



Environment, Roads & Facilities

Sandbag Policy

October 2017

Contents

1	Terms of Reference	1
2	Background	1
3	Sandbag Policy.....	1
4	Sandbag Guidance	2
5	Alternative Flood Defence Products.....	2

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1 Terms of Reference

1.1 This policy has been produced to provide clear guidance on how Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) prioritises the distribution of sandbags as a means protecting critical infrastructure and assisting residents. It clarifies what CCBC will, and will not do in relation to the provision of sandbags during flood events.

2 Background

2.1 Flooding is a natural occurrence and can occur during coastal storms, prolonged rainfall and during pluvial events. No drainage system or flood protection measures can protect and eliminate the risk of flooding during extreme storm events.

2.2 CCBC have no legislative duty to provide sandbags to residential or commercial premises to protect them from flooding, unless the source of flooding travels from a Council owned asset such as the highway or a watercourse that travels through authority owned land.

2.3 Whilst the usefulness of sandbags is acknowledged in helping to divert and direct flows, such as along a highway, it must be noted that they have severe limitations in application when faced with prolonged periods of high flow or static water. Additionally, sandbags are ineffective in protecting property from groundwater flooding or indeed where sewers cause flooding within properties.

2.4 Sandbags at best only have a 40% chance of successfully keeping water out of a property. With this in mind homeowners and businesses are encouraged to implement their own flood resilient measures by purchasing specifically designed flood protection products. The non-profit charity, The National Flood Forum, provides advice on various products to enable residents to implement 'Property Level Protection' which includes a directory of products that have achieved BSI Kitemark status. Sandbags have not achieved this accreditation yet remain a 'fall back' position for many residents.

3 Sandbag Policy

3.1 This Policy identifies the decision making process of when sandbags are deemed to be an appropriate method of flood defence. This could be a combination of location, asset ownership and severity of the flood event.

3.2 During times of inclement weather, CCBC will make reasonable efforts to assist residents at imminent risk of flooding, but this is subject to resources available at the time of an event. No guarantee can be offered to residents that we can assist with all flood incidents. If residents are concerned that they may be at risk of flooding, it is strongly recommended that they consider implementing their own flood resilience measures in advance of a flood event. Advice can be sought from The National Flood Forum, or by contacting the Environment, Roads and Facilities department.

Conwy County Borough Council WILL

1. Deploy sandbags to divert the flow of flood water originating from Local Authority assets such as highway gullies, culverts and ditches in addition to watercourse, culverts and ditches lying within local authority owned land;
2. Subject to availability; deploy sandbags at locations where there is an imminent risk to life or property. The decision to deploy sandbags shall be taken at the discretion of responding officers. Where possible, elderly and vulnerable residents shall be given priority; and,
3. Collect sandbags from authority owned land and public open spaces and dispose of them in an appropriate manner.

Conwy County Borough Council WILL NOT

1. Deploy sandbags to private properties in advance of a flood event;
2. Deploy sandbags to commercial properties at any time before, during or after a flood event, unless deemed necessary under exceptional circumstances to protect adjacent residential and/or essential infrastructure from flood damage;
3. Allow residents to collect sandbags from CCBC depots;
4. Collect sandbags from private land, residential properties (other than when deployed by CCBC to elderly or vulnerable residents), or commercial premises; and,
5. Collect sandbags which have not been deployed by CCBC.

4 Sandbag Guidance

- 6.1 Guidance on how to use sandbags can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sandbags-how-to-use-them-to-prepare-for-a-flood>

5 Alternative Flood Defence Products

- 7.1 A directory of property flood products can be found here:

<http://bluepages.org.uk/>