



**REPORT TO: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE
SERVICES COMMITTEE ON 15 NOVEMBER 2022**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON COUNCIL SANDBAG POLICY AND PROPERTY
PROTECTION PRODUCTS**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND
FINANCE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To ask the Committee to approve a revised policy on the issue of sandbags.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (32) of the Council's Administrative Scheme relating to emergency planning and home defence.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **It is recommended that Committee agree:**

- (i) **the updated Council policy on the issue of sandbags and property protection set out in Appendix 2; and**
- (ii) **to note the property level protection products that were previously sanctioned at committee are now available to purchase.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Multiple individuals and agencies have responsibilities in relation to flooding. The Council and other statutory agencies such as SEPA have a responsibility to manage the risk of flooding, both on a long term and emergency response basis. During severe flooding the council works with other agencies as part of its emergency response – although there is no legal requirement to provide flood protection such as sandbags. In these instances the Council does distribute sandbags to strategic collection points. Property owners are responsible for protecting their own property from flooding.
- 3.2 The current Council Policy with regards to the issue of sandbags (**Appendix 1**) was agreed at a meeting of this Committee on 25 November 2014 (Para 8 of the Minute refers).

- 3.3 The Council receives a number of requests for sandbags and sandbagging assistance in the build up to and during flooding events. To assist local communities the Council aims to distribute pallets of sand bags to strategic points to allow the public to help themselves during flood events. Locations are advertised by the issue of press releases, updates on the Council's website or via the Council's Contact Centre.
- 3.4 The speed and timing of any flood event can result in flooding occurring before the Council has had time to respond and provide sandbags at strategic locations. So whilst the Council will help, of necessity that help is limited so property owners are encouraged to make their own preparations where they are at risk of flooding.
- 3.5 To assist local residents, the Council strongly recommends local residents engage with their local Community Council to consider more resilience planning in areas where no current arrangements are in place. The Council will fully support to help develop local resilience plans and provide assistance where possible.
- 3.6 A report was presented to this Committee on 7 December 2021 (Para 13 of the minute refers), with regards to proposals for the Council to make property level protection products available, at cost price, to Moray residents who may be affected by flooding. Following consideration the Committee agreed the proposed scheme to purchase £5,000 of Property Level Protection Products for sale to the public and if demand was high, to purchase a further £15,000 of products.
- 3.7 The Council now has the initial £5,000 worth of property level flood protections available and information on how these may be purchased will be advertised on the Council's website. The success of this trial and update on sale of this stock will be reported to a future committee before any further products are purchased by the Council.
- 3.8 Following on from this approved report, it was felt an opportune time to review the 2014 policy with regards to the provision of Sandbags and Sandbagging Operations and encompass into a new proposed combined policy on; Property Protection, the Provision of Sandbags and Sandbagging Operations.
- 3.9 The proposed updated policy is set out in full in **Appendix 2**. The key points within the updated policy are as follows:
- A clear statement of who is responsible for protecting personal property during a flood event.
 - Providing Moray residents with advice in regards to what property level products are available to purchase from the Council.
 - Setting out how these products may be ordered.
 - Encouraging people/communities to sign up to SEPA's flood warning service to receive automatic advance flood warnings for their area.
 - Setting out the role of local community councils and resilience groups in emergency resilience planning and that further Council support is available for other local communities to consider developing their own resilience plans.

- Making it clear what the use of any distributed sandbags are for and how these are to be disposed of once they have come into contact with flood water.

3.10 Specific web pages have been developed which detail all of the above and are ready to go LIVE subject to proposed policy being approved. These pages provide more detail in respect of the property protection products the Council has purchased and details the cost, description and photographs of products and how these may be ordered.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

“Empowering and Connecting Communities”. This report supports building community capacity by supporting and encouraging self-help during flooding events.

(b) Policy and Legal

There are no policy or legal implication associated with the recommendations in this report.

(c) Financial implications

Whilst the Council incurs financial costs in delivering sandbags to local communities, and removing them when not disposed of by residents, there are no financial risks associated from this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risk implications as a result of this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

None.

(f) Property

There are no property implications associated directly arising from this report. Whilst in a flood event there can be consequences for property, the Council’s policy position continues to provide a proportionate response.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Equalities issues may arise in respect of groups who are unable to avail themselves of sandbags via ‘self-help’ however, the proposed policy does not preclude provision of direct help to such equalities groups.

(h) Climate Change and Biodiversity Impacts

There are no climate change and biodiversity impacts as a result of this report.

(i) Consultations

The Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Environmental and Commercial Services, Legal Services Manager, Head of Financial Services, Committee Services Officer (L Rowan), and Equalities Officer have all been consulted and their comments incorporated into this report.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This proposed combined policy on Property Protection, the Provision of Sandbags and Sandbagging Operations sets out, given the context set out in the report, that in the first instance it is the property owner's responsibility to protect their premises during a flood event.**
- 5.2 The report and policy highlights what the Council will do to assist Moray residents and if approved will be more in line with recent experience, will better guide officers and so ensure a consistent approach to requests for sandbags and sandbagging operations.**

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Background Papers:	
Ref:	SPMAN-524642768-805