

**EMERGENCY PLANNING WORKING PARTY held at 7.00 pm on 6 JULY 2000 at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN**

Present:- Councillor Mrs C D Down - Chairman
Councillors R P Chambers and Mrs S V Schneider.

Officers in attendance:- C D Cooper, Mrs R Hutchinson, Mrs S McLagan
and M T Purkiss.

EPWG1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E C Abrahams, Mrs M A Caton, A Dean, Mrs S Flack, R D Green, D W Gregory, D M Miller, R B Tyler and P A Wilcock.

EPWG2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs S V Schneider be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Working Party for the remainder of the Council year.

EPWG3 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 1999 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EPWG4 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute EPWG5 - Millennium Planning

Members expressed their thanks to the staff who had manned the Emergency Centre during Millennium night. In answer to a question, the District Emergency Planning Officer confirmed that no special arrangements were being made for New Years Eve 2000.

The Leader of the Council expressed his concern at the poor attendance by Members at this meeting and stressed the importance of the Members' role in Emergency Planning.

EPWG5 NEW FLOOD WARNING SYSTEMS

Officers explained that a new flood warning system would be introduced by the Environment Agency on 12 September 2000. This was particularly important as there were a number of rivers within the District.

Under the current system there were three levels of warning from the Environment Agency - Yellow, Amber and Red. The first level on the new system would be entitled 'Flood watch' and would combine information on weather and flooding. The next level would be entitled 'Flood warning' and would be issued when there was flooding of homes, businesses and roads expected. Uttlesford staff would be put on stand-by and the Council's Voicemail system would be used to alert some residents in the most vulnerable areas.

The highest level was 'Severe Flood Warning' where there was imminent danger to life and property. At this stage it was likely that the Council's action plan would be activated and staff would be called out.

One of the final information bulletins from the Environment Agency would be the 'All Clear'. Whilst at this stage there might still be some flooding, improvement would be imminent. The Environment Agency would provide an information pack to residents at risk and training was planned for Uttlesford staff.

EPWG6 NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR RECEPTION OF ASYLUM SEEKERS AT STANSTED AIRPORT

It was explained that over the past few years the Council had had to provide temporary housing for asylum seekers arriving at Stansted Airport. However, a new system was now in place which put this responsibility on the National Asylum Seekers' Service and the East Anglian Consortium of Councils.

EPWG7 UPDATE ON COUNCIL'S INVOLVEMENT IN STANSTED HIJACK

Members received a detailed report on the role of the Council in the Afghan air hijack from Monday 7 February to Friday 11 February 2000.

The involvement of the Council in this operation had been small, but the profile had been high. The use of the voluntary organisations proved the success of the joint training and exercising which had been carried out over the past two years. The small number of Council officers involved meant that the briefing chain had been easy to manage and the use of 'Message of the Day' to keep the staff informed had proved successful.

EPWG8 UPDATE ON MEMBERS' ROLE IN AN EMERGENCY

Officers explained the current situation with the elected Members' role in emergencies. It was noted that a revised emergency procedures handbook and a quick reference orange card had been circulated to all Members.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm.