

Tewkesbury Borough Council Sandbag Policy

Introduction

This document details the Policy of Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) with regards to the deployment of sandbags in response to a potential flood event. This policy has been created to set clear priorities for the use of sandbags.

The responsibility for protection of private property in the event of a flood lies with individual owners and not the Council or any other agency. The Council does however have permissive powers in relation to flood defence, and will use those powers where appropriate to support local communities in preparing for and dealing with floodwater.

Working with other Organisations

In the event of flooding in the Borough, TBC will work with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) who are the lead local flood authority, the Environment Agency (EA), Town and Parish Councils and other agencies and will take a flexible approach to dealing with the emergency.

The decision to distribute sandbags in accordance with this policy will be made by TBC's District Emergency Planning Liaison Officer (DEPLO) or deputy DEPLO in consultation with senior TBC officers and representatives of Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF). This decision will consider the risk of internal flooding to properties, based on information from the EA, the Met Office and other members of Gloucestershire LRF.

In deploying sandbags, TBC recognises the importance of working with local communities at an increased risk of being affected by flooding. This is because they are best placed to ensure that their area is resilient in times of flooding. They have a wealth of local knowledge which means that they are likely to respond quicker in an emergency. To that extent, we will work with relevant Parish and Town Councils to encourage them to take responsibility for ensuring that there is adequate provision of sandbags within their areas and to ensure they understand how sandbags should be stored, filled and stacked.

Priorities for sandbag allocation

This policy recognises the fact that in a major flooding situation, TBC may not be able to meet every request for sandbags to support people to protect their property. The deployment of sandbags will therefore be decided with regards to the following priorities:

1. To prevent loss of life or serious injury
2. Maintaining access for emergency services
3. Protecting vital facilities within the community
4. Protection of residential property occupied by vulnerable people within the Borough
5. Enable property owners within the Borough to make arrangements to protect their own property.

Those distributing sandbags will be advised of the above and will be guided not to provide sandbags for other means e.g. protection of a garden or other non-habitable areas of a property.

Sandbag Distribution

When a flood event is predicted, free empty sandbags will be available for TBC resident householders from the locations shown in Appendix A. This will be at the discretion of TBC and in accordance with the priorities within this Policy. Each Parish and Town Council at Appendix A will make sure they have adequate supplies of empty sandbags in preparation

for a flood event (but not so many that the bags are likely to start degrading). TBC will supply any Town or Parish in a timely way but requests must give consideration to likely high demands before a predicted flood event.

As a guide, **twelve six** sandbags will be sufficient to protect an average household and distributors will be encouraged to keep to this number in most cases.

Small quantities of sand to fill the bags will be available to purchase at a reasonable cost from the locations shown in Appendix A, subject to availability. Some of the suppliers may also help fill the bags. Otherwise householders will be advised to use other adequate filling materials (e.g. soil).

Other sandbag and sand locations (whether temporary or permanent) will be sanctioned by the DEPLO or deputy DEPLO dependent on the information from the agencies detailed above. Those locations will be decided in consultation with the local Member / Parish Council / Flood Warden as appropriate and will be coordinated with identified local needs and response arrangements, and in accordance with priorities in this Policy.

After a sandbag has been used, the householder will be advised to dispose of the sand on their garden and dispose of the bag in their general waste bin.

Businesses

Businesses will not be supported with the provision of sandbags and are expected to make their own arrangements.

On request, TBC will help guide businesses to identify a potential need for sandbags (or other suitable flood defence measures) within Business Continuity Plans and will help them to identify potential suppliers of both bags and sand should such an occasion arise.

Very Vulnerable People

We will provide a filled sandbag delivery service on request, and within timescales as resources allow to very vulnerable people. Very vulnerable people are defined as those who have made special arrangements with TBC due to difficulties putting out their bin for collection.

Disposal of sandbags

It is the residents responsibility to dispose of sandbags once the flooding event is over. This must be done bearing in mind that viral and bacterial infections may be present in flood water due to it mixing with foul sewage.

Communications

Information within this policy and in Appendix A will be communicated to the Parish and Town Councils, the EA, GCC and will be posted on the TBC website. It will form part of the Gloucestershire LRF Multi-Agency Flood Plan.

During normal office hours, enquiries relating to flooding will be directed to the Environmental Health service. Initial advice will be given regarding precautions to be taken and the nearest location of sand bags and sand supplies.

If those at risk of flooding are very vulnerable, the council's contractor will be despatched to provide filled sandbags.

Out of Hours, enquiries to TBC will be picked up by the emergency call centre. Advice given will be as per this policy. However, if a caller requests sandbags and they are very vulnerable, they will be asked to establish how they consider themselves to be at immediate

serious risk of internal flooding. The on-duty out-of-hours officer will then judge the risk to the householder and make a decision on whether to ask the council's contractor to make an immediate sandbag delivery and will tell the householder what will happen and what to do.

Sandbag collection locations (and other emergency information) will be communicated to Members as part of regular member updates during the flood event and through press releases, website updates and Twitter / Facebook updates as appropriate.

Residents living in areas at risk of flooding will be advised to visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk to find out if their home is at risk of flooding and to register with the EA on 0845 988 1188 for an early warning by telephone. Other useful numbers are:
Incident Hotline: 0800 807060 (Free phone 24 hour)
Floodline: 0845 988 1188 (24 hour)

At the appropriate time, residents at risk of regular flooding will be advised to find better solutions to sandbags for preventing floodwater entering their property, for example individual property protection measures or gel-filled sacks for one-off use.

APPENDIX A

Information for Householders on Sand Bags and Sand Stores

Tewkesbury Borough Council does not store filled sandbags. However, a limited number of empty sandbags can be obtained for free. In the event of an emergency, you may collect them from the following locations:

Parish / Town	Collection details	No of bags requested
Brockworth	Via Brockworth Parish Council 01452 863123	200
Churchdown	Gill Blackwell: 01452 859388 Alan Porter: 07952 909162	None as have own stock
Winchcombe	Winchcombe Town Council 01242 604087	50
Down Hatherley	Martin Cole: Landline 01452 730295; Mobile 07761 589102	200
Tewkesbury	Town Council: 01684 294639	200
Chaceley	Jonathan Hodges 07837 651269	200
Minsterworth	Cathy Thomas/Paul Bell 07963 115870	100
Norton	Sarah Clifford: 07883 911012 nortoncouncil@gmail.com ...awaiting number	100
Stoke Orchard	Richard Chatham: 07802 781588/Community Centre 07437 533132	200
Woodmancote	Nigel Adcock 07903 880448	200
Twyning	Ian Ferguson 07896 714496/Dave Lockett 07975 639854	100

In addition sandbags can be purchased from your local builders' merchant or DIY store.