

EMERGENCY PLANNING - UPDATE

Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee - 17 July 2017

Report of Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services

Status: For information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: In light of recent events, and at the request of the Chairman, this report provides an update to the Advisory Committee on current Emergency Planning practises and procedures

This report supports the Key Aim of Safe Communities

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Roddy Hogarth

Contact Officer Alex Dawson, Ext. 7368

Recommendation to Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee:

That the report be noted.

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Council has statutory responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 as a Category 1 responder, along with the 'Blue Light' emergency services, Kent County Council, the Environment Agency and the NHS.
- 2 The District Council's main responsibilities are to provide humanitarian assistance during any event or evacuation, immediate care and longer term housing needs whilst aiding recovery, and throughout any event assisting with multi agency response, sharing information and mutual aid.
- 3 An Emergency is defined, under the Act as an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare or the Environment.
- 4 The principles for preparing for, responding to and recovering from a civil emergency are much the same whatever the emergency.
- 5 Emergencies invariably involve a large number of agencies which need to cooperate and support each other. Procedures and capabilities need to be well integrated for the response and recovery work to be effective.
- 6 There is a generic national framework for managing emergency response and recovery which is applicable irrespective of the size, nature or cause of the

emergency. This is to ensure that the emergency services, various agencies and Local Councils are all properly prepared.

- 7 As part of this process, Resilience Forums have been set up across the Country to ensure a co-ordinated response to emergencies. These Resilience Forums identify and update risks and prepare associated plans as well as ensuring their members exercise in readiness for emergencies covering a wide spectrum of scenarios.
- 8 The Kent Resilience Forum, which Sevenoaks District Council is a member of, is a partnership of over 100 organisations which work together to improve the resilience of Kent. It comprises of Category 1 & 2 responders.

Major Emergency Plan

- 9 The major emergency plan is a framework document cross referencing with Councils' and other Agencies' plans, consisting of numerous documents, but principally are:
 - Major Emergency Plan
 - Mutual Aid Agreement
 - Contacts List (Requires updating)
 - District Emergency Centre Operations
 - Local Multi Agency Flood Plan
 - Various Internal Plans From Media to Finance
 - Business Continuity Plan
- 10 As a result of SDC organisational changes and those of the KCC Emergency Planning team all plans were updated throughout 2014 with a further review due in 2017. Emergency Planning arrangements were subject to an internal audit review in May 2016, where no major weaknesses were identified. The one area of improvement regarding website links and officer contact details has subsequently been rectified.
- 11 All these documents have not been reproduced in the report as they run to many pages, however, a copy is available on the SDC website -

https://www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/downloads/download/112/sevenoaks_district_council_major_emergency_plan_v11

Evacuation and care of the homeless in the event of an emergency

- 12 The Council has a responsibility for homeless persons as part of its normal day to day operations. In an emergency, people who are unable to stay in their own homes or are stranded in the District will be accommodated and if necessary, the Council will set up and run rest centres for this purpose. These are located at:

White Oak Leisure Centre
Sevenoaks Leisure Centre
Edenbridge leisure Centre

- 13 Local Village halls can also be used for more localised and short term use.
- 14 If larger rest centre capacity was required, the Kent Resilience Forum would coordinate and assist with finding other suitable premises either with neighbouring Local Authorities or across Kent.

