

Flood Investigation Protocol

Royal Greenwich Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) has a statutory duty to investigate flooding incidents in its area, to the extent that it considers necessary or appropriate. This requirement is set out in Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

On becoming aware of a flooding incident, the LLFA must decide whether it is necessary or appropriate to investigate further in order to:

- a) Identify which risk management authorities (RMAs) or individuals have flood risk management functions in respect of the flooding (it could be for example the Environment Agency if it comes from main rivers); and
- b) Establish whether that authority or individual has responded or is proposing to respond to the flood.

It will not be the responsibility of the Investigating Officer to resolve the flooding, however they will investigate the cause and notify any relevant authority. In the Borough of Royal Greenwich, these authorities include: Royal Greenwich Council (including the Highways Department), Thames Water, the Environment Agency, Transport for London and landowners.

Upon learning of a flood event within the Borough of Greenwich, the Investigating Officer will follow the established 'Flood Investigations Protocol' whereby it will be determined whether an investigation should be carried out, taking into account the available resources and significance of the event. It is therefore essential to determine what is 'necessary or appropriate' in the context of Royal Greenwich.

A formal flood investigation will be carried out if one or more of the following occurs and meets the thresholds identified:

- Flooding has affected critical infrastructure¹ for a period in excess of three hours from the onset of flooding;
- Internal flooding² of a building has been experienced on more than one occasion in the last five years;
- Internal flooding of five buildings in close proximity³ has been experienced during one single flood incident.

¹ **Definition of critical infrastructure:** Those infrastructure assets (physical or electronic) that are vital to the continued delivery and integrity of essential national services, the loss or compromise of which would lead to severe economic or social consequences, or to loss of life.

² **Definition of internal flooding:** A situation in which a building (commercial or residential) has been flooded internally, i.e. water has crossed the threshold and entered the building. This includes;

- Basements and ground level floors of the building;
- Garages/outbuildings if they are integral to the main occupied building. Garages adjacent or separate from the main occupied building are not included;
- Occupied static caravans and park homes. Tents are not included.

³ **Definition of close proximity:** Where it is reasonable to assume that the affected properties were flooded from the same source, or interaction of sources, of flooding.

The investigation will follow the following process:

Step 1. Flood incident reported to: flood-team@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Step 2. Review the information provided to determine if the incident meets the threshold for formal investigation. If the incident does not meet the threshold then advice and guidance is provided.

Step 3. If the incident does meet the threshold, then a site meeting is arranged with the affected community and a data collection process undertaken. This will include any photos, video footage and eyewitness statements.

Step 4. A draft Flood Investigation Report (FIR) is written and shared with all relevant Flood Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) for comment and review.

Step 5. Any necessary revisions are made to the FIR and published online.

Step 6. All RMAs and the affected community are notified of the publication. The final FIR will be published on the Royal Greenwich Council website under a dedicated section.

It is important to note that this is a technical assessment and that it is for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess any recommendations in terms of their legal obligation, resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of undertaking such actions.

Following significant widespread flooding in Royal Greenwich, where a number of incidents meet the thresholds for investigation, the investigations will be undertaken on a priority basis. This methodology includes an assessment of; the type of flooding, the impact, what was affected, duration of flooding, whether or not major roads were impassable, whether the flood water was contaminated, the depth of the flood water and the number of times the flooding has occurred.

The Flood Investigation Reports describe the flood incident and aim to determine any contributing factors. The reports explain the roles and responsibilities of those involved, and provide recommendations for future actions.

It is for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess each recommendation in terms of the legal obligation, resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of undertaking such action.

The Council will endeavour to undertake and complete a Flood Investigation Report within six months of receipt of a flood incident report form; however, this may not be possible following extensive flooding when significant numbers of reports of flooding are received.

Note: The LLFA will not investigate incidents of structural dampness or where basements are affected by groundwater entering through cracks in the basement walls or floors. In the event that the cause of, and the responsibility for addressing the flooding is well understood, no formal investigation will be undertaken. The LLFA will only undertake a flood investigation if the incident is formally reported within 6 months of the flood event occurring