

From: Mike Hill Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services
Barbara Cooper Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee – 10 March 2020

Subject: Kent County Council Resilience and Emergency Planning Update

Decision No: N/A

Classification: Unrestricted

Electoral Division: All

Summary:

This report provides an overview of KCC's resilience and emergency planning duties, its current activity and a forward look at emerging risks.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet Committee is asked to note current and future County Council resilience and emergency planning activity.

1. Introduction

1.1 The last two years have seen a spotlight on international, national and local contingency planning associated with the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union. KCC has played a key role to ensure minimum disruption for Kent's residents, communities and economy. This has been undertaken alongside the 'business as usual' emergency planning and operational response activity ensuring Kent remains resilient in the face of all foreseeable risks and emergencies.

2. Background

2.1 KCC is a 'Category 1 Responder' as defined by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and is legally bound to ensure that the Local Authority has the capacity to respond to threats to life, property and the environment. The Act defines an emergency as:

- (a) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to **human welfare**;
- (b) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the **environment**;
- or
- (c) **war**, or **terrorism**, which threatens serious damage to **security**.

2.2 As a 'Category 1 Responder' and upper tier Local Authority, KCC is subject to seven duties:

- To carry out **risk assessments** and publish all or part of a Community Risk Register (This is published on the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) website and Resilience Direct).
 - To **plan** for emergencies.
 - To have robust **business continuity** arrangements in place to maintain service delivery.
 - To have arrangements in place to **Warn & Inform** the public both before and during emergencies.
 - To **co-operate** with partner agencies.
 - To **share information** with partner agencies (The duties to co-operate and share is achieved through the Kent Resilience Forum).
 - To **promote business continuity** to local businesses and the voluntary sector.
- 2.3 Effective governance across these duties is delivered through four Directorate Resilience Groups, each reporting to a corporate Cross Directorate Resilience Forum. Resilience issues are also routinely reported to Directorate and Corporate Management Teams, with policy initiatives and Key Decisions tabled at the appropriate Cabinet Committee and Executive level.
- 2.4 The County Council currently maintains 14 emergency plans and associated guidance documents, including a strategic [Major Emergency Plan](#), and 172 individual service Business Continuity Plans, which inform a [Corporate Business Continuity Plan](#).
- 2.5 KCC also operates a fully equipped County Emergency Centre at Invicta House, which can be mobilised around the clock. A weekly command rota details the on-call Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO), Duty and Recovery Directors (KCC Directors and Corporate Directors from across the authority), Tactical Managers (again from across the authority, but principally GET Directorate) and Emergency Response Team (colleagues from across the authority). To date more than 500 incidents have been alerted to the DEPO in the current financial year (2019/20).

3. Current Issues

- 3.1.1 **Flood Planning and Response** – The last year (2019) witnessed significant flooding events in June and December. The County Emergency Centre mobilised for the duration of these floods and pro-active interventions including evacuation (accompanied by specialist support for vulnerable people), pumping water off highways into tankers and effective management of reservoirs levels all sought to reduce the scale of damage arising from the floods. Some 168 residential and commercial properties incurred flood damage in the June event with another 65 flooded in December.
- 3.1.2 A KCC structured debrief for the December floods took place in January and the draft report capturing lessons learned will be taken to the Kent Flood Risk Management Committee in March 2020.

