



## **APPENDIX AD**

### **SECTION 19 REPORT – SOUTHWELL – STORM BABEL, OCTOBER 2023**

#### **Introduction**

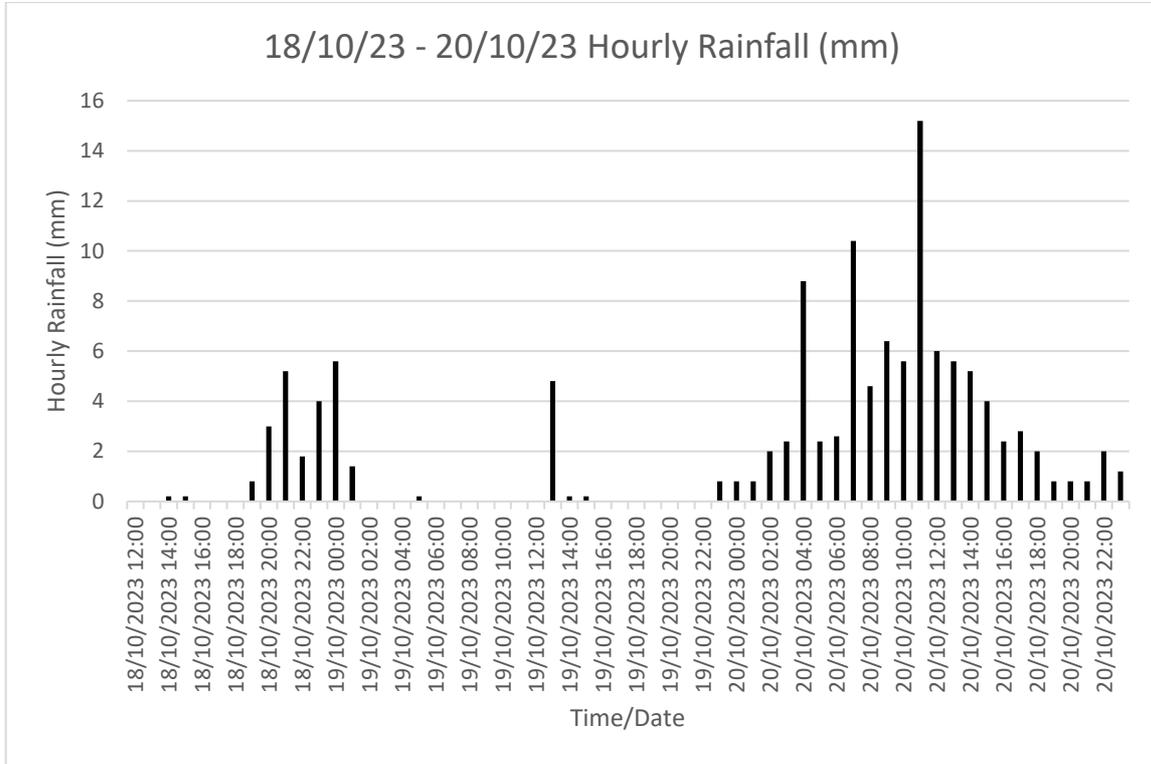
Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states:

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 (RMAs) have relevant flood risk management functions.
  - (b) Whether each of those RMAs 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) of Section 19 it must:-
  - (a) Publish the results of its investigation.
  - (b) Notify any relevant RMAs.
3. The objective of this report is to investigate which RMAs had relevant flood risk management functions during the flooding in October 2023 and whether the relevant RMAs have exercised, or propose to exercise, their risk management functions (as per section 19(1) of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010).
4. The Risk Management Authorities for this area of Nottinghamshire are Newark & Sherwood District Council (NSDC), Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and VIA East Midlands Ltd as Highways Authority on behalf of NCC.
5. It should be noted that this duty to investigate does not guarantee that flooding problems will be resolved and cannot force others into action.

