

EMERGENCY PLAN
(Report by Head of Environment & Transport)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cabinet at their meeting on 29 January 2004 approved draft emergency plan prepared following the deliberations of the Flooding Advisory Group.
- 1.2 The plan was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) at their meetings on 10 February 2004 and 2 March 2004 respectively. This report outlines for Cabinet how it is proposed to address the issues raised by the Panels.
- 1.3 An addendum to the report detailing any further issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) will be circulated at the meeting, as they had not met at the time this report was prepared.

2. FURTHER ISSUES

- 2.1 Good communications and the provision of accurate and timely information is recognised as a key element of successful incident management. The emergency plan addresses media relations (Section 3.5), the use of the communications technology within the emergency incident room (Section 4.2) and arrangements for notifying employees and Executive Councillors with responsibility for responding to any emergency.
- 2.2 Inter-agency communications arrangements are detailed in the county-wide generic and specific plans listed in the emergency plan and these are known from experience of previous incidents to work well.
- 2.3 The plan currently does not address the community leadership role that ward councillors could undertake during an emergency and this is considered to be a weakness. It is proposed, therefore, to develop a protocol to cover this and a draft is included at Annex A.
- 2.4 The Flood Forum provides Parish Councils with an opportunity to discuss issues specifically relating to flooding incidents. However, the absence of a more structured approach to engagement with and the involvement of Parish Councils in emergency planning issues has been commented upon.
- 2.5 It is proposed that Parish Councils be consulted to establish how their role in an emergency can best be developed and supported and to develop appropriate procedures and include these in the emergency plan.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Cabinet are recommended to:

1. note the concerns raised by the Overview and scrutiny Panels;
2. approve the Protocol For Notifying and Supporting Ward Councillors;
3. authorise the Director of Operational Services to consult with the Parish Councils on their role in any emergency and to report on this to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

**Contact
Officer:**

**Mr R Preston, Head of Environment and
Transport
☎ 01480 388340**

ANNEX A

Protocol For Notifying and Supporting District Councillors

1. District Councillors are prominent within their communities and may be approached at any time for information and advice with regard to an incident that is having an impact on that community.
2. It is imperative, therefore, that at the earliest possible time all relevant ward councillors are advised of the nature of any incident affecting their communities. The Duty Officer will be responsible for notifying ward councillors by telephone at such time as this can be achieved without interrupting adversely the control and co-ordination of the response to the emergency.
3. The initial notification to a ward councillor will include –
 - the nature of the incident
 - a brief assessment of how the incident might develop
 - current response arrangements
 - current District Council control and co-ordination arrangements
 - contact arrangements for the Duty Officer
 - any arrangements in place for the public to obtain information
4. Subsequent updating of information will be at the discretion of the Duty Officer having regard to the demands of managing the incident.
5. District Councillors in their dealing with the public should seek to limit their interactions to providing and receiving information. Where they obtain information that they consider may be of use in managing the response to the incident this should be relayed to the Duty Officer, using the contact arrangements previously notified.
6. **Councillors should not give any undertaking to the public that the District Council will provide a specific local response unless the Duty Officer has confirmed this.**
7. Members should maintain records of their interactions with the public and any other agencies and surrender these to the Head of Environment and Transport when the incident has ended. These will be secured with other records relating to the incident and may be produced as evidence at any public inquiry, Police investigation, or Coroner's Court.
8. Councillors will be provided with training opportunities relating to their potential role in any emergency.