



Report of Peace and Emergency Planning

Report to Outer North West Area Committee

Date: 30th March 2009

Subject: Emergencies and the community context

Electoral Wards Affected:

Adel & Wharfedale
Guiseley & Rawdon
Horsforth
Otley & Yeadon

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion X

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function

 X

Delegated Executive Function available for Call In

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call in Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

This report supports a presentation by the Council's Peace and Emergency Planning Unit (PEPU) on work to increase the number of local people engaged in increasing the resilience of their community, and the implications of this for the Outer North West Area.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

This report supports a presentation by the Council's Peace and Emergency Planning Unit (PEPU) on recent work undertaken, and planned for the coming year, to improve the resilience of the community to emergency incidents.

2.0 Background Information

PEPU is responsible for ensuring the Council is prepared to respond to emergencies in support of its partners and affected communities. The mission of the unit is to work with external partners and Council services to deliver an efficient and robust approach to emergency management and reduce the impact of emergencies on the community through support and the development of community resilience.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 PEPU's corporate role is shaped by the Council's statutory and regulatory responsibilities discussed in Section 5. The Unit also contributes to achieving the outcomes and priorities in the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-11 and Council Business Plan. It is the intention in the coming year for PEPU to spend a significantly greater proportion of its productive time on educating and raising the awareness of the public, with the result of the delivery of enhanced resilience to the Council, the city and its diverse communities. This will ultimately contribute towards the strategic outcome '*Stronger Communities – Improved community cohesion and integration through meaningful involvement and valuing equality and diversity*'.
- 3.2 Work has already commenced on a number of initiatives and workstreams to increase the number of local people engaged in increasing the resilience of their community. Examples include the development of local community-based emergency plans (e.g. Halton and Collingham – though future plans may be appropriate for Outer North West), participating in public events (e.g. Great Yorkshire Show and local Flood Awareness events) and close liaison with businesses through the Leeds Business Continuity Network.
- 3.3 A large proportion of our emergency response work is public-facing and of direct benefit to those who require support or who seek information and advice from all walks of life. We now need to extend this into new ways reaching into all parts of the community. As previously mentioned, we have made a start but would like to work closer with Area Management in order to develop better community resilience.
- 3.4 A 'Warning & Informing' strategy is in development by the Unit, which focuses on implementing many preparedness and resilience activities with differing community groups. Initially the focus will be on school children and students through Safety Rangers, a Leeds-based multi-agency scheme led by West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, where primary school children take part in a number of activities based around safety. PEPU attended the most recent event with an activity based around developing an emergency kit.
- 3.5 It is intended to extend the work on local community-based flood plans to areas at high risk from flooding. It is hoped that engagement to any existing resident groups / committees can be through the Area Management team with support from within Area Committees. Areas in Outer North West may include flooding in Otley and surface water issues in Yeadon, Bramhope, Adel and Pool. Other risks we are aware of in this area include a COMAH site and of course Leeds Bradford International Airport.
- 3.6 The Business Continuity Network has continued to thrive, with additional seminars aimed at Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and security awareness seminars run for key sectors with the Police. While our engagement with the larger businesses in Leeds is strong, there is still much work on liaising and promoting business continuity to SMEs.
- 3.7 There is a lot to be achieved in undertaking this piece of work including stronger community links, increased understanding of our community when we do respond and also helping individuals reduce the impact of emergencies upon themselves. As a service we are interested in identifying what issues or concerns the areas have and how we might better address these in relation to emergencies. This is particularly the case where specific needs, vulnerabilities or risks exist in a given area.

4.0 Implications for Council Policy and Governance

The work is in fulfillment of the Council's '*Policy on Planning and Responding to Emergencies*', which sets out the Council's commitment and approach to ensuring that it is able to plan for and respond to emergencies as effectively as possible.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 5.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, together with the related regulations and guidance, sets out a comprehensive legislative framework for the undertaking of emergency planning and business continuity planning by local responders. Under the Act the Council is designated as a Category 1 or 'core local responder, with a number of statutory duties. Compliance with these duties is measured externally by the Audit Commission as part of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Key lines of enquiry criteria for civil contingencies have been incorporated into the corporate assessment under the 'Safer Stronger Communities' theme. 'Resilience' features in five indicators of the Department for Communities and Local Government's National Indicator set issued in 2007.
- 5.2 In addition to the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA), the Government continues to progress the 'Capabilities Programme' which seeks to ensure that a robust infrastructure of response is in place to deal with the consequences of widespread disasters. It consists of a total of 18 capability 'workstreams'.
- 5.3 The duties under the Civil Contingencies Act fall upon the Council as a whole and all directorates have a role in planning for, and responding to, emergencies. The Council's Emergency Planning Policy sets out how these obligations are divided between key officers and directorates

6.0 Conclusions

PEPU have implemented a number of initiatives to increase the resilience of communities in an emergency incident, and will continue to progress this throughout 209/10. PEPU now seeks to engage Area Committees better on this agenda.

7.0 Recommendations

Outer North West Area Committee is requested to note the contents of the presentation and offer feedback on its potential role in supporting and progressing improvements in the enhancement of community resilience.

Background Papers

Policy on Planning and Responding to Emergencies