#### **Background**

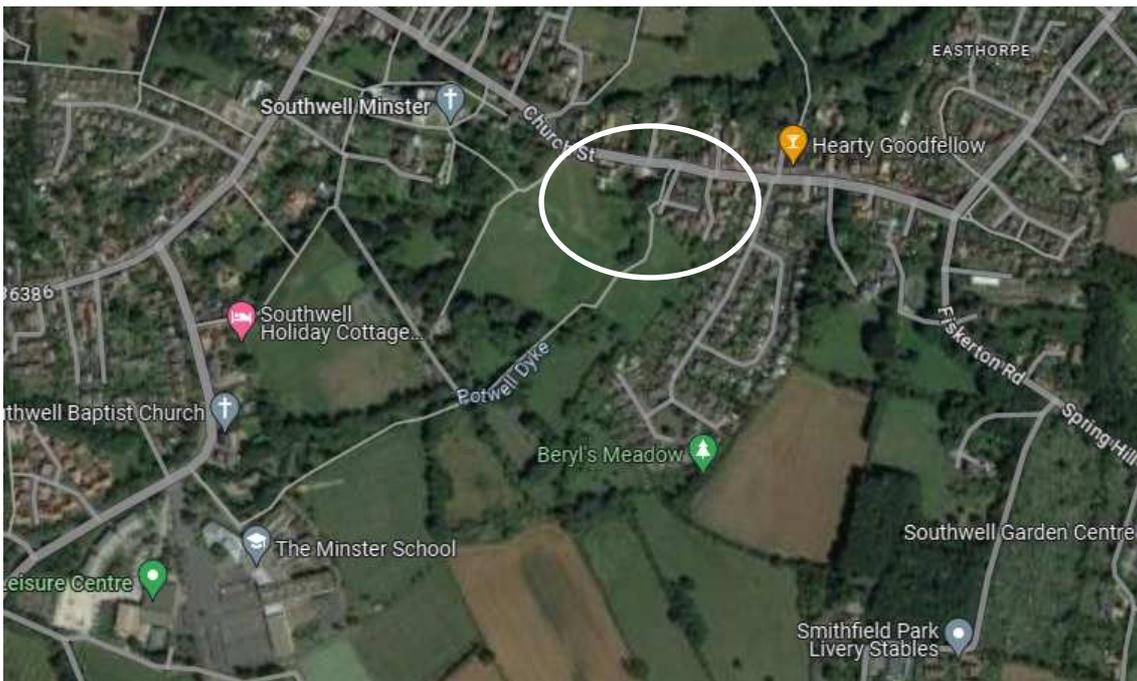
6. Southwell is a town within the District of Newark & Sherwood District Council, Nottinghamshire. It has a population of approximately 7491 people according to the 2021 census.
7. Between 12:00 noon on the 18 and 23:00 on the 20 October, 124mm of rainfall was recorded at the Staythorpe rain gauge, which is approximately 6km from Southwell (Figure 1).

- 8. This storm came after a prolonged period of persistent rain which had saturated the ground resulting in flooding of roads and properties quicker than they would following a dry period.
- 9. During Storm Babet 14 residential properties in Southwell were subject to internal flooding.



**Figure 1.** Staythorpe Hourly Rainfall from 12:00 18<sup>th</sup> to 23:00 20<sup>th</sup> October 2023. Data supplied by the Environment Agency.

