2 – Great Corby Flood Event Outline

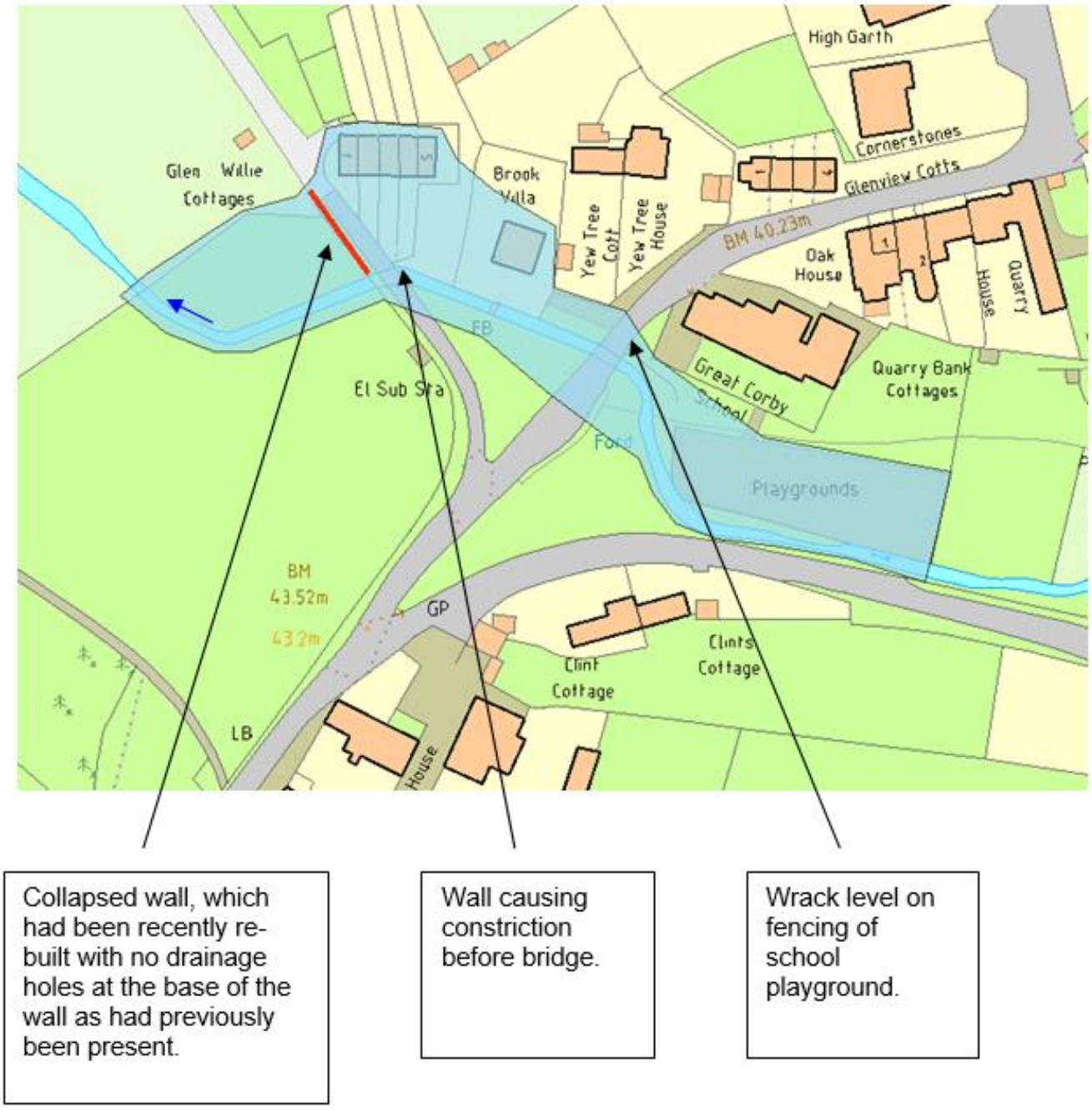


Figure 8 2011 Flood Mechanism Report Diagram

The flood mechanism is essentially the same, except there was reported less surface water from the highway in the 2024 event. It is also noted the rebuilt parapet wall to the causeway culvert included ‘smoot holes’ to facilitate drain down off the causeway road should it become flooded. The water did not exceed on top of the causeway in the 2024 flood event.