Key Roles & Responsibilities

- 15 To increase resilience across the Council, and to embed Corporate responsibility, an Officer Emergency Planning Working Group, chaired by the Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services, and comprising Officers from Building Control, Housing, Environmental Health, Customer services, CCTV, Communications, HR, Direct Services, Facilities Management, IT and Communities and Businesses operates to disseminate information and to learn and develop plans from events.
- 16 Key roles are:
 - Emergency Planning Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator
 - Information Managers
 - GIS Mapping
 - Call Handlers
 - Communications Officers
 - Incident Liaison Officers
 - Function Co-ordinators, and
 - Representatives for Strategic Command (Gold) and Tactical Command (Silver).
- 17 Furthermore additional staff are trained in areas such as Rest Centre Management and Operation of the District Emergency Centre (DEC).
- 18 Exercises are regularly delivered to test the group's preparedness and resilience and to identify any further areas for development.
- 19 Examples of exercises and real emergencies to test preparedness and resilience:
 - March 15 - Fuel Spillage
 - May 15 - Business Continuity Test (loss of building)
 - June 15 - Gas Leak
 - July 15 - Dunton Green, Planned Evacuation
 - September 15 - Flood Plan Training & Testing
 - January 16 - Leigh Gas Outage (3 day event)
 - February 16 - High Street, Sevenoaks, Suspect Device
 - February 16 - Severe Weather
 - March 16 - Severe Weather, Storm Katie
 - Ongoing - Severe Weather Monitoring
 - Ongoing - Potential Restriction in Fuel
 - Ongoing - Various Gas Leaks/Cylinder Fires/Small Scale Evacuations

Training

20 Training, both internal and external, has been undertaken by various Officers covering the following areas:

- Introduction to Civil Protection
- Strategic Emergency and Crisis Management
- Working in Safety Advisory Groups
- Public Safety at Mass Gatherings
- Developing & Maintaining Business Continuity Management
- Recovering from Emergencies
- Television & Radio Interview training
- Mass Evacuation & Shelter training
- Rest Centre Management training
- Incident Liaison Officer Training
- Scientific and Technical Advisory CELL (STAC)

Relationship with other Emergency Planning Agencies

21 The Council is a member of the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) and continues to build strong relationships with Multi Agency Partners such as Kent County Council, the newly formed Kent Resilience Team (KRT comprises KCC, KF&RS and Police Emergency Planning Departments) amongst other partners such as the Environment Agency and Voluntary Sector.

22 The Council is a representative on the following KRF groups:

- Risk Assessment Group
- Voluntary Sector Group
- Local Authority Emergency Planning Group

23 The District was recently the Chair of the Business Continuity working group, tasked with writing new plans for the County including Fuel Shortage and Resilient Telecommunications.

Safety Advisory Groups

24 Since the 2012 Olympic Games there has been a greater emphasis on all Local Authorities to host and Chair Safety Advisory Groups (SAG) potentially covering any public show or event within the District. Key responsibility here, is to ensure public safety.

25 The Council has traditionally held such SAGs for large scale events such as at Brands Hatch and the London Golf club but now Chairs a SAG for any event which may cause partners agencies such as the Police, Highways or any other agency concern for public safety and well-being.

26 The role has developed and continues to develop with attendance at cross boundary SAGs (Tonbridge half marathon) with the potential for a Kent wide attendance and approach to create greater efficiency for all agencies attending.

- 27 The Council also has a representative on the Kent Safety Advisory Steering Group.

Community Resilience

- 28 With particular reference to severe weather, the Council continues to work with Parish Councils & Community Resilience Groups to support and enhance where possible their local and immediate response to an unfolding event.
- 29 Further to recent flooding events (2013-14), greater links and pre-deployment of sandbags have been made with most Town & Parish Councils along the Eden & Darent rivers. Specific Community Flood Plans have been developed and a training and testing exercise was held in September 2015 with interested parties.
- 30 More recently, the EP & PS Manager supported the Kent Resilience Forum & the Environment Agency (EA) to deliver Flood Warden training at Otford and worked with the EA to test the Westerham Town Council Flood Plan.

Key Implications

Financial

The Council has a small budget for Civil protection (£50,000) which is largely salary allocations for key staff responsibilities. In the event of invoking emergency Planning procedures and actions, funding would need to be found from Partner Agencies, or from Council reserves, depending on the nature of the response. In certain larger scale events, where expenditure exceeds a certain threshold, funding can be recovered from Government above this limit (Belwin Scheme).

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

The Council has statutory responsibilities as a Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Appendices None

Background Papers: SDC Emergency Plan

Richard Wilson
Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services