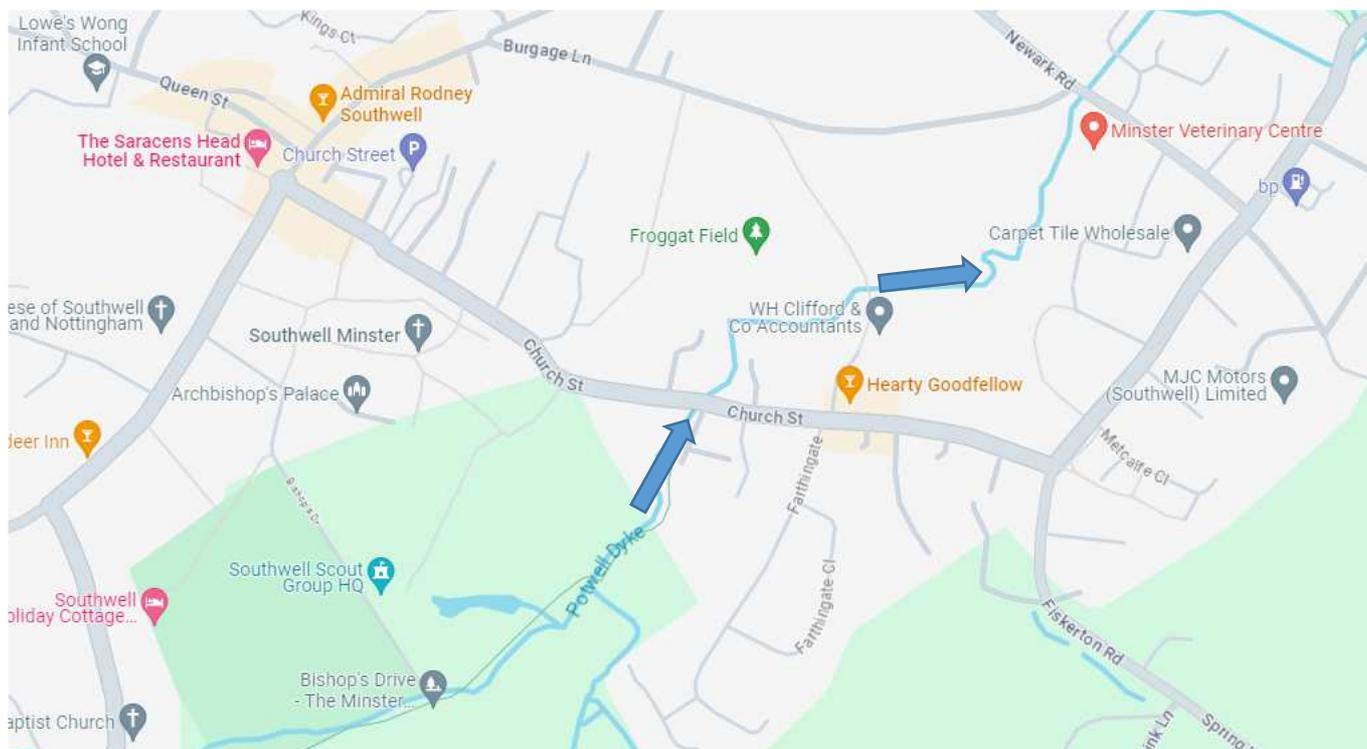
- 10. Figure 2 highlights the areas that were subjected to internal flooding.



