

Briefing Note

Title: Surface Water Flooding Scrutiny Update

Date: 30 August 2019

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Job Title: Resilience Officer

Intended Audience: Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To provide an update on progress to improve the City of Wolverhampton Council's response to out of hours emergencies, and strengthen resilience to manage such incidents effectively.

2.0 Background and context

2.1 Following an incident of surface water flooding in parts of the City on 26-27 May 2018, a Scrutiny Panel convened to consider the effectiveness of plans and procedures designed to manage surface water flooding. This included the out of hours emergency response process. The Scrutiny Panel made 16 recommendations (Appendix A).

2.2 Key issues identified included the need to address the on-call resilience function and response to surface water flooding. The review established that due to technical disruption to the Wolverhampton Homes 24 Hour Contact Centre, Ward Councillors were unable to get through to the Duty Manager or Duty Director on-call.

3.0 Update on progress

3.1 Changes to the rota system (recommendation 7 & 8)

The Resilience Team, alongside the Director of Public Health, have considered the recommendation of the Scrutiny Panel and established a Task and Finish group to review the current internal on-call resilience arrangements.

This Task and Finish group objectives include:

- Reduce the duty manager rota to a dedicated number of officers (between 4-8) to improve skill and experience of officers
- Review current duty devices to ensure efficiency and effectiveness
- Work closer with Wolverhampton Homes to ensure all contact details are correct and business rules are in place

3.2 The newly established rota is expected to be implemented in October 2019 and will increase knowledge of those on-call to have in-depth understanding of processes and

procedures to be taken for a wide variety of specific risks. Consequently, those on-call will be able to provide an appropriate level of response to a range of incidents that come through to the Duty Manager (soon to be rebranded Emergency Response Officer).

3.3 As recommended by the Scrutiny Panel, a pager system is being considered. Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council currently use a pager system, conversations are in progress to learn more about this system and its applicability in the City of Wolverhampton.

3.4 In response to the difficulties Ward Councillors experienced in contacting the Duty Manager or Director during the bank holiday incident of 26-27 May 2018, the Resilience Team has ensured that where possible bank holidays are covered by a single Duty Manager and Duty Director. Duty phones will be diverted to ensure the on-call officers are accessible at all times on the numbers provided through the weekly Chief Executive report to Councillors.

3.5 **Resilience Training (recommendation 9)**

The regular duty refresher training continues to be offered on a weekly basis. Plans are currently in place to exercise some of the new emergency plans, such as Loss of Facilities Plan and Corporate Condolence Plan.

3.6 Training needs have been identified through reviewing on-call arrangements. The aim is to reduce the overall number of officers on the rota and increase the knowledge and experience of officers that remain. Training needs will be addressed as new officers for the rota are identified.

3.7 **Councillor Development: Resilience Sessions (recommendation 10)**

The Resilience Team organised several development sessions on a variety of dates and times shortly after the Scrutiny Board last summer (2018). Unfortunately, attendance was low. A repeat of these sessions is being scheduled through Organisational Development and Councillors will be encouraged to attend and learn about resilience plans.

3.8 **Communications (recommendation 11)**

The Resilience Team has recently set-up a Twitter account (@WVPrepared). Key messages from agencies such as the Met Office are being shared, and the account is being promoted to help grow the following through, for example, the Corporate Communications Team.

4.0 **Plan Review**

4.1 The Resilience Team are reviewing the Local Flood Plan over the next six months, in line with guidance released by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – the National Emergency Flood Framework for England, as well as the Best Practice Template for Multi-Agency Flood Plans by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, bought together using examples from all responders across the UK.

4.2 In addition to the Local Flood Plan, work has been ongoing to develop a Severe Weather Co-ordination Plan to outline actions to be taken on receipt of weather warnings and alerts via the Met Office, as well as co-ordination mechanisms for internal services.

Annex A – Recommendations from Scrutiny Panel (May 2018)

Review Recommendations	Lead
1. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to share information with the Resilience Board on progress against actions detailed in the Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management Action Plan (published <i>October 2015</i>).	LLFA
2. The LLFA to publish their findings from an investigation into the flooding incident as detailed in their list of responsibilities. Confirmation required as to whether there is an Annual Report and where and to who does this go?	Flood Risk Manager
3. Highway Operations Manager and Flood Risk Manager to present a joint report to Cabinet about the implications for Wolverhampton to respond to a future flooding incident on a similar scale, if the current gulley cleaning budget is reduced.	Highway Operations Manager and Flood Risk Manager
4. The Flood Risk Manager to brief the relevant Portfolio Holder on the outcome of a funding bid aimed at providing better intelligence about flood risk areas which can be part of a map-based system.	Flood Risk Manager
5. Highway Operations Manager to brief the relevant Portfolio Holder on progress of a business case for additional funding for future flood prevention work and any specific work to reduce risk of flooding in known high risk areas of Wolverhampton.	Highway Operations Manager
6. Wolverhampton Homes report to the LLFA forum on the feasibility and risk of installing flood resistant doors at the front and rear in new housing developments and the timeline for introducing a trial scheme to test their effectiveness and impact on the level of flood risk.	Wolverhampton Homes
7. Director of Public Health to present an update to Scrutiny on the impact of changes introduced to CWC emergency resilience planning following an internal review.	Director of Public Health
8. Director of Public Health, to present a report to Cabinet of any proposed changes to the arrangements for voluntary bank holiday and weekend cover by duty director and managers.	Director of Public Health
9. Director of Public Health, to detail plans for regular desk top and live resilience training to test the robustness of emergency systems and identify areas of concern and or training support needed.	Director of Public Health
10. The Councillor Development and IT Advisory Group to encourage all councillors to attend Resilience Sessions: Introduction to the Major Incident Control Room and the Councillors role in an emergency. The Resilience Officer to report on feedback from Councillors and to make recommendations as appropriate to the Councillor Development and IT Advisory Group.	Councillor Development and IT Advisory Group
11. The Head of Communications in partnership with Wolverhampton Homes, Highways Service, Resilience and Severn Trent Water to consider further proposals of what further action (including enhanced use of social media) could be taken to encourage residents to register for flood alerts and severe weather warnings and how to protect their homes from flooding.	Ian Fegan, Head of Communications, Wolverhampton Homes,

http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/severeweather	Resilience Team, Seven Trent Water.
12. CWC website to be updated to stress to the public that they should not walk or drive in severe flood water as there are risks to their safety and will also add to the pressure on the emergency services responding to calls. The website information to be updated to include the information detailed in Appendix 7.	Director of Public Health
13. Wolverhampton Homes to update Cabinet on plans for alerting tenants to plan and prepare for flooding, which are suitable for the needs of vulnerable people living in known high risk flood areas	Darren Baggs, Wolverhampton Homes
14. That the Flood Risk Manager consider more sustainable drainage systems and the use of targeted maintenance to clean gullies more frequently in high-risk flood areas.	Flood Risk Manager
15. That the weekly report to councillors from the Managing Director continues to be utilised and that it continues to include up to date information regarding duty managers and directors.	Head of Corporate Communications
16. That information be received regarding Highways and Transport cross boundary working in respect of emergency planning and flood risk.	Flood Risk Manager