Historically flooding here has been exacerbated by surface water inflows but this was not reported as an issue on this occasion, possibly due to improvements that were done as part of the post 2011 flood recovery work.

3.5 Existing and Proposed Flood Protection Measures

Some in the community have installed private property resilience measures following previous flood events.

The base of the existing culvert has been concreted to provide scour protection to the structure and to improve the flow.

Residents suggested increasing conveyance of the existing culvert through the causeway should be the focus of any flood mitigation improvement.

Increasing the hydraulic capacity through the culvert can be achieved by a number of separate or combined measures. All the options have limitations and constraints and at this time it is not possible to confirm a preferred scheme, cost or timescales. However, a course analysis of options is presented in Appendix 2.

4. Next Steps

4.1 Next steps and timescales

Recommended Action	Action by	Timescale
Add area to forward programme of LLFA schemes to test Cost / Benefit ratio for funding viability.	LLFA	To be confirmed.
Property Flood Resilience measures	EA to facilitate PFR discussions with PFR consultants	Ongoing
Carry out localised topographical survey with a view to establish feasibility of shortlist Option 1	LLFA	End of March 2025

* The Cumbria Local Resilience Forum includes emergency services, Local Authorities, Cumberland Council, Environment Agency, Maritime Coastguard Agency and health agencies along with voluntary and private agencies. Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) every part of the United Kingdom is required to establish a resilience forum.

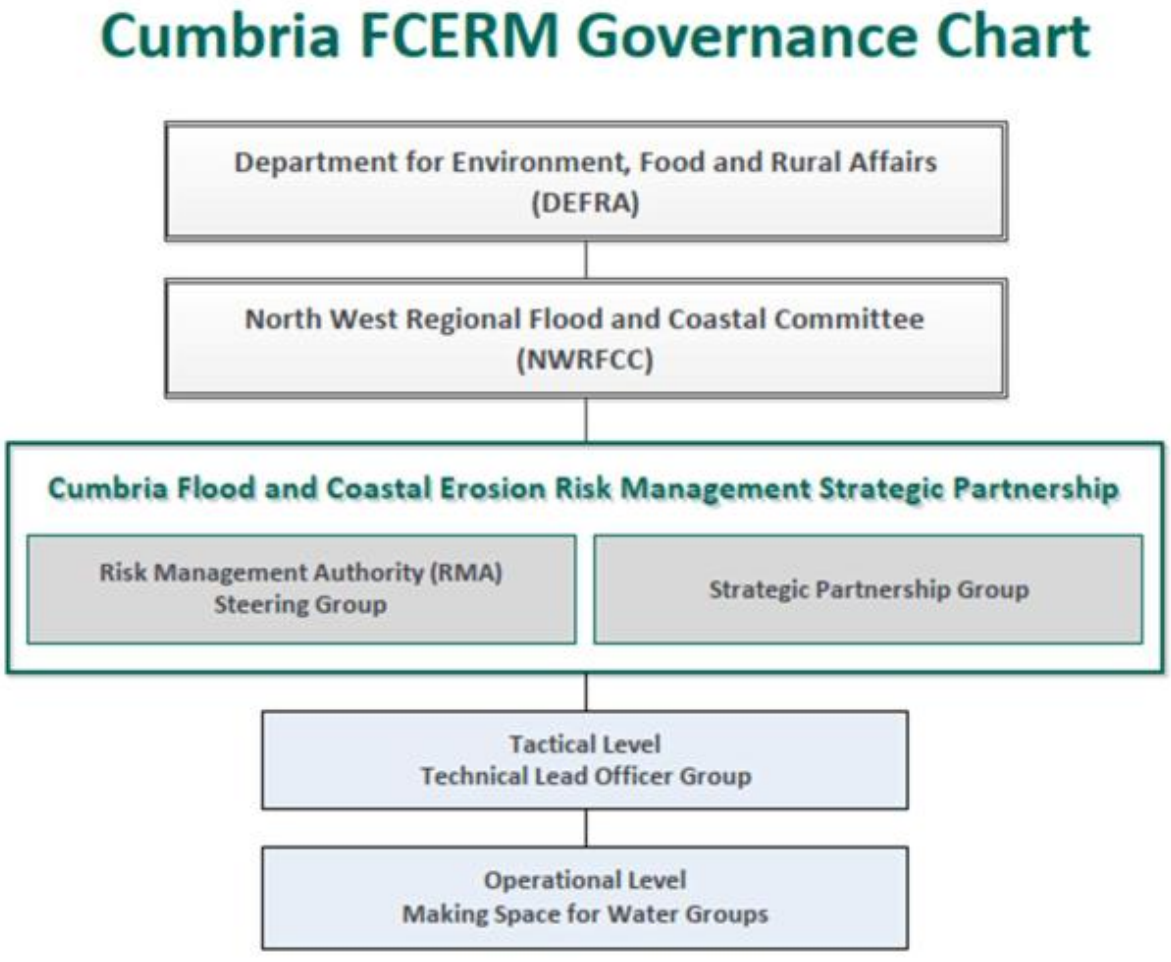
Residents and property owners who are aware that they are at risk of flooding should take action to ensure that they and their properties are protected. Community resilience is important in providing information and support to each other if flooding is anticipated. Actions taken can include laying sandbags and moving valuable items to higher ground, to more permanent measures such as installing floodgates, raising electrical sockets and fitting non-return valves on pipes. Anyone affected by flooding should try to document as much information about the incident as possible.