**Figure 2.** View of Southwell highlighting areas affected by internal flooding.

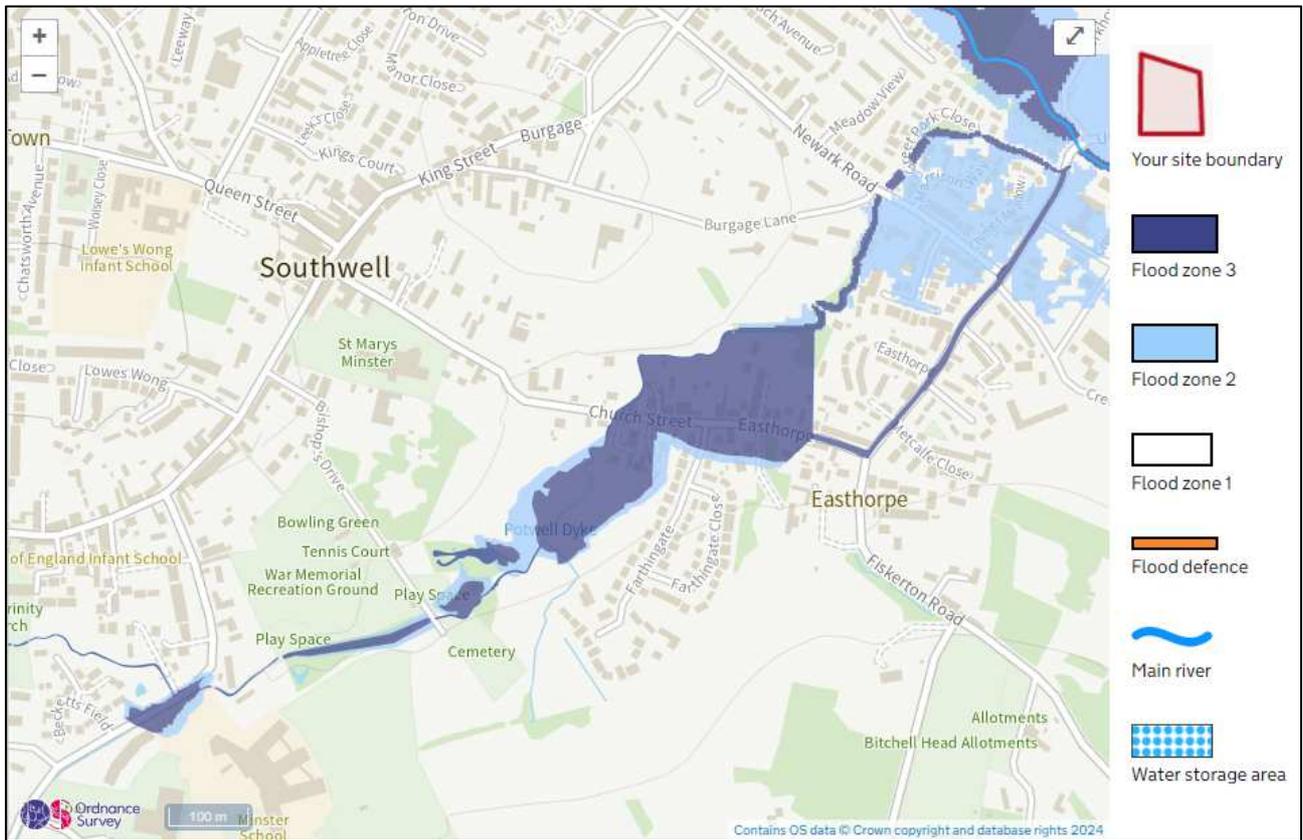
## Summary of flooding and its causes

11. Southwell has a history of flooding which ultimately led to Nottinghamshire County Council leading a £5m flood alleviation project for the catchment. Southwell sits in a natural valley surrounded by agricultural land and is served by a number of watercourses including the Potwell Dyke. Subsequently the catchment has several areas that are naturally prone to flooding.
12. The Potwell Dyke runs through the centre of the town as shown on Figure 3 and runs underneath Church Street. During Storm Babet this area experienced flooding that manifested itself in a manner similar to previous flood events.
13. The area has been identified as a key point for flooding and part of the £5m capital investment is to facilitate the construction of a storage reservoir upstream of the Church Street crossing and install property flood resilience on properties on Church Street. The reservoir and property flood resilience will reduce the risk and consequences of flooding in the area. The storage reservoir is currently in the feasibility stage with planning submission programmed for summer 2024.

