

Committee: Scrutiny

Agenda Item

Date: 7 December 2010

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Title: Emergency Planning Status update

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Item for decision

Summary

1. This report on the status of emergency planning has been requested by members of the Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendations

2. Members note this report

Financial Implications

3. None

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	Failure to prepare for and respond to emergencies appropriately and in a timely fashion may put the public at risk
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	Inadequate emergency plans can risk the health and safety of staff in emergency situations
Human Rights/Legal Implications	The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 states that local Authorities have a duty to plan and prepare for emergencies that may occur within their districts.

Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	The council relies upon volunteers to respond in the event of emergencies and upon line managers to release staff for training in emergency response

Situation

6. Uttlesford District Council is a category 1 responder, as set out in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. As such it has statutory duties to:
- Assess the risk of emergencies happening
 - Put in place emergency plans
 - Put in place business continuity management arrangements
 - Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise members of the public in the event of an emergency
 - Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
 - Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.
7. The council has plans in place to meet these statutory requirements. There is a call out procedure to enable staff to be summoned to respond to an emergency situation which is tested periodically. Training is conducted on a regular basis. Recent examples include a table top exercise conducted for senior management and a full rest centre exercise was conducted for UDC staff and other local responders.
8. The council works closely with cross border authorities, sharing best practise and training, it has close connections with Essex County Council Crisis Support team which would be an added resource in the event of an emergency and gives additional experience to the council response staff. The council is working in partnership with Epping Forest DC and has recently assisted at a large emergency roadshow event at Gillwell Park, attended by over 1700 scouts and associated groups.
9. A recent community survey resulted in a percentage of the community stating that they were unaware of what to do in the event of an emergency. In order to address this and to improve the response of the council to the needs of the community, UDC is seeking to work closely with Epping Forest and Harlow district councils to carry out a project starting 2011 and leading up to and over the 2012 Olympics. The three districts share major roads and motorways, rail

and other public transport links and face common risks associated with this event.

10. Exercises have shown that Uttlesford needs to improve its response by recruiting more volunteers from within its own organisation. As a small council with many staff living outside the district the council would struggle to deal with an emergency without outside assistance. In order to improve Uttlesford’s response divisional heads of service should actively encourage staff to volunteer and to allow attendance at relevant training. In addition the council needs to retain close links with other councils and voluntary agencies (such as the Red Cross and the WRVS) to boost resilience to deal with emergency situations.

Risk Analysis

11.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Uttlesford is inadequately prepared to respond to emergency situations	3 Uttlesford has a low number of adequately trained response staff	4 Little or no response could be provided causing the council to suffer severe reputational damage, particularly if the emergency lead to a public inquiry as is frequently the case.	Uttlesford takes steps to ensure sufficient staff with appropriate training are able to respond to an emergency situation.

- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.