

Scrutiny Committee

30 August 2017

Scrutiny Review of Flooding: Final Progress Report



Lead Member: Councillor Colin Clark

Lead Officer: Garry Barclay

1. Background

In the immediate aftermath of Storm Eva which occurred over the Christmas period in 2015, a Scrutiny Task Group review was commissioned to assess the Council's response to the flooding which affected a number of residential properties and businesses in the Borough.

Separate to this was a routine officer de-briefing which occurs following any situation when the Council's Emergency and Flood Response Plans are put into operation. This is to ensure that procedures are improved to incorporate any learning resulting from emergency incidents.

The Scrutiny Task Group report endorsed the suggested improvements from the officer de-briefing process and also contained additional recommendations for Cabinet's consideration. The Task Group report was agreed by Scrutiny Committee on 20 September 2016.

The totality of the Scrutiny Task Group recommendations were therefore considered by Cabinet and a response was made to Scrutiny Committee on 6 December 2016. Appendix 1 summarises Cabinet's response at the time and the final position with regards to the actions taken.

2. Summary of Progress

We are pleased to report that all the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Task Group that were agreed by Cabinet in December 2016 have now been implemented.

The attached Appendix also refers to some further improvements to the Council's emergency response procedures which have been introduced in 2017.

3. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Review Recommendations, Cabinet Response and Final Progress Position

Scrutiny Review Recommendations, Cabinet Response and Final Progress Position

Scrutiny Committee Recommendation	Cabinet Response: 6 December 2016		Final Position at August 2017
	Recommendation Accepted? Yes / No	If yes, how and when is the recommendation going to be implemented? If no, why is the recommendation not going to be implemented?	
1. INTERNAL DE-BRIEF RECOMMENDATIONS (ENDORSED BY SCRUTINY)			
1.1 Upon receipt of flood warnings from the Environment Agency (EA) key services including Gateway & Neighbourhood Services to be put on notice that they may need to open for business out of normal office hours and provisional arrangements also made for the Emergency Management Team (EMT) to meet promptly to co-ordinate activities. This should occur simultaneously to putting rest centres on notice.	Yes	Implemented. A procedure has been agreed whereby Neighbourhoods Out of Hours Duty Officers will open the Civic Centre and contact key officers to attend to co-ordinate activities including the establishment of a Gateway service.	Implemented.
1.2 The Council's Public Relations Officer to attend the Lancashire Resilience Forum (LRF) Media Sub-Group to raise and progress the issue of dove-tailing local communication channels including social media with those of the lead emergency response agency in order to better inform residents and members of ongoing developments.	Yes	In progress. Engaging with social media has now become an integral part of PR's approach. The PR team have also undertaken to attend the LRF Media Group meetings.	Implemented.

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1.3 To facilitate this the Council's PRO should also be given access to Resilience Direct.	Yes	Implemented. The PR team was provided with RD access and training July 2016.	Implemented.
1.4 The Council to arrange for detailed mapping of the affected locations and supply these to the South Ribble multi-agency "Making Space for Water Group" at which the EA, United Utilities (UU) and Lancashire County Council (LCC) are represented.	Yes	Implemented. The list of flooded properties has been shared with the lead agencies through the Making Space for Water Group & also fed into the new LLFA district level flood reporting process.	Implemented. As the Lead Flood Risk Management Authority, LCC has also undertaken investigations pan Lancashire and findings were published in "Section 19" reports in September 2016, followed up by district level flood reports in April 2017. The reports inform residents and businesses of the investigations undertaken, flood risk improvements completed and opportunities for further investigation and investment in flood prevention measures. These reports are updated quarterly and can be found on LCC's website.

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<p>1.5 The Council should adopt a clear policy statement setting out its responsibilities with regard to the distribution of sandbags and this should be extensively publicised amongst members and the general public. This may include provision of sandbags at predetermined storage areas near to the most susceptible locations which local communities are able to access themselves.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Implemented. The Council has neither the statutory responsibility nor the capacity to ensure property level flood defence. The planned multi-media awareness campaign will make this clear by informing residents of the limited value of sandbags and of their responsibility to prepare and self-protect.</p>	<p>Implemented. A media campaign has since taken place including social media and the Spring 2017 edition of "Forward" to inform residents of the limited value of sandbags and of their responsibility to prepare and self-protect. Information and contact numbers for self-protection products was also made available.</p>
<p>1.6 The EA to be invited to the Central My Neighbourhoods Forum to explain their plans for engaging with the community at Bannister Brook and to discuss how community resilience might operate more generally in the area.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Implemented. A dedicated event was held at the Civic Centre with representation from EA, LCC, UU and SRBC to promote community resilience within the Borough. As a result of this event a Leyland Flood Action Community Resilience Group was established.</p>	<p>Implemented.</p>

