Lancaster District Flooding

5 December 2015
Lune River Valley area
Lancaster

- Roads converge on Lancaster at the lowest point
- Industry/business spreads out along the Caton Road to ward the motorway
North Lancashire 4/5 December

- Red alert for flooding
- Ground saturated after nearly 4 weeks of daily rain
- Expected rainfall up to 200mm - actually 140mm both days
- Devil's Bridge midday on Saturday
Lancaster Substation (the power station)
Saturday 5 December

- Normal life – shopping, eating out, big events like trips, weddings, nights out, nights in, nights in tents
- Amber Flood warning - increased likelihood of bad or extreme weather, potential risk.
Warnings late on Saturday

- Floodgates open on St George's Quay 5 pm
- Bay Radio flooded
- A+B roads in and out of Lancaster reported impassable, animals trapped in fields
- Caton Road businesses flooding
- Chaos on the railways
- Water coming up out of drains
- Bridges unsafe
- Huge waves on the front at Morecambe
Sat 5 December 10.29 pm

- Floodwater rises 2m in lowest part of town
- Power off, back on briefly and then off completely- more than 60,000 homes are in the dark
- No traffic across the bridges, cars floating
- Silence apart from the sound of rain
- No lights anywhere
- No phone, television, laptop, even radio
people begin searching for ways to communicate – Bay Radio
Official emergency declared

- River Lune flows 1700 cubic metres per second
- Surface water unable to drain
- Valley flooding upriver
- Container has hit both bridges
- Loss of power equals risk to vulnerable
- Residents flooded out or trapped
Gold command

- No mobiles one/two plug ins; missing keyholders
- Essential lists on computer or internet
- City council computers crash on power loss
Sunday 6 December am

- Rescue services out all night
- Bay and Gillow open
- Support unit arrives
Clearing up
Food and Drink
Vulnerable People

- Town Rest Centres
- Community pop ups
- Villages
- Communications
- Students
Taking it all in

About 7.3 m scaled off William

Level of top debris in branches
Aftermath 1

- Sunday - buses running - few trains
- Some shops open
- Power returning Monday 4 am off at 4 pm (75 generators come in)
- Schools closed
- University closed Sunday
Aftermath 2

- Business support varies – rates holiday
- Insurance problems, unclaimed grant fund
- Materials, skills, manpower – closures and comebacks
Aftermath 3

- Emergency services Gold Command and Flood Authority debrief
- City council meetings: Flood Resilience Commission
- University study
- Community resilience action
Finally, this debate is about localism. It is about local knowledge. Every scheme and every response needs to respond to local knowledge. In one community it might be about dredging, in another it might be about a pump, in another community it will be about the clearing of trees and in another it will be about upland storage. We need to look at what we are doing with forestry and what we are doing with peatland restoration. We need to understand that some schemes take 25 or 50 years to succeed, but that they should be undertaken nevertheless. As the Secretary of State said, we need to start the 25-year planning now.

Rory Stewart – Minister for Flooding
19 July and 22 November 2017 Lower Church Street Lancaster

- No insurance
- No flood defences
- Drainage unresolved
- No concerted district action