

0.0 LATE ITEM: FLOOD EVENTS 15 & 24 JULY 2026**File Number:****Report Author:** Water Services Manager**Report Authoriser:** Group Manager Operations**Appendices:** Nil**1. REPORT PURPOSE**

- 1.1. To update Council following the extreme weather events on 15 & 24 July 2026.
- 1.2. Gain direction from Council on the specific area Fox Street and Hall Street, Cobden.

2. OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

Receives the report and notes the contents herein.

AND

- 2. Direct staff to further investigate options for surface flooding mitigation, for the Fox Street and Hall Street area of Cobden, and report back to the September meeting.

OR

- 3. Direct staff to continue reviewing both flooding events, specifically focusing on locations where known house/business floor levels were affected by flooding, reporting back to Council at the September meeting.

3. SUMMARY OF EVENTS**3.1. 15 July 2026 – Flood Event**

- 3.1.1. On 15 July 2026, a severe, un-forecasted convective weather event hit urban Greymouth area. The storm featured frequent lightning and localised heavy hail and rain. The Arnott Heights water reservoir communications antenna sustained a direct lightning strike. This was immediately followed by an intense downpour of at least 50mm/hour lasting approximately 30 minutes. The event is described as a high intensity ‘cloud burst’.
- 3.1.2. The localised rainfall severely overwhelmed the local stormwater network. This resulted in significant surface runoff overflowing State Highway 6 (SH6), causing rapid flooding in Tasman Street properties and the Domain Terrace park areas. Emergency response from council staff, emergency services, and local contractors was immediate and highly effective.

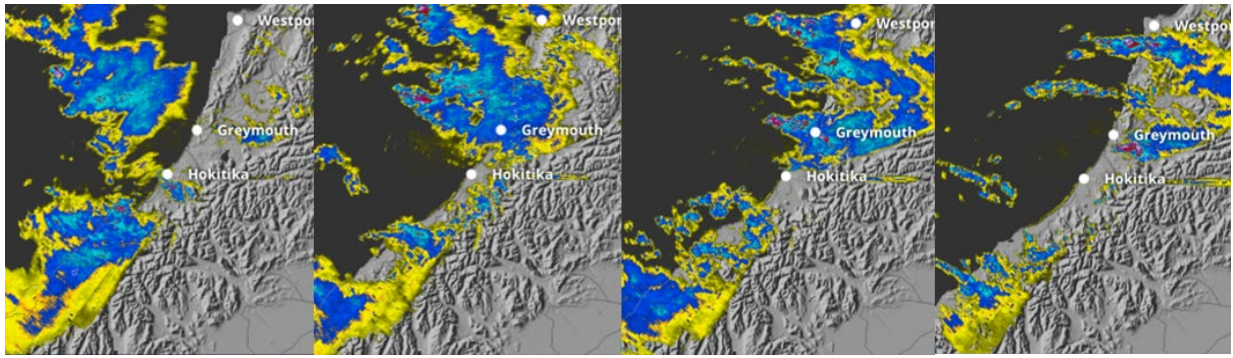


Fig 1: Sequence from the rain radar from 12:52pm to 3:52pm

3.1.3. Catchment

- (a) The affected area consists of two primary sub-catchments within the Arnott Heights and Karoro zone:
 - (i) Upper Catchment (approx. 28 ha).
 - (ii) Lower Catchment (approx. 16 ha).
 - (iii) There were also secondary surface runoff points across approx. 1 km of SH6 at Karoro.



Fig 2: Approximate Catchment area.

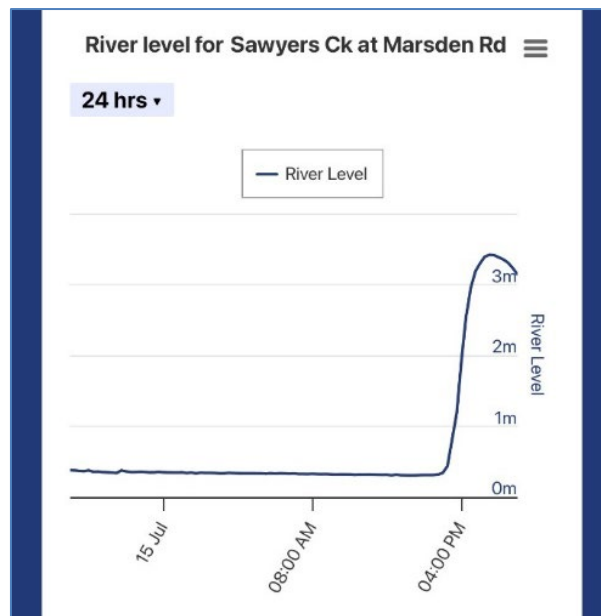


Fig 3: Sawyers Creek rapid level rise over a 2-hour period (courtesy of WCRC website).

