

**Committee:** Community and Housing

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** November 12, 2009

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**Title:** CESSATION OF SANDBAGS

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Item for decision

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### Summary

- 1 This report explains the reasons for the recommendation for Uttlesford District Council to cease the supply of sandbags as part of its Emergency response to flooding and gives reasons why and how the Emergency Planning Department is recommending this change in policy

### Recommendations

- 2 That the committee agrees upon a new policy for the cessation of delivery and supply of all sandbags.
- 3 To support information and education within all affected communities in liaison with Parish Councils.

### Background Papers

- 4 Emergency Planning incident logs for flooding 1999 – 2009
- 5 Responses from Town and Parish Councils and the Essex Fire & Rescue Service to the consultation exercise

### Impact

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Communication/Consultation	<p>Consultation has been carried out with all Parish Councils and both North and South Area Community Forums and Essex Fire &amp; Rescue Service.</p> <p>Letters sent to all Parish Councils summer 2009, requested their comments, concerns and feedback with regard to the cessation of sandbags. Several replies from parishes who suffer frequent flooding were to the positive: All who replied recognised that UDC should no longer be responsible and that this responsibility should be delegated to the Parishes who were to maintain and deploy their own equipment in the event of flooding and with a database of other similar districts that could be used as</p>
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	mutual aid in an emergency. Most parishes had their own supply already and were in agreement for this to continue. There is also call for some education and consideration for those unable to help themselves in times of flooding.
Community Safety	No Impact
Equalities	There are key issues that have been recognised and due consideration has been given for educating and informing both Parish Councils and community  See Appendix I
Finance	No cost for the recommendation. Implementation will save the council an approximate figure of £6000 per annum based on current costing although historically this has never been budgeted for.
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	None. There is no legal duty on the council to supply sandbags
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	Positive impact in terms of no longer requiring resources to be redirected and no necessity for resources to be exposed to potential harm by being sent to flood risk areas at the time of greatest potential risk.

## Situation

- 7 Incident records from 1999 to 2009 show lack of efficiency and speed between the request from the general community for sandbags and the deployment of staff and vehicles and actual delivery to the recipient. Later records also show that for all incidents of flooding there were no more than one or two properties affected at each location. The significant exception to this being Ashdon.
- 8 Staff are not trained for working in water.

- 9 Staff deployment during the hours of darkness to respond to calls from the out of hour's service for sandbags is seen as an unacceptable risk due to the above.
- 10 Deployment of sandbags require the rescheduling of normal patterns of work and for staff resource to be redirected from other work which takes time and has an effect on the business continuity of street services, by which time the response is too late.
- 11 For a number of years this authority has maintained a stock of sandbags without effective storage facilities at any of the three locations. As a result sandbags have been stored improperly in conditions that have accelerated their deterioration and subsequently when they have been needed it has been found that a proportion of the sandbags are not fit for use.
- 12 The lack of resolution to this historic problem has led to the unrealistic expectation on the part of members of the public suffering from flooding, that the council can and will deliver sandbags upon immediate request.

### Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Members of the public will not be fully aware of policy changes in the event of a flood	1 The Emergency planning Dept has plans to advise, assist and educate all public of policy changes both via media communication and interaction with effected communities	1 Members of the public will be informed and prepared	Education and definition of responsible parties with regard to fluvial and surface flooding and interaction with the public