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1.7 The learning from Central My Neighbourhood Forums to be applied to the other Forums in due course.	Yes	In progress. The EA are endeavouring to engage with other communities to promote and develop greater resilience amongst residents.	Implemented. The EA and LCC Emergency Planning have attended parish councils and other forums to support those communities wishing to establish community resilience/flood action groups.
1.8 In the meantime it is recommended that an article is placed in "Forward" Paper informing residents of the roles and responsibilities of all agencies including the Council in respect of flooding and to provide advice as to how residents should themselves prepare for flooding and build resilience into their properties. The limited value of sandbags should be mentioned and reference made to other products that are available on the market which residents should be encouraged to take a self-help approach (noting the grants that may be available to assist).	Yes	In progress. An article will be placed in the next edition of Forward. In the meantime other channels of communication are being used including the Council website, social media and information leaflets. These provide information on known risk areas, the promotion of self-help and signposting to the flood awareness campaigns of the main agencies. Qualifying residents have also been given support with their applications for property level flood resilience grants.	Implemented. An article was placed in the Spring 2017 edition of Forward alongside information provided through social media. This included information on self-help and signposting to the flood awareness campaigns of the main agencies. Qualifying residents have also been given support with their applications for property level flood resilience grants.

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ADDITIONAL SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS			
2. The Council appoints a Member flooding and drainage champion to support Cabinet in ensuring that flooding issues are promoted, tackled and co-ordinated across the Council at a member and officer level, including strengthening partnership working on these issues.	No	Not required. Already within the portfolio of the member responsible for Emergency Planning and the Council is fully engaged within the LRF.	Not required.
3. The emergency plan be reviewed and updated to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearer guidance on when to place relevant officers on standby • A clear process for briefing and updating the Cabinet Member and other relevant Cabinet Members • Process for opening and ensuring the Civic Centre is operational during holiday periods 	Yes Yes Yes	Implemented. See 1.1 above. Implemented. Already within EP procedures and will be applied on a more timely basis in future Implemented. See 1.1 above.	Implemented. Implemented. Implemented.

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4. Provide training and awareness for employees and councillors on the emergency plan.	Yes	Implemented. Refresher training for relevant officers was undertaken to cover improvements to procedures following the internal de-briefing process. A Member Learning Hour took place in May 2016. SMT received refresher training in November 2016.	Implemented.
5. Carry out practice exercises to test the emergency plan to ensure it is robust and evaluate how they have gone to improve emergency planning further.	Yes	Implemented. Already built into EP procedures. These take place on a cyclical basis, for example a Rest Centre simulation exercise is planned for March 2017. Actual incidents / de-briefings provide further learning opportunities in addition to simulated events.	Implemented. A combined rest centre simulation exercise with Chorley Council is now planned as a key project in the Shared Services Business improvement Plan for 2017/18.
6. In future EMT meetings are organised and take place more promptly, with a clear log of the decisions and actions taken.	Yes	Implemented. See 1.1 above.	Implemented.
7. The Council opens in between Christmas and New Year on a skeleton staff basis to provide customer services.	No	Alternative approach adopted. See 1.1 above.	Alternative approach adopted.

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<p>8. A clear and proactive strategy is developed by the Council to re-assure and provide information to our residents using the Council's website, social media channels, press releases and automated telephone message. This strategy should include residents, councillors and employees. Forming a key part of the emergency plan, standard and pre-prepared communications materials should be developed.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>In progress. See 1.2 & 1.8 above.</p>	<p>Implemented. See 1.2 & 1.8 above.</p>
<p>9. The on-call officer support be reviewed to allow more resources to dealing with calls. A process for escalating issues be developed to provide more re-assurance to the on-call duty officer.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Implemented. See 1.1 above.</p>	<p>Implemented. In August 2017 the emergency planning out of hours arrangements were enhanced further with the establishment of a SMT Duty Officer weekly on-call rota to enable a Director be available to take a strategic lead on any serious incidents.</p>

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<p>10. The newly appointed Member Flooding and Drainage Champion (see recommendation 2) develop a policy for the provision of mobile flood barriers and how local communities through My Neighbourhood Forums could become more resilient and self-sufficient.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Not applicable. The new LLFA district level flood reports will seek to identify the relevant flood protection opportunities for further investigation and investment and will also provide concerned homeowners and businesses with information about what they can do to help protect their own properties from flooding in the future. The EA are also endeavouring to engage with local communities to promote and develop greater resilience amongst residents. The EA are seeking to target specific communities at risk of flooding when opportunities arise (see 1.6 and 1.7).</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>
<p>11. South Ribble Neighbourhoods Officers inspect gullies and pass on any issues to Lancashire County Council.</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Not applicable. This is the responsibility of the Highways Authority LCC who have recently completed a programme of gully cleansing and highways maintenance at all the locations flooded.</p>	<p>Not applicable.</p>