

Select Committee on Community Safety and Community Services
- 14th September 2006

Annual Report of The Emergency Planning / Business Continuity Officer

Purpose of Report

To report to the Select Committee on Public Safety and update on the state of preparedness within the Council to respond to those major incidents which could befall the community of Dudley either from natural, man-made disasters or terrorism within the Borough.

Background

The Council has, for many years, operated with an Emergency Planning Officer under the Civil Defence Act. Since 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act has been on the statute book and was enacted on the 15th November 2005, with the additional requirement to give advice/promote Business Continuity to the private sector by Local Authorities.

The Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) has led to a new era in Emergency Planning. Following national consultation in 2001, a review of Emergency Planning was undertaken and the results of this review formed the basis of the new Act.

Emergency Planning had worked towards the review since 2002 and was therefore well placed to implement the CCA.

Over 4 years, a comprehensive set of plans have been drawn up to ensure both the preparedness of the Borough and compliance with the CCA.

The Act lists Category 1 and Category 2 responders, these are :

Category 1 - Councils
Police
Fire
Ambulance
Health
Environment Agency
Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Category 2 - Electricity
Gas
Water
Telecommunications
Railways
Airports (civil)
Harbours
Health & Safety Executive
Highways

The areas of responsibility for a local authority are as follows :

- **Planning to Respond to Emergency Situations** – the generic Major Emergency Plan has been reissued this year and covers all situations.
- **Risk Assessment** – those risks within the Borough which may lead to an emergency situation occurring, a comprehensive 126 page assessment has been undertaken and is available to the public on the internet.
- **Risk Mitigation** – this is a difficult process for a Local Authority where as long as a premise conforms to relevant legislation, no further reduction in risk can be asked for, however other Category 1 Responders have legislation they enforce.
- **Response** – to be in a position to respond to incidents. In order to conform to this, training and exercising is an ongoing activity of Emergency Planning.
- **Business Continuity Planning** – to plan within the Authority for the continuation of our key services during an emergency. Emergency Planning has taken on this important role and is ensuring this is undertaken within Directorates. A Corporate Business Continuity Plan has been drawn up, as well as a template for Service Managers to work to.
- **Warning and Informing the Public** – a comprehensive plan is available for this, the Public Information and Media Plan.
- **Information Sharing and Co-operation** – this is between all Category 1 and 2 responders. In the West Midlands Conurbation, this is done through the Local Resilience Forum, locally Emergency Planning hold regular multi-agency meetings with the partner agencies.
- **Promotion of Business Continuity Planning to the wider community (Local Authorities only)** – this part of the Act was introduced in May 2006, however from December 2005 Emergency Planning have been undertaking talks to Dudley Business Forum and through Black Country Chamber. Information has been placed on the internet and a flyer through the Business Rates this year.

All these areas have been addressed and a complete list of documents/plans held by Emergency Planning is summarized at Appendix 1.

In order to further address the training of officers within the Authority, training sessions and exercises carried out in 2005/6 are listed at Appendix 2.

To further ensure Dudley's compliance and ability to respond to emergencies, the Emergency Planning Team attend many partner organisation meetings. Also, the Chief Executive has recently taken on the role of Lead Chief Executive for the West Midlands Chief Executives, which means he will be representing the West Midlands Local Authorities on both the Local Resilience Forum and Regional Resilience Forum.

Recently, the Chief Executive has been, at the invitation of the United States Secret Service, to Washington DC to meet with various US Disaster Management Agencies to exchange views on resilience to various emergencies.

This was one visit which shows the work undertaken in Dudley has been recognised internationally and it is anticipated that this dialogue will continue.

The Emergency Planning Team has increased in size to 3 members of staff in 2005/6, consisting of 1 Emergency Planning Officer and 2 Assistants, with some administration assistance from Corporate Policy and Research; members of Corporate Policy and Research also deputise for on call emergency planning in the case of absence.

In order to conform to CPA and Audit requirements, a dedicated Emergency Planning Centre is to be created at Himley Hall which will allow the Authority to deal with any incident affecting the Borough efficiently and with the least disruption to other services.

