

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

News Release

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Council mounts massive clear up to help residents in flood-hit areas 'We will support our residents every step of the way'

As flood water recedes the council is starting a huge clean-and-repair operation across the borough, with particular focus on helping residents in the worst-hit areas of Bisham, Cookham, Hurley, Wraysbury, Datchet and Old Windsor.

The council is working with partners to retain community hubs in Wraysbury, Datchet and Bisham/Cookham as schools need to be restored in time for classes starting again on Monday (24 February).

Multi-agency community hubs have been confirmed at:

- Datchet Parish Council offices, Allen Way
- Wraysbury Baptist Church, High Street

They will open between 9am and 7pm. Final arrangements are being made for premises serving the Bisham/Cookham/Hurley area.

Initial recovery work is already under way with waste collections being done in previously flooded streets and from tomorrow (Wednesday), the council's own workforce and contractors, Veolia Environmental Services, will mount an initial clean-and-repair operation. This will see:

- roads and council car parks swept of flood debris
- streetcare teams filling potholes and making other fast-response repairs and
- a detailed inspection of road surfaces to identify issues that need major repairs or resurfacing

Cllr Carwyn Cox, cabinet member for environmental services, said the post-flood clear-up was a massive operation that would involve services across the council and close joint working with partner agencies such as Thames Valley Police, the Environment Agency, health utility companies and, most importantly, local communities.

He said: "The flood waters have brought chaos and distress into the lives of many of our residents and it is the council's top priority to provide whatever support we can to help get life back to normal. Unfortunately for some people whose properties have been flooded this will take a long time, but the council can make a constructive start by cleaning roads, footways and car parks and making sure waste collections get back on track.

"We have a big task ahead and we will work tirelessly with and in support of our residents, not only going the extra mile in providing our own services but making information available about other services and support that local people will need as they move towards restoring their lives, homes and businesses."

The council is acting on residents' behalf to get information on the twin post-flood issues of what to do with sandbags and also the collection of flood debris, such as wet furniture and equipment from people's homes. In the meantime residents should retain sandbags until further information is available.

Cllr Cox added: “The bottom line is we care about our residents and will support them every step of the way. There are areas that are not traditionally council responsibility but we will work to get information for local people and make sure it is passed on so they know exactly where they can get the help they need.”

The council now has a full response plan to flood recovery including:

- helping to restore Wraysbury and Bisham Primary Schools after their use as community hubs for local residents during the floods – the aim is to have them open as usual after the half-term break on Monday (24 February)
- collecting the chemical toilets and event-style loos that have been provided in all the flooded areas when they are no longer needed
- liaising with public health to provide common sense health and hygiene information and advice
- working with the vulnerable people who were relocated from their homes, to ensure the right outcome for each person’s individual needs
- signposting residents to sources of advice about flood relief funding, including the borough’s own Flood Relief Fund and the new Berkshire Flood Recovery Fund
- providing council tax exemption advice to residents whose homes are not habitable because of flood damage
- helping flood-affected businesses access the right information to help them get back to business as usual.

The customer contact centre is open from 7am to 7pm to answer questions and provide advice on how residents can access financial and other practical help.

Call 01628 683800 or visit the council’s website at www.rbwm.gov.uk . Follow the council on Facebook and on Twitter @RBWM where there will be regular updates.

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David Perkins, head of streetcare and operations – tel: 01628 796860
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Photo opportunities:

Photographers and reporters are welcome to see the start of the Royal Borough post-c flood clean-up tomorrow morning (**Wednesday 19 February**):
10am Feathers Lane, off Staines Road, Wraysbury – pothole and roads repairs
11.30am Quarrywood Road, Cookham – gulley cleaning.

Website: www.rbwm.gov.uk

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