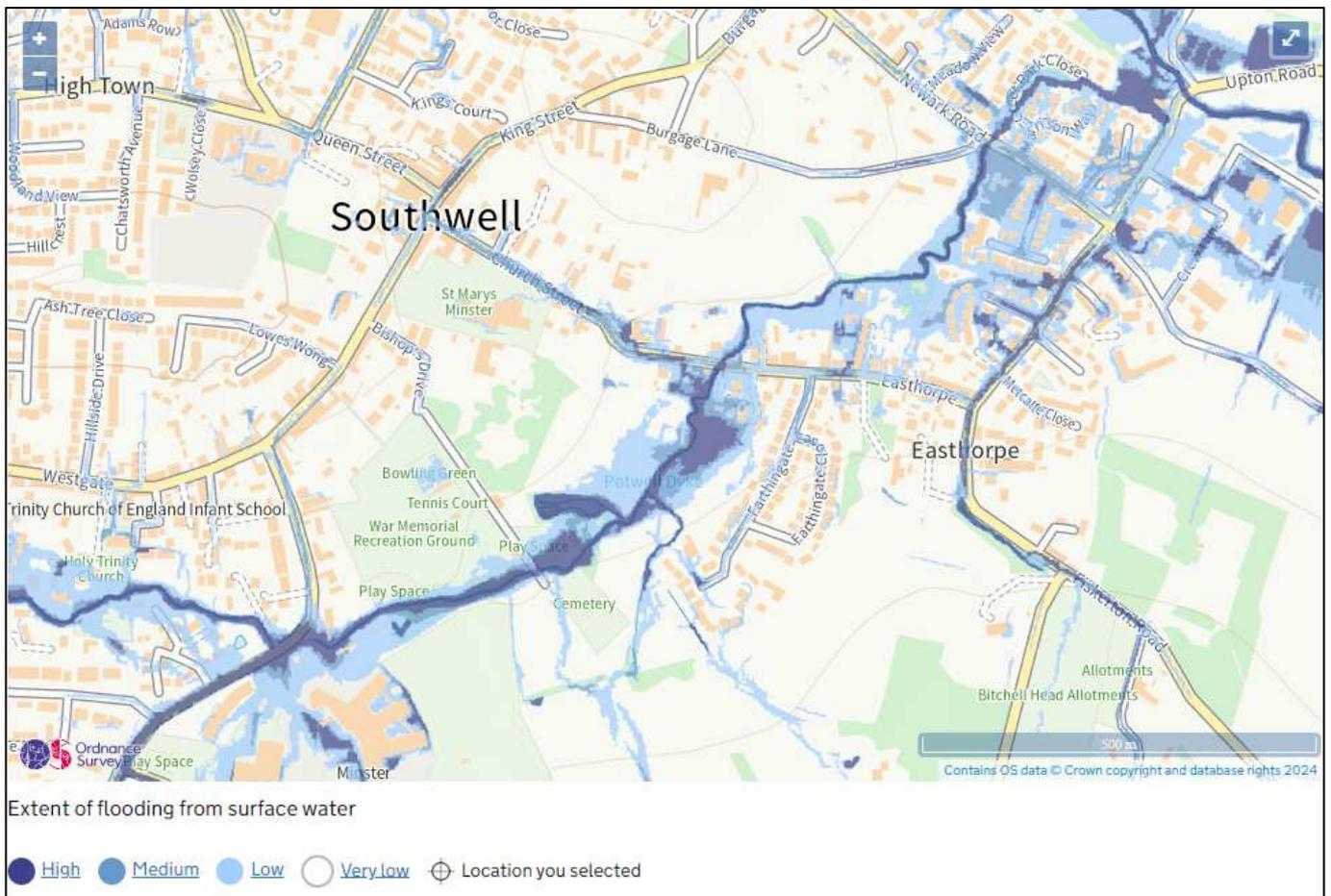


**Figure 3.** Map of Southwell showing routes of the Potwell Dyke and its crossing with Church Street and its tributary.

14. These watercourses and the topography of the village combine to create a natural risk of flooding to the area. Figures 4 and 5 show the predicted risk of flooding as published by the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning (<https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk>)



**Figure 4. Predicted Flood Zone Extents (FZ3 is darkest area)**



**Figure 5. Predicted Surface Water Flood Extents**

Figures 4 and 5 help to confirm the areas naturally occurring risk of flooding and correlate with the majority of flooding experienced during Storm Babet.

Southwell benefits from a well-established Flood Forum ([Southwell Flood Forum ~ Community Protection & Support](#)) who provide exceptional support and advice to their community. They adopt a very positive and proactive approach to flood resilience and we will continue to work with and support them.

The work carried out as part of the Southwell Flood Alleviation scheme and Southwell Flood Forum to date has clearly reduced the likelihood of flooding on other parts of the catchment as several areas that had experienced flooding in the past were not affected by Storm Babet.

### **Risk Management Authorities and their responsibilities**

15. The Nottinghamshire County Council.

- i. Investigate significant local flooding incidents and publish the results of such investigations.
- ii. Play a lead role in emergency planning and recovery after a flood event.
- iii. As the Lead Local Flood Authority, we have a new duty to determine which risk management authorities have relevant powers to investigate flood incidents to help understand how they happened, and whether those authorities have or intend to exercise their powers.
- iv. By working in partnership with communities, Lead Local Flood Authorities can raise awareness of flood risks.
- v. Lead Local Flood Authorities should encourage local communities to participate in local flood risk management.
- vi. If a flood happens, all local authorities are 'category one responders' under the Civil Contingencies Act. This means they must have plans in place to respond to emergencies and control or reduce the impact of an emergency.

b) Highway Authority (NCC/VIA East Midlands Ltd).

- i. Maintenance of the public highways including highway drainage assets.
- ii. Provided site-based presence and investigations immediately following the event.

16. Newark and Sherwood District Council.

- a) Category one responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. This means they must have plans in place to respond to emergencies and control or reduce the impact of an emergency.

