9.1.2023

Somerset Levels and Moors January 2023

Background:

The Somerset Levels & Moors are designed to store flood water when the rivers flowing through them overtop. The recent heavy rain has caused spillways (specifically designed low-points in the riverbanks) on the Rivers Tone and Parrett to flow and there is now water stored on the moors.

Flood alerts and a warning for Currymoor have been updated.

Current Situation:

The Parrett and Tone catchments have responded as expected following the recent rainfall on already wet ground.

Heavy rain fell this weekend, but we are maximising pumping when river levels and tides allow.

Spillways have been running intermittently, pumps have operated intermittently as they only pump when there is capacity in the rivers. Water stored on the moors has increased.

We are monitoring the situation and following our operational procedures. Our teams are out checking our flood defences and clearing debris screens and other assets to ensure correct operation.

Currymoor, one of the largest flood storage reservoirs on the Somerset Levels and Moors, is 84% full. Pumping began from Currymoor on 5 January. It can be pumped out in about 14 days with low enough river levels. It can store 17 million cubic metres of water safely.

Outlook:

The 3-5 day forecast is for intermittent rain. Longer range forecasts are less reliable.

Our trigger points plan sets out when we deploy mobile pumps.

We are taking action as the trigger has been met for Northmoor & Saltmoor pumping stations. We are taking pre-emptive action at Dunball tidal doors as we are close to the triggers.

The Somerset Levels and Moors are designed to store floodwater. However, the £80 million of investment since 2014 in flood risk interventions is helping us better manage the flooding. It allows us to take pre-emptive action to delay the onset of flooding and to evacuate the waters more effectively. Together this enables communities to be more resilient and to recover more rapidly from flooding.