3.1.4. Infrastructure Impacts & Property Damage

- (a) The extreme volume of water led to widespread system pressure and surface flooding:
 - (i) Network Overload: All localised stormwater and wastewater sewer systems were overwhelmed. High hydraulic pressure blew out multiple manhole lids and structurally damaged one manhole unit.
 - (ii) Debris Blockages: Heavy runoff washed bush/catchment rubbish and railway ballast down, blocking catchpits, sumps, and pipelines.
 - (iii) Property Inundation: Two residential houses, a clubrooms and a line of motel units are known to have suffered direct water ingress. Multiple outbuildings, including residential garages and garden sheds, were flooded.
 - (iv) Infrastructure: Road and rail network damage was limited to minor surface scouring.

3.1.5. Operational Response & Recovery Timeline

- (a) Despite the un-foreseen nature of the storm, the operational response was swift. No heavy rain warnings were in place.
 - (i) Within 10 minutes of the event starting, Council staff arrived on-site, establishing operational management, directing contractors, and assisting affected residents.
 - (ii) Contractor effort operated well in a tight work area. Responding teams from multiple contractors was well coordinated. Contractors responded from multiply agencies, included; Westroads, Isaacs, Truline Civil, MBD, Fulton Hogan, and Paul Smith Earthmoving.
 - (iii) Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) deployed two units to assist with water redirection, pumping, and community safety. Police were also active in the areas.

3.1.6. Surface flooding on Tasman Street had completely dissipated within an hour, except for some lower-lying areas, including the Domain Terrace parks, which took 2 to 3 hours to drain.

3.1.7. Clearing sumps, repairing manholes, road repairs were generally completed over the following two to three days.

3.1.8. A selection of flood event photos is shown below.



Fig 4: 80 Tasman Street, Karoro



Fig 5: State Highway 6 - Rail line adjacent to Rata Street, Karoro



Fig 6: Culvert intake at Weenink Road, Karoro



Fig 7a: Flooding at its peak, Tasman Street, Karoro



Fig 7b: Flooding at its peak, Tasman Street, Karoro



Fig 7c: Flooding at its peak, Main South Road, Karoro



Fig 8a: Rail damage adjacent to the Tasman street/SH6 intersection, Karoro



Fig 8b: Rail damage adjacent to the Tasman street/SH6 intersection



Fig 9: Motel inundation, Tasman Street, Karoro

3.2. 24 July 2026 - Flood Event

- 3.2.1. On 24 July 2026, a severe and significant, un-forecasted weather event hit the Grey District from 2:30am to about 4am, specifically affecting Greymouth CBD, Cobden, Dobson and Runanga areas. The storm featured widespread rain and localised heavy sustained falls in the hills above the CBD and Cobden. Intense downpours recorded in the Marsden Road area, recorded rainfall intensities of 76.2mm/hour (private weather station), creating flash flooding carrying with it; rocks, gravel, silts and debris, including items from private property as an example; a mattress and a sheet of plywood.
- 3.2.2. This event again, is described a high intensity 'cloud burst' event, of wider scale than the Karoro event, a week prior.
- 3.2.3. The localised rainfall severely overwhelmed and/or blocked the local stormwater network in places, creating significant surface flooding and property inundation.