5. The Cumbria Floods Partnership

The Cumbria Floods Partnership has brought together a wide range of community representatives and stakeholders from a variety of sectors to plan and take action to reduce flood risk. The Cumbria Floods Partnership, led by the Environment Agency, is producing a 25 year flood action plan for the Cumbrian catchments worst affected by the December 2015 flooding, including Carlisle. The plan will consider options to reduce flood risk across the whole length of a river catchment including upstream land management, strengthening flood defenses, reviewing maintenance of banks and channels, considering water level management boards and increasing property resilience. The Cumbria Floods Partnership structure below details how these 5 themes are being delivered in the Flood Action plans which will be completed in July.

The 'Cumbria Floods Partnership' was set up by Flood Minister Rory Stewart following December's floods and includes all of Cambria's Flood Risk Management Authorities. They are working alongside the existing 'Cumbria Strategic Partnership', which was formed as part of the Flood and Water Management Act and comprises of the county's Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) including the Environment Agency, Cumberland Council, Local Authorities and United Utilities. Both partnerships are working with communities, businesses and relevant stakeholders to understand and reduce flood risk across Cumbria.

This diagram below helps demonstrate how the two partnerships are working together:



6. Appendices

Appendix 1: Glossary

Acronyms

EA	Environment Agency
CC	Cumberland Council
UU	United Utilities
LLFA	Lead Local Flood Authority
LFRM	Local Flood Risk Management
MSfWG	Making Space for Water Group
FAG	Flood Action Group
FWMA	Flood and Water Management Act 2010
LDA	Land Drainage Act 1991
WRA	Water Resources Act 1991

Appendix 2: Initial Shortlist of Options

The main cause of flooding is lack of capacity under the causeway bridge for this level of flood event / flow volumes. Possible interventions include:

Option	Description	Benefits	Constraints / drawbacks
1	Create an overflow / exceedance channel from Glenwillie Cottages across causeway (localised lowering) to allow flood water to flow around the houses.	• More cost effective No impact on bridge / culvert	Effectiveness will depend on relative ground and river levels, fall and channel size / capacity.
2	• Lower invert under causeway culvert (currently concrete)	• Relatively easy and low cost • No disruption to utilities in causeway	• Possible limited hydraulic capacity improvements • Disruption / interference with foundations?
3	• Lower the causeway to create an overflow route over the top or remove the structure altogether to create a ford.	• This would provide a significant capacity improvement.	• Would remove access over the causeway • Utilities in causeway would be severed
4	• Add overflow culvert upstream of culvert through causeway bank to work in tandem with existing culvert	• This would have limited capacity improvement (due to practicable size of pipe / culvert) but still could make a significant difference	• Possible clash with utilities • Significant engineering works in beck and through embankment
5	• Replace culvert with larger clear-span bridge	• This would provide the most significant capacity improvement.	• Utility diversions required • Cost implications / viability • Very significant engineering works

Appendix 3: Summary of Relevant Legislation and Flood Risk Management Authorities

The Flood Risk Regulations 1999 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 (the Act) have established Cumberland Council (CCC) as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) for Cumbria. This has placed various responsibilities on CCC including Section 19 of the Act which states:

Section 19

(1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority must, to the extent that it considers it 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.

