

**CIVIL CONTINGENCIES ACT – FUNDING ISSUES  
(Report by Head of Environment & Transport)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Within Cambridgeshire the district and city councils have worked in partnership with the County Council on emergency planning. Historically, the County Council has been the only authority to receive government funding for emergency planning.
- 1.2 The Civil Contingencies Act now imposes, for the first time, a duty on both tiers of local government to make arrangements for dealing with civil emergencies. Many of these new duties can best be delivered at the county level and this report addresses funding arrangements to facilitate this.

**2. SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**

- 2.1 The District and County Council are required to –
- undertake a risk assessment (flooding, aircraft crash, severe weather etc.) and produce a publicly accessible Community Risk Register;
  - prepare and test plans for dealing with any unacceptably high risks and train all responding agencies identified in the plans;
  - make the public aware of the risks, the plans that exist and how they should prepare themselves before the emergency occurs;
  - make specific plans for supporting vulnerable people during any emergency;
  - promote business continuity to local companies and plan for their own business recovery; and
  - contribute to resilience planning at the regional level
- 2.2 The District Council has already increased its capability by creating the post of Emergency Planning and CCTV Team Leader and appointing a Risk Management Advisor. However, there remains a further substantial workload to comply fully with the legislation. Much of this is best performed at the county level because of the need to co-ordinate with other agencies (Police, Fire and Rescue Service, NHS, PCT, military etc.) which operate across two or more districts.
- 2.3 It has been proposed, therefore, that the existing County Council Civil Protection Unit be expanded and that a standing Joint Agency Team be established to take forward work on the Community Risk Register.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Cost sharing arrangements were made initially in a proposal by the County Council to the Chief Executives' Liaison Group. The group generally accepted the principle of the proposals, which set

contributions by districts at 66% of the sum included in the Revenue Support Grant available to support the new duties under the Civil Contingencies Act.

- 3.2 Following bi-lateral negotiations on this council's contribution it is proposed that it be reduced from £28k (based on the 66%) to £23k to better reflect the investment that the District Council has already made in responding to the Civil Contingencies Act. Furthermore it is proposed that the District Council give 18 months notice of any termination of funding rather than support the redundancy costs incurred by the County Council as a consequence of the District Council withdrawing its funding.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The emerging regulations made under the Civil Contingencies Act places new and demanding duties on local authorities. These cannot be fulfilled by the local authorities working in isolation and much of the joint agency planning needs to be taken forward on a countywide basis.
- 4.2 The principle of the County Council expanding their Civil Protection Team to provide resources to meet the new demands has the support of the other councils (district and city).
- 4.3 An equitable level of contribution has been negotiated that reflects the investment that the District Council already has made to improve its own capability, both in preparatory planning and managing any emergency. It is proposed that this contribution is committed for 2005/06 to 2007/08 inclusive, with a review in October 2006 to allow termination in March 2008 if this is considered appropriate.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) support the principle of an expansion of the County Council's Civil Protect Unit;
  - b) authorise an annual contribution of £23k to the County Council;
  - c) approve a supplementary estimate of not more than £23k in 2005/06, pro rata to the period during which the County Council employ its additional staff; and
  - d) note that an 'unavoidable' MTP bid will be made in respect of £23k (at 2005/06 prices) in each of 2006/07 and 2007/08

#### **Background papers**

Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and related guidance and draft regulations.

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