- 3.1.3 The new year witnessed further flooding events associated with named storms; Ciara (8th and 9th February) and Dennis (15th and 16th February). The first of these storms saw damage to coastal defences in the Lydd area as well as fluvial and surface water flooding across parts of west Kent, with some 68 residential and commercial properties affected. Storm Dennis latterly saw the evacuation of some 150 residents, pro-active pumping of water off highways into tankers, sandbag deployment, widespread road closures and further property flooding.
- 3.1.4 KCC's operational response was substantially informed by its [Flood Response Emergency Plan](#).
- 3.2 **Radiation Emergency Preparedness Public Information Regulations (REPPIR) 2019** – A revised Detailed Emergency Planning Zone (DEPZ) was developed for the Dungeness B Nuclear Power Plant and confirmed by the Cabinet Member for Community and Regulatory Services in autumn 2019 as a Key Decision following scrutiny by the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee.
- 3.2.1 The Government's Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) subsequently signed-off the revised DEPZ, which informs countermeasures to protect those inside the Emergency Planning Zone, making the County Council one of the first Local Authorities in the UK to achieve compliance with the new Radiation Regulations. KCC also created a public information calendar for residents and businesses within the DEPZ as part of its new responsibilities for provision of public information.
- 3.2.2 Work continues on planning for a 30km Outline Planning Zone (OPZ) around Dungeness B which builds on existing arrangements and capabilities to provide commensurate planning for low probability events. An updated KCC offsite emergency plan for Dungeness B must be submitted to ONR by 22nd May 2020. The final plan will come to this Cabinet Committee in May for information.
- 3.3 **Health Protection** – The County Council is responsible through the National Health Service Act 2006 and Health and Social Care Act 2012 to provide information and advice on appropriate health protection arrangements within their local area, including to clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). This responsibility rests with the Director of Public Health and includes planning for and responding to incidents and emergencies that present a threat to the public's health.
- 3.3.1 The current Wuhan Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak has seen significant engagement by Kent County Council services with Public Health England and other partners to ensure that appropriate guidance and local policy and practice is enacted in relation to a range of key stakeholders including schools, colleges and social care providers. The Director of Public Health facilitated a recent Local Health Resilience Partnership meeting focusing on the outbreak, while the Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager has chaired a number of meetings with Public Health England addressing areas such as policy and practice for social care, human

resources, schools and colleges. A further oral update will be provided to the Cabinet Committee as part of the presentation of this paper.

- 3.4. **People and Communities in Emergencies** – KCC is leading the development of an innovative Kent Resilience Forum strategy to increase the resilience of vulnerable individuals and communities. The scope of this project includes lessons learned from recent events such as the Grenfell Tower fire and Manchester Arena bombing. A further aim is to provide a framework to support partners to co-ordinate activities to identify, prepare and address the needs of people and communities less able to help themselves in the circumstances of an emergency.
- 3.5 **Animal and Plant Health** – Kent’s geography and ‘gateway status’ for trade and travel places it in the frontline of emerging animal and plant disease threats. Foot and Mouth Disease, Avian Influenza, Blue Tongue and latterly Ash Dieback have all impacted the County in recent years. Lessons learned have informed an updated [Animal and Plant Health Emergency Plan](#) which has been expanded and changed from a KCC to a KRF document to reflect the multi-agency nature of this evolving risk.
- 3.6 **Business Continuity** – All 172 individual service Business Continuity Plans are being converted to an updated and standardised template. This change supports work to develop an innovative systemised Corporate Continuity Requirement Analysis (CRA) and Business Impact Analysis (BIA) to enable more effective oversight and upkeep of Business Continuity Plans across KCC.
- 3.7 **Recovery** – The County Council has the lead role in multi-agency recovery from major emergencies and operates a comprehensive [Emergency Recovery Plan](#). An officer development group has now been established to ensure that the appropriately trained personnel, IT and other infrastructure resources are in place to deliver this challenging ‘Gold Command’ responsibility.
- 3.8 **Training and Exercising** – Training and exercising remains a key focus. In the last year ten command and control training exercises, all incorporating response and recovery cells were delivered inhouse, with 89 KCC personnel participating. Further exercises were conducted to validate Flood, Control of Major Accident (COMAH), Business Continuity and Animal and Plant Health planning. An ambitious future programme of exercise events is currently being planned, focusing on coastal flooding, railway and business continuity scenarios.

4. **Horizon Scanning**

- 4.1 KRF is currently undertaking a series of workshops to update the Kent Risk Register and individual risk assessments, with KCC an influential partner in this endeavour.

