

Flooding

UK's winter floods land councils with nearly £250m bill, survey shows

http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/mar/25/uks-winter-floods-land-councils-with-nearly-250m-bill-survey-shows

The cost of damage to roads, bridges, drains and other infrastructure could rise further, local government analysis reveals



Pooley Bridge in Ullswater, washed away during flooding in Cumbria in December 2015. Photograph: Owen Humphreys/PA

This winter's floods caused almost £250m in damage to roads, bridges, public rights of way and drainage systems, a survey by town hall chiefs has revealed.

The snapshot analysis by the Local Government Association (LGA) warns councils have been hit with a huge bill following storms Desmond and Eva and the flooding they brought.

The final tally could be even higher, as councils are still counting the cost of the winter devastation. The total cost to households and businesses hit by the winter floods could be as much as £5bn, [KPMG said in December](#).

The worst-hit council was Cumbria, which saw around £175m in damage to local authority-owned infrastructure, with costs for flood-hit bridges, landslips, carriageway damage, survey work and the need to build a temporary road on the A591.

Calderdale has a bill of £33m, Northumberland £24m and Lancashire has suffered £5m damage due to the floods.

The LGA said government funding had been important in helping local authorities and communities recover from the floods, but warned councils will need more help as the full cost of damage emerges.

The organisation also called for new flood defence funding to be devolved to local areas so authorities can work with communities and businesses to ensure money is spent where it is most needed.

Peter Box, chairman of the LGA's environment, economy, housing and transport board, said: "The devastation wreaked by this winter's flooding has landed councils with a bill of nearly £250m - just for damage to key infrastructure like roads and bridges.

"Councils are still literally counting the cost and the final bill is likely to be much higher.

"Government has gone a long way to helping hard-hit communities get back on their feet. But it is clear more financial support will be needed for councils.

"Other measures from government could also make a massive difference in helping councils. These include allowing them to keep landfill tax and devolving new flood defence funding to local areas," he said.

Local authorities [have been hit with a landfill tax bill of more than £2.25m](#), as a result of the amount of flood-ruined furniture, belongings and white goods which cannot be recycled and have to be dumped in the ground, the LGA said.

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