A '*Risk Management Authority' (RMA)* means:

(a) the Environment Agency,

(b) a lead local flood authority,

(c) a district council for an area for which there is no unitary authority,

(d) an internal drainage board,

(e) a water company, and

(f) a highway authority.

The table below summarises the relevant Risk Management Authority and details the various local source of flooding that they will take a lead on.

Flood Source	Environment Agency	Lead Local Flood Authority	Water Company	Highway Authority
RIVERS				
Main river				
Ordinary watercourse				
SURFACE WATER RUNOFF				
Surface water				
Surface water on the highway				
OTHER				
Sewer flooding				
The sea				
Groundwater				
Reservoirs				

The following information provides a summary of each Risk Management Authority's roles and responsibilities in relation to flood reporting and investigation.

Government – Defra develop national policies to form the basis of the Environment Agency's and Cumberland Council's work relating to flood risk.

Environment Agency has a strategic overview of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion as defined in the Act. As part of its role concerning flood investigations this requires providing evidence and advice to support other risk management authorities. The EA also collates and reviews assessments, maps and plans for local flood risk management (normally undertaken by LLFA).

Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) – Cumberland Council is the LLFA for Cumbria (ex Carlisle, Allerdale and Copeland areas). Part of their role requires them to investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish the results of such investigations. LLFAs have a duty to determine which risk management authority has relevant powers to investigate flood incidents to help understand how they happened, and whether those authorities have or intend to exercise their powers. LLFAs work in partnership with communities and flood risk management authorities to maximise knowledge of flood risk to all involved. This function is carried out at CCC by the Flood and Development Management Team.

Water and Sewerage Companies manage the risk of flooding to water supply and sewerage facilities and the risk to others from the failure of their infrastructure. They make sure their systems have the appropriate level of resilience to flooding and where frequent and severe flooding occurs they are required to address this through their capital investment plans. It should also be noted that following the Transfer of Private Sewers Regulations 2011 water and sewerage companies are responsible for a larger number of sewers than prior to the regulation.

Highway Authorities have the lead responsibility for providing and managing highway drainage and certain roadside ditches that they have created under the Highways Act 1980. The owners of land adjoining a highway also have a common-law duty to maintain ditches to prevent them causing a nuisance to road users.

Flood risk in Cumbria is managed through the Making Space for Water process which involves the cooperation and regular meeting of the Environment Agency, United Utilities, District/Borough Councils and CCC's Highway and LFRM Teams to develop processes and schemes to minimise flood risk. The MSfWGs meet approximately 4 times per year to cooperate and work together to improve the flood risk in the vulnerable areas identified in this report by completing the recommended actions. CCC as LLFA has a responsibility to oversee the delivery of these actions.

Where minor works or quick win schemes can be identified, these will be prioritised and subject to available funding and resources will be carried out as soon as possible. Any major works requiring capital investment will be considered through the Environment Agency's Medium Term Plan or a partners own capital investment process.

Flood Action Groups are usually formed by local residents who wish to work together to resolve flooding in their area. The FAGs are often supported by either CCC or the EA and provide a useful mechanism for residents to forward information to the MSfWG.

Appendix 4: Useful contacts and links

Cumberland Council (Local Flood Risk Management):
lfrm@cumberland.gov.uk, www.cumberland.gov.uk

Cumberland Council (Highways):
https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/streets-roads-and-pavements/road-maintenance-closures-and-improvements/report-problem-street-or-road
tel: 0845 609 6609
Out of hours emergencies should be reported via the Police on 101

Insert Neighbourhood forum contact details

United Utilities: www.unitedutilities.com, tel: 0845 746 2200

Flood and Water Management Act 2010:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents

Water Resources Act 1991:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/all?title=water%20resources%20act

Land Drainage Act:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/all?title=land%20drainage%20act

Highways Act 1980:
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/all?title=highways%20act

EA – Owning a Watercourse Guidance a guide to the rights and responsibilities of riverside occupation:
http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/31626.aspx

EA – 'Prepare your property for flooding' how to reduce flood damage including flood protection products and services:
http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/31644.aspx

Translation services

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