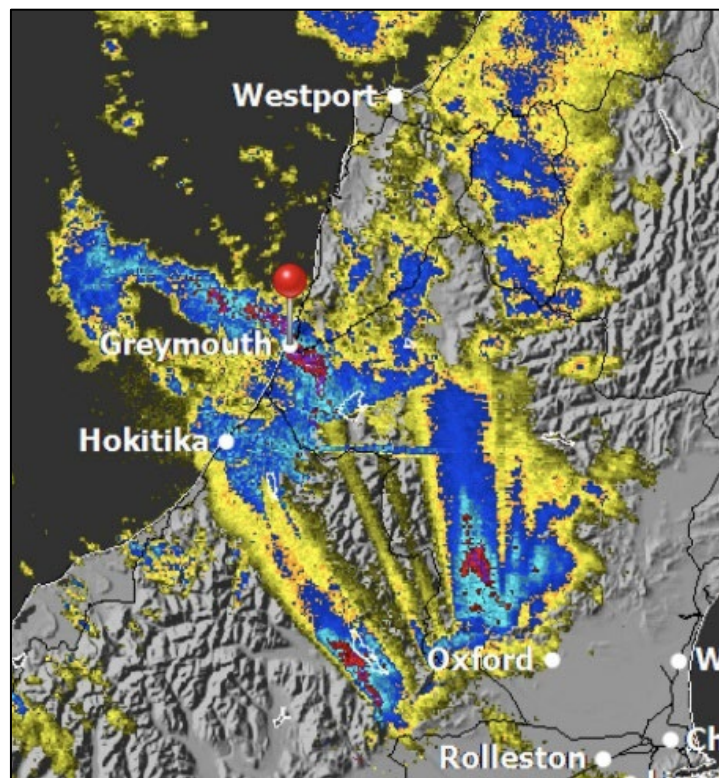


Fig.10 Rain radar: 24 July 3:15am

3.2.4. Catchment.

- (a) The affected areas consist of two primary catchments:

- (i) Nikau Valley catchment above the CBD (approx. 97 ha).
- (ii) Rapahoe Range Catchment (approx. 86 ha).

3.2.5. There were also numerous secondary surface runoff areas through properties.



Fig 11. Cobden estimated catchment area and the worst flooded streets.

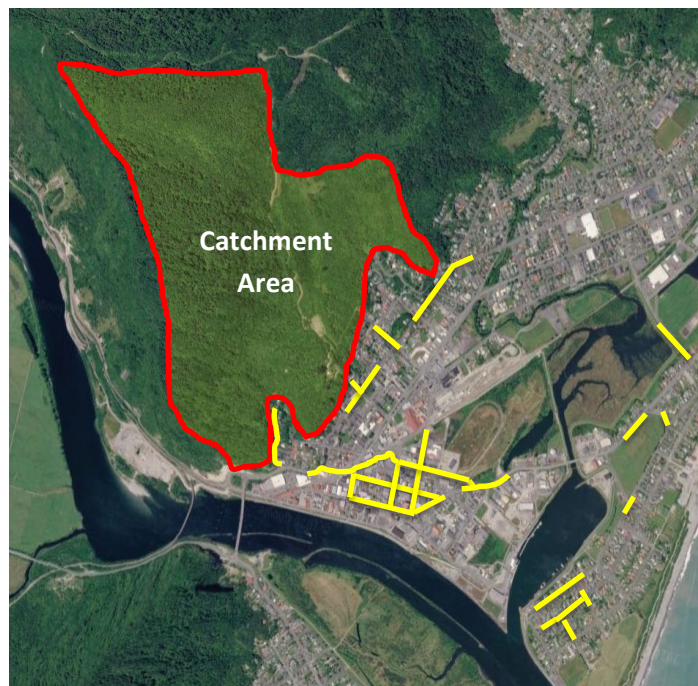


Fig 12. CBD estimated catchment area and the worst flooded streets.

3.2.6. Infrastructure Impacts & Property Damage

- (a) The extreme volume of water led to widespread system pressure and surface flooding:
 - (i) Network Overload: All localised stormwater and wastewater sewer systems were overwhelmed. High hydraulic pressure blew out multiple manhole lids and caused road damage in many areas.
 - (ii) Debris Blockages: Heavy runoff washed catchment rubbish blocking some catchpits, sumps, and pipelines.
 - (iii) Property Inundation: numerous houses, the school hall and businesses suffered direct water ingress. Multiple outbuildings, including residential garages, garden sheds and cars, were flooded.
 - (iv) The Range Creek floodgate was identified as being shut, at 7:30 am on the morning of the event. This was immediately opened by our contractor.
 - a. An extensive investigation has been undertaken following this event. The last time the flood gate was recorded being operated/closed, was on the 5 of May (during a high Grey River event). It was opened following this event.
 - b. WCRC Cobden lagoon monitoring information confirms the gate was open following the event, as can be seen by the cyclic tidal effect on the below graph. The WCRC data does show however that the tidal effect on the lagoon ceased on 21 July 2026, indicating this is the date the floodgate was closed. How the gate was closed is still a matter of investigation, but investigation to date, confirm this was not actioned by Council or its contractors.