### **Risk Management Authority Responses to Flooding**

17. The following lists the actions taken by each RMA in response to the flooding both in the immediate aftermath as well as in the longer term:

18. The Nottinghamshire County Council.

Officers from across the County Council played a key role in the response to the Major Incident that had significant impacts across the county. The following lists the key actions taken by Nottinghamshire County Council:

- a) Initiated its Community Flood Recovery Grant to support individuals affected by internal flooding as a short-term recovery aid.
- b) Attended site after flooding occurred to verify scale of internal flooding, offer support, guidance and advice to affected residents and businesses.
- c) Information gathered on site was fed back to relevant RMA's and partners.
- d) Collated flood impact data from other RMA's and partners and published verified data on Resilience Direct.
- e) Visited flood affected residents and businesses to establish sources and mechanisms of flooding and severity of flood impacts.
- f) Chaired and attended Strategic / Tactical / Recovery Coordination Group meetings initiated by the Local Resilience Forum.
- g) Provided 24-hour support through the Emergency Planning team.
- h) Carried out relevant actions requested by Strategic / Tactical / Recovery Coordination Groups.
- i) Initiated and led the Section 19 Flood Investigation, including liaison with relevant RMA's, parish councils, community groups, affected residents and businesses.
- j) Leading on procurement and delivery of DEFRA Property Flood Resilience Repair Grant Scheme.
- k) Liaised with and supported existing community flood signage schemes during the flooding.
- l) Delivered sandbags to affected areas and communities.
- m) Closed 77 roads across Nottinghamshire to promote road safety and avoid additional flood damage to at risk areas.
- n) Supported District and Borough partners by sharing resources during the emergency response.
- o) Utilised existing communication channels to update the public, partners and Elected Members with key messages during the event.
- p) Liaised with Southwell Flood Forum in the aftermath of the event.
- q) Responded to highway flooding in the catchment and carried out ditch clearance. to reduce the risk of flooding in the Nottingham Road / Minster School area.

#### 19. Newark & Sherwood District Council

- a) Played a full and intensive role alongside other agencies and community representatives.
- b) Worked to deliver whatever support was possible from the skills and resources available.
- c) Ahead of the storm the council stood up a team of managers to prepare for potential impacts across the district. A large team of staff was formed from across departments prioritising the flood response. Staff worked throughout the flood event, working beyond the normal working hours and days.
- d) Staff visited impacted communities and vulnerable individuals.
- e) Many hundreds of aqua sacs were delivered and people were helped to evacuate their homes.
- f) The council prepared to support evacuated residents and provided emergency accommodation when necessary.
- g) The communications officers worked with other agencies to warn and inform the public of the risks and the support that was available. Daily briefings were also provided to councillors and community leaders.
- h) As the flood event changed from the surface water flooding to the continued risk of river flooding the council commenced actions to help clean up roads, paths and remove bulky waste from flooded homes.

- i) Staff contacted affected individuals to identify humanitarian needs and offer direct support or liaised with other agencies to find the appropriate assistance.
- j) Due to the predicted extreme levels for the River Trent, the council coordinated in person visits to communities at high risk of flooding to reinforce the need to take immediate action to prepare for potential flooding.
- k) Once the risk of further flooding had passed the council commenced its role in meeting the recovery needs of impacted communities and individuals. Grant funding is being delivered to those eligible.
- l) An internal and multi-agency debrief was conducted to identify any lessons learned.
- m) Since the flood the council has worked with parish and town councils to restock stores of aqua sacs.

### **Additional Information and Future Actions**

- 20. Nottinghamshire County Council continue to progress with the proposals to construct a surface water reservoir in the catchment and deliver property flood resilience measures as part of the Southwell Flood Alleviation Scheme.
- 21. Southwell Flood Forum have a well- established working relationship with a number of the RMAs including NCC's Flood Risk Management Team, and Via East Midlands and are committed to continue with that working relationship.
- 22. As the Lead Local Flood Authority we have witnessed and have experience of how flooding devastates communities. The most vulnerable in the community will be our priority. Nottinghamshire County Council will continue to work closely with partners and communities to identify ways of proactively reducing the risk, likelihood and consequences of future flooding events.
- 23. NCC will continue to support its Flood Warden / Road Closure training programme and community volunteer groups to help ensure they operate as effectively and safely as possible.
- 24. NCC will work with its partners to look at ways of strengthening the enforcement of riparian responsibilities alongside developing our asset inspection process.