



Report to the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Title:	Update to Information Paper on Buckinghamshire County Council's Emergency Response to Flooding
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Overview

The aim of this report is to summarise the Resilience context to Buckinghamshire County Council's emergency response to flooding as delivered by the Resilience Team.

Legislative Background

The Statutory duties for Buckinghamshire County Council under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) – the primary legislation for the Resilience Team - are:

- a) To undertake risk assessment and to prepare a Community Risk Register (CRR) based on the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) area,
- b) To have emergency plans,
- c) To communicate risk to the public through the CRR and to communicate with the public in the event of an emergency,
- d) To cooperate and share information with other Category 1 and 2 Responders,
- e) To have Business Continuity Management arrangements,
- f) To advise and assist local businesses and voluntary organisations with regards to Business Continuity Management.

The Civil Contingencies Act (2004) states that Category 1 Responders, such as Buckinghamshire County Council shall,

“Maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if an emergency occurs or is likely to occur the person or body is able to perform his or its functions so far as necessary or desirable for the purpose of –

- Preventing the emergency,
- Reducing, controlling or mitigating its effects, or
- Taking other action in connection with it,”

(Section 2(1) (d))

The stated aim of the County Emergency Plan is to provide an effective and coordinated Council response to an emergency affecting the community, in support of the combined multi-agency response, in order to:

- manage the immediate effects of the emergency,
- mitigate the impact of the emergency – especially on the vulnerable –
- and hasten the return to normality through the recovery process.

The County Emergency Plan provides a mechanism for Services to respond to an emergency delivering predominantly their normal job (*‘his or its functions’*) under abnormal (emergency) circumstances.

Business Continuity Management allows the Services to prioritise their resources into delivering those pre-identified ‘Mission Critical Activities’, within a certain timeframe and to a certain level, because of a disruption to internal services including in the event of an emergency.

It should be noted that Property owners are responsible for the protection of their own properties.

Team and Resources

The Resilience Team is now part of the Communities, Health and Adult Social Care Business Unit. During early 2014, it was part of the Localities and Safer Communities Service.

In 2014, the Team consisted of 5.7FTE. The Team is now 4FTE with currently 2 FTE in post).

The budget for the Resilience Team in 2014-5 was £213k. The budget for the Team in 2015-16 is £182k.

Ongoing Work since Feb 2014 Flooding

Organisational Learning

Since the 2014 floods, the Resilience Team have facilitated the BCC organisational learning process and, with the output from this, have contributed to the multi-agency organisational learning coordinated by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum (TVLRF).

During 2014, the identified lessons from the BCC debriefing process were actioned progressively. These actions included:

- Specific updates to the County Emergency Plan (complete, due again 2015).
- Training identified and delivered (ongoing).
- Updates required to the Tactical Multi-Agency Flood plans (ongoing).
- Attempts to rationalise the 5 Buckinghamshire Local Authorities' sandbag policies utilising the vehicle of Community Emergency Plans and Mutual Aid.
- Signing up to the Extended Floodline Service (ongoing).
- Provision of an opportunity (Exercise Neptune, Nov 14) for training and exercising for responders, COMT and all Councillors who have significant flood risk in their wards (completed, although attendance was disappointing).

The TVLRF also undertook an academic review into the flooding from a Thames Valley perspective using an independent academic. The results of this were delivered to the TVLRF Executive in January 2015 and key recommendations have been extracted and are being added to the respective TVLRF capability plans.

Support to Strategic Flood Risk Management Team

The Resilience Team have supported the prevention and preparation efforts of the SFRMT through their support to the Temporary Defence project and with subject matter expertise as required.

Challenges & Opportunities

1. There is a public information message that needs to be clarified to the community that property owners are responsible for the protection of their own properties. It is not the responsibility of the local authorities or the emergency services.
2. To develop a single approach to flooding by the Buckinghamshire local authorities, to include an agreed single sandbag procedure. This would ensure a single agreed message could be given to residents. It would require an agreement about when sandbags would need to be distributed and an activation mechanism for doing this.
Noting:
 - a. AVDC are expecting TfB to deliver sandbags on their behalf – this needs to be confirmed by TfB.
 - b. There is a proposal by TfB to deliver sandbags for all District Councils – this has yet to be confirmed.
3. Provide advice and assistance in relation to Community Resilience – which is the key to future emergency management in the age of reducing public funds balanced against the

increasingly wide-area and wide impact emergencies, often (but not always) caused by the weather, such as flooding.

- a. Developed Community Resilience would see individual Parish / Town Councils or other bodies preparing community emergency plans, to include flood risk, and organise themselves so that they could respond in support of their community to mitigate the impact of any incident or emergency, including flooding.
 - b. Community Resilience can be expanded to include individual & family resilience and business resilience (including businesses, voluntary organisations, care homes, schools) thereby creating a resilient Buckinghamshire.
 - c. Other benefits of Community Resilience are increased community spirit, neighbourliness, self-sufficiency, self-determination, business profitability and community prosperity. Community Resilience supports Volunteering, Prevention Matters, Demand Management and Adaptation to Climate Change.
4. To enhance Resilience, ideally there would be the funding, resources and capacity to identify risk areas and prevent flooding taking place in known areas (using risk assessment). This is to a degree, being undertaken by the Strategic Flood Risk Management Team in their Temporary Defence project, but it is a natural follow-on from Section 19 investigations, where past flooding could reoccur and where specific prevention / mitigation measures have been identified, to, where possible, undertake those mitigation measures and prevent future flooding.