- 4.2 Uncertainty around transition from the European Union at the end of the calendar year and what this will mean to Kent residents, communities and business will require significant contingency planning.
- 4.3 Severe weather impacts are a key area where planning is being undertaken to better reflect the intensifying level of risk. Contingency planning around highway and surface water flooding is being stepped up in response to an evolving trend for more intense localised rainfall. The trend toward more stormy conditions alongside sea level rise and a greater understanding of community vulnerability is further informing our resilience planning.
- 4.4 The integrity of infrastructure such as reservoir dams, is receiving significant national scrutiny following incidents such as the evacuation of communities downstream of Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire in August 2019. KCC has legal responsibility for [offsite emergency planning for reservoirs](#), with 60 sites in and around Kent.
- 4.5 Security issues are increasingly a key focus of resilience activity in line with responsibilities enshrined within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Cyber-attack is now identified as a potential business continuity risk and is the focus of national and local planning.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The budget provision for the REPS for the current financial year is £630k. The majority of costs associated with planning, training and exercising are covered by individual services, with corporate budgets utilised for certain standby payments. However, in recognition of the staff resource and other costs required to deliver this work, the REPPIR (Radiation Emergency Preparedness Public Information Regulations), COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) and Major Accident Hazard Pipelines regulations allow for upper tier Local Authorities to recover planning costs from the site operators.
- 5.2 KCC may in certain circumstances be eligible to claim against the Bellwin Scheme of Emergency Financial Assistance to Local Authorities, which works to reimburse councils for costs incurred in responding to emergencies. Before being eligible for the grant, the Local Authority must submit an expression of interest within the prescribed timetable and have spent a 0.2% of its calculated annual budget on works reported to MHCLG as eligible for grant. Significantly, Bellwin does not cover recovery from incidents, where the County Council has a lead responsibility and effectively provides the 'Gold Command' infrastructure.

6. Legal Requirements

- 6.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty on KCC to plan for and respond to major emergencies. In addition to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, a further 33 individual pieces of legislation and guidance inform day to day County Council emergency planning and response activities from gas pipeline and reservoir safety to human and animal health.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Kent County Council is the largest county council in England, delivering vital services to a growing population of more than 1.5 million people and with significant resilience challenges. An iconic coastline some 350 miles long bounds the busiest seaway, a nuclear power station and Europe's busiest ferry port. Kent's extensive strategic transport network, numerous floodplain settlements, and geographical vulnerability to climatic extremes bring further resilience challenges. This risk profile, exceptional in a UK context, places great responsibility upon the County Council, to demonstrate excellence across its resilience policies, procedures and capabilities. This is being achieved against a backdrop of demographic change, rising service demand, EU exit and growing and inter-linked environmental threats (i.e. climate change, greater frequency of extreme weather events, species loss, increasing water scarcity and food production challenges).

8. Equalities Impact

- 8.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken to address the implications of a range of emergency scenarios upon protected characteristics. The County Council's Resilience and Emergency Planning Service and Social Care teams co-operate with the NHS, voluntary sector and other partners to enable dynamic identification of and support for individuals and communities potentially at risk in the event of emergencies.

9. GDPR Considerations

- 9.1 Emergency planning and response sometimes require the County Council to collect, use and be responsible for certain personal information to ensure an appropriate response can be delivered. The General Data Protection Regulation means that the County Council will be responsible as a 'controller' of that personal information.

10. Recommendation(s):

Cabinet Committee is asked to note current and future County Council resilience and emergency planning activity.

11. Background Documents

KCC Major Emergency Plan

KCC Corporate Business Continuity Plan

KRF Animal and Plant Health Emergency Plan

KCC Flood Response Emergency Plan

KCC Offsite Reservoir Inundation Emergency Plan

KCC Emergency Recovery Plan

KCC Managing Ash Dieback in Kent

12. Contact Details

Report Author:

Tony Harwood (Resilience and Emergency Planning Manager), Growth, Environment and Transport, tel. 03000 413 386, e-mail tony.harwood@kent.gov.uk

Group Head:

Mike Overbeke (Head of Public Protection), Growth, Environment and Transport, tel. 03000 413 427, e-mail mike.overbeke@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Stephanie Holt-Castle (Interim Director of Environment, Planning & Enforcement), Growth, Environment and Transport, tel. 03000 412 064, e-mail stephanie.holt-castle@kent.gov.uk