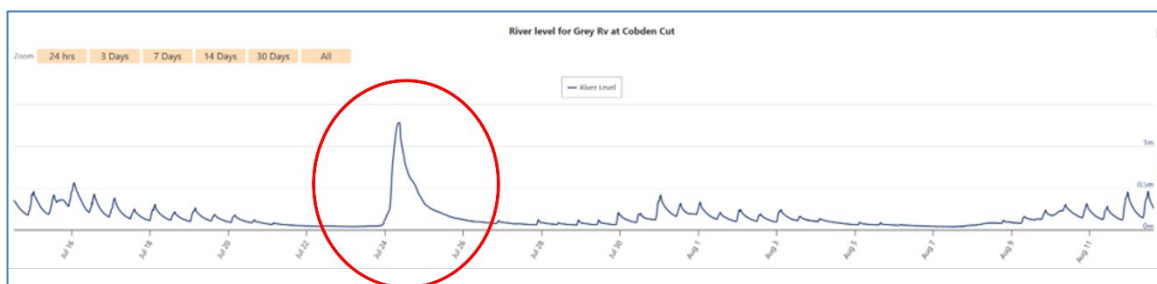


Fig.13 Cobden Lagoon WCRC Water Levels Data

3.2.7. Operational Response & Recovery Timeline

- (a) Despite the un-forecasted nature of the storm, the operational response was swift:
 - (i) Within 15 minutes, Council Staff were on-site as flooding began, establishing operational management, co-ordinating with contractors.
 - (ii) Contractor effort operated well, once on site. Responding teams from multiple agencies, included; Westroads, Isaacs and Fulton Hogan.
 - (iii) Fire and Emergency New Zealand (FENZ) deployed multiple units to assist with water redirection, pumping, and community safety.
 - (iv) Police were also active in various areas.

3.2.8. Surface flooding occurred in the Greymouth area, Greymouth CBD and Cobden, with localised flooding in Blaketown, Runanga, Dobson and Kaiata.

3.2.9. Clearing sumps, repairing manholes, road repairs were generally completed over the following two to three days. Significant debris has been identified in stormwater mains and this is being cleared at present.

3.2.10. Fox Street and Hall Street Area – Specific Direction Requested.

- (a) Council Staff and the Mayor have met with affected residents in Cobden who have strongly indicated that immediate action is required; detailing infrastructure improvements from roadside channels to pipe upsizing and the installation of a pumping station. Residents describe the situation as a complete failing of infrastructure. They have also raised concerns around the potential removal of secondary flow paths due to development in the area.
- (b) Staff have considered at a high level, the likely costs associated with providing a pumping systems for this area, with cost likely to be \$3M+. This is based on the recently completed project at the Cobden Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- (c) Should Council wish to investigate this option further, a detailed assessment of the catchment area, pumping needs to meet Council design criteria and associated costing would need to be completed, before direction could be requested around confirmation and funding support.

3.2.11. Other areas of note.

- (a) Staff have also met with some concerned residents of Dobson, Greymouth and Runanga, regarding this event. There is a strong sentiment also, around the need to upgrade stormwater infrastructure to cope with similar storm events.

3.2.12. Council's current design direction is 1:10 year ARI and 1:50 year ARI where there is no secondary flow path. It is quite typical, for a secondary flow path to utilise roads and streets.

