

The Calderdale Flood Recovery and Resilience Programme Board - 1 July 2022

Question Raised at the Meeting.

The question (with background context) that was raised at the Flood Board as a result of a resolution raised at item 10 of the DC meeting on 27 April May 2022 is below:

CMBC is currently considering an application for 12 houses in Derdale St (20/01367/FUL). Planning applications dating from 2003 (03/00937) have resulted in the building of two apartment blocks and 20+ houses on this site. The planning applications were approved before the impact of climate change was considered as seriously as it is now.

This area, which is near the Rochdale Canal, is in flood zone 3 and it regularly floods. It also suffers from surface water flooding. As well as this, it is believed that the water table of the area has risen resulting in the flooding in the cellars of the houses surrounding Derdale St even without any major flood event. It is already acknowledged that the water table has risen in this area. There are concerns about subsidence in some of the properties caused by this. The residents of one property have had to be evacuated as the kitchen of the house subsided. This street is also a stones throw from Lidl, the site at which significant surface water flooding issues are still unresolved. Derdale St, the block from 132 – 138 Halifax Rd and neighbouring streets are at a much lower level than Lidl or this housing development and any surface water floods there.

The existing new housing on Derdale St has been built at a higher level to protect it from flooding. The Environment Agency has supported the plans for the additional twelve houses (providing that finished floor levels are set no lower than 125.30 metres above Ordnance Datum (AOD). Drainage plans have also been submitted by the applicant. However, this ground level is up to 2 metres higher than some of the existing properties nearby on Derdale St and surrounding areas. There is therefore a serious concern about increased surface water flooding. The Victorian drains in the area are already struggling to cope with the existing demand in the area.

Todmorden Town Council is very concerned that the proposed additional building on Derdale St will exacerbate the risk of surface water flooding in an already vulnerable area.

What is being done to ensure that existing properties on Derdale St and surrounding streets are not at an increased risk of surface and ground water flooding because of the building of these additional houses? What positive actions will CMBC take to ensure that the existing (terraced) properties in the area, which are set at a significantly lower level than the proposed build, will not be subject to additional flood risk?

The Meeting

The question was well received at the meeting. Cllr Stephen Leigh said that a further question should be 'the Planning Department should get up to speed quickly with what should be done where a planning permission is old and agreed before the current understanding of climate change'.

Steven Lee said that many papers had been written about the issue and will continue to be.

Paul Swales of the Environment Agency said he would have a look at this issue again.

Next Steps

The chair (Tim Swift) said that there would be an initial written response and followed up with a further considered response when the reply from the Environment Agency has been received.