

ITEM 10, APPENDIX I

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL FLOOD POLICY

EMERGENCY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

SEPTEMBER 2007

1.0 Introduction:

- 1.1 This policy has been designed to provide clear guidance to the public and Council staff in respect of the Council's strategy in planning and responding to flood emergencies.
- 1.2 The Council, within its remit, is committed to providing the residents of Uttlesford with a good standard of service when responding to flood emergencies. We recognise our duty to plan and prepare for emergencies under the provisions of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and provide advice and information to local residents.
- 1.3 The Council does not have a legal obligation to provide sandbags but we have decided to store sandbags and will endeavour to provide them to residents once a flood emergency has been declared.
- 1.4 The Council will be proactive in providing information to warn and inform the public on any relevant issues relating to flooding.

2.0 Responding to floods:

- 2.1 The Council maintains a list of trained staff volunteers who will respond to a flood emergency by setting up and managing a public help line to support residents and businesses.
- 2.2 A liaison officer will attend the scene of the flood to assess the severity and to cascade information to the PA's team who will then cascade the information to the relevant response team. The severity of the flood will determine whether we set up a Silver Control or a Gold control team.
- 2.3 In the aftermath of the flood, the Council may engage in a joint operation to return the environment to its original state. However, private residents and land owners will be responsible for their own land and any contaminants from their land that may have affected the flood water and hence, natural water courses. Page 1

3.0 Sandbag Policy (storage)

- 3.1 The Council may provide sandbags to parish/town councils if flooding is a risk within their parish/town. The Council cannot be held responsible for the storage and distribution of sandbags from the parish/town council but will provide advice in terms of storage and distribution.
- 3.2 If a flood is reported, the District Council will, in the first instance, make contact with the parish/town council where the flood has occurred to determine whether they can respond by supplying sandbags to those affected. If not, the Council will activate their flood procedures to deliver sandbags where possible.
- 3.2 The Council will make arrangements to store their own supply of sandbags at Newport, Shire Hill and Great Dunmow depots.

4.0 Sandbag Policy (distribution)

- 4.1 The distribution of sandbags is subject to availability of logistics and sandbag supplies. Each house hold will be entitled to a maximum of ten sandbags.
- 4.2 Sandbags will only be distributed once a major emergency (flooding) has been declared by the Chief Executive.
- 4.3 Sandbags are not available for collection from the depots. Instead, the depots will deliver the sandbags to an agreed local collection point or the property directly.
- 4.4 To qualify for sandbags residents must live in a private residential (not commercial) dwelling in the district and is affected by fluvial flooding or surface run-off flooding.

5.0 Warning and informing the public (flooding):

- 5.1 The Council has a legal obligation to warn and inform the public of any relevant issues relating to the risks within the district and in this case, relating to flooding. The Council cannot provide information on whether a particular property is at risk from flooding but we can provide advice on what to do and it is the responsibility of the resident as to which course of action they take.
- 5.2 A Community Risk Register is maintained on the public domain (website) which includes details in respect of the risk of flooding.
- 5.3 Residents may seek information from the Council on flood risk relating to their property. When requesting information, the resident will be asked to prove that they are the occupier of the property. Proof may be in the format of a Utilities Bill or Council Tax bill.

- 5.4 The Emergency Planning Department, where necessary, will provide information to the public and parish/town councils on flood prevention and response. This may be in the format of a leaflet, presentation or flood fair. Information can also be found on the Council's website.
- 5.5 The local population also have a role to play so far as being prepared for flooding and should look out for guidance. Local residents are advised to determine whether they are at risk to flooding at which they should take the necessary precautions to safeguard their property. Residents must not rely on the Council to provide sandbags during an emergency.
- 5.6 The provision of flood warnings is the responsibility of the Environment Agency and the provision of severe weather warnings (heavy rain) is the responsibility of the MET Office.
- 5.7 Arrangements have been made with the Councils external "Answering Service" so that weather and flood warnings can be sent by text message to members of the parish/town council. It is to the discretion of the parish/town council as to how they will respond to the warning message. The Council cannot be responsible for the accuracy or timely execution of weather/flood warnings.

6.0 Disposal of sandbags:

- 6.1 In cases where we have delivered sandbags, it is the responsibility of the resident to either store the sandbags for future use or to recycle the sand for other purposes. The sandbags must not be sent to landfill.

7.0 Partnership arrangements:

- 7.1 We recognise the need to work in partnership with other operating authorities. The Council engages with the Essex Mutual Aid Agreement to share resources during an emergency. The Councils ability to share resources is however, subject to our own requirements of the resource.