3.2.13. A selection of flood event photos is shown below.



Fig 13: Boundary Street, Greymouth



Fig 14: Leonard Street, Greymouth



Fig 15a: Blake Street, Blaketown



Fig 15b: Blake Street, Blaketown



Fig 16: Nelson Quay, Cobden



Fig 17: Archilles Street, Cobden



Fig 18: Dommatt Esplanade, Cobden



Fig 19: Bright street, Cobden

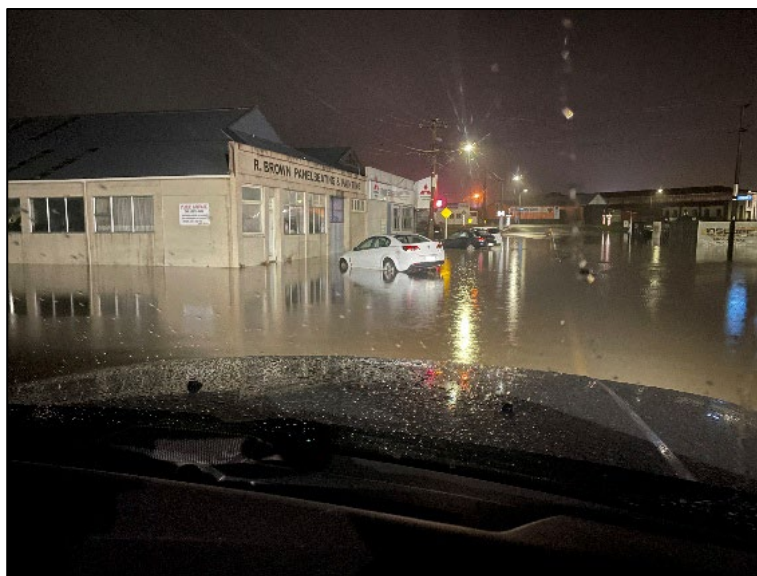


Fig 20: Tarapuhi Street, Greymouth

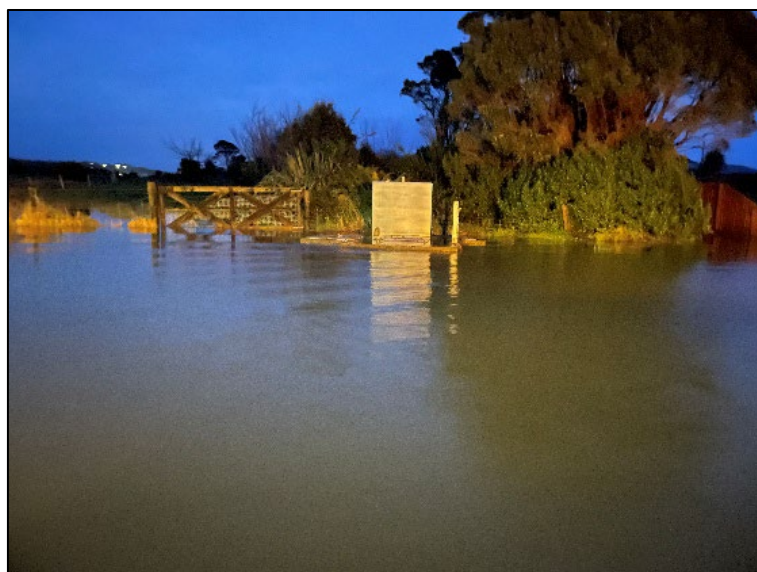


Fig 21: Kaiata Wastewater Pump Station



Fig 22: Carroll Street, Runanga



Fig 23: Omoto Road, State Highway 7

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1. Two significant, high intensity 'cloud burst' events occurred in the district, during July, with no prior heavy rain warnings.
- 4.2. Numerous areas of Karoro, Greymouth, Greymouth CBD, Cobden, Runanga, Dobson and Kaiata suffered flooding, with many dwellings being inundated during these events.
- 4.3. Council has received many complaints about its stormwater infrastructure, following the two events. Many have been visited by staff and particular situations have been discussed.
- 4.4. Both events were likely well in excess of Council stormwater infrastructure design standards. If stormwater network capacity was required to mitigate similar sized events in the future; changes to the design requirements would be required, along with significant financial support.
- 4.5. Council, along with its contractors and other agencies, reacted quickly, in a coordinated way, to monitor and assist throughout both events. This enabled a quick resolution to affected roads/streets and debris removal.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1. Take direction from Council and report back, at the following meeting.
- 5.2. Continue to meet with residents and business owner, to record and understand the specific situation and concerns.

Confirmation of Statutory Compliance

Compliance with Statutory Decision-making Requirements (ss 76 - 81 Local Government Act 2002).

- (a) This report contains:
 - (i) sufficient information about all reasonably practicable options identified and assessed in terms of their advantages and disadvantages; and
 - (ii) adequate consideration of the views and preferences of affected and interested persons bearing in mind any proposed or previous community engagement.
- (b) The information reflects the level of significance of the matters covered by the report, as determined in accordance with the Council's significance and engagement policy.