The internet is now being used to convey information to the public. Also, some advice documents have been prepared, printed and distributed through libraries, CAB, health centres, Dudley Council Plus, reception areas and LA residential homes.

Finance

There is no increase in the current budgetary provision envisaged for planning. Finance for responses will come from balances or reserves; any response funding over £621,000 would be subject to a claim to the Government under the Bellwin Scheme.

The authority will ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

Law

The Emergency Planning function of the Local Authority is now laid down within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

Equality Impact

Emergency Planning ensures that all sections of the community are treated equally and has printed material available in other languages, Braille and audio for times of emergency, and the ability to get this undertaken at any time.

Recommendation

That members note this annual report of the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Unit.



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Documents and Plans held by Emergency Planning :

- Dudley MBC Major Emergency Plan
- Dudley MBC Public Information and Media Plan
- Dudley MBC Call Centre Guide
- Dudley MBC Registrars Emergency Contacts
- Dudley MBC DPC Emergency Call out Plans
- Dudley MBC DUE Emergency Plan
- Dudley MBC Social Services Emergency Plan
- Dudley MBC Fuel Crisis Plan (Draft)
- Dudley MBC Role of the Elected Member in Emergencies
- Dudley MBC Housing Emergency Plan
- Dudley MBC Rest Centre Managers Guide
- Dudley MBC Rest Centre Locations and associated documents
- Support Officers Guide
- Dudley Emergency Information Helplines Guide
- Dudley MBC Temporary Mortuary Plan
- Dudley MBC Crisis Support Team Protocol
- Dudley MBC Crisis Support Team Handbook
- Dudley MBC Feeding Plan
- Dudley MBC CBRN Recovery Plan
- Council Buildings Evacuation Plans
- Dudley MBC Pandemic Plan
- Hazard Identification Document
- Dudley and Worcestershire Clergy Response
- Interfaith Contacts
- Public Advice for Emergency Situations
- Town Centre Evacuation
- Dudley MBC ITC Disaster Recovery Plan
- Dudley MBC Business Continuity Plans
- Community Business Continuity template
- Business Continuity to the Community
- Coroners Court/temporary Magistrates Court, Keyholders
- Election Count Plan

Training Sessions and Exercises carried out in 2005/6 :

20 th -21 st January 2005	Crisis Support Team
25 th January 2005	Horizon 2
27 th January 2005	Contemporaneous Note Taking
10 th -11 th February 2005	Crisis Support Team
25 th February 2005	Boscastle Floods Seminar
28 th February 2005	Rest Centre Training
2 nd March 2005	Halesowen College
7 th March 2005	Clergy Training
10 th March 2005	Business Continuity Seminar
14 th March 2005	Horizon 3
29 th March 2005	Exercise Stanier
18 th -19 th April 2005	Crisis Support Team
28 th April 2005	DEFRA
14 th June 2005	National Decontamination Service
1 st August 2005	Undertakers Training
2 nd August 2005	ONYX Chemical Training
13 th October 2005	Media Training
17 th October 2005	Rest Centre Managers
24 th October 2005	PCT Training
27 th October 2005	Crisis Support Team First Aid
1 st November 2005	Business Continuity Management Forum
1 st November 2005	PCT Training
9 th November 2005	Exercise New Day
	Highways Exercise Advance
10 th November 2005	Contemporaneous Note Taking
11 th November 2005	HPA Exercise
15 th November 2005	Members
22 nd November 2005	Rest Centre Managers
28 th November 2005	Crisis Support Team First Aid
15 th December 2005	Witness Box Training
19 th January 2006	Managing Personal Impact of Dealing with Fatalities
24 th January 2006	Multi Agency Exercise Stourbridge
2 nd February 2006	Exercise Seville
16 th February 2006	Information Helpline Training
7 th March 2006	Managing Personal Impact of Dealing with Fatalities
9 th March 2006	Contemporaneous Note Taking
10 th April 2006	Business Continuity – Law & Property
20 th April 2006	Business Continuity – DUE
25 th April 2006	Clergy
11 th May 2006	CST
22 nd May 2006	CST

