

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES REPORT 2022

Summary:	Annual report from the Resilience Manager on Civil Contingencies.
Options considered:	This is a briefing report only.
Conclusions:	Not applicable.
Recommendations	To note the report and the council's contributions to the Norfolk Resilience Forum and the response to incidents.
Reasons for Recommendations:	A better understanding of the challenges in the past year and the role of the Norfolk Resilience Forum in emergency preparedness planning and incident response will help to discharge our obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

N/A

Cabinet Member(s)	Ward(s) affected
Nigel Lloyd	All

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 It has been exceptionally busy year again for the Civil Contingencies Team, at times dealing with multiple concurrent incidents. The Resilience Manager returned from long term sick leave in January, completing a phased return to work in March. The North Norfolk Safety Advisory Group has seen a 28% increase in the number of events. There has been an increase in the number of Norfolk Resilience Forum meetings as a result of exercise planning activity and post-Covid catching up.

2. Emergency Planning

- 2.1 **Norfolk Resilience Forum** - The Civil Contingencies Act, 2004 sets out a number of duties around emergency preparedness and response. As a Category 1 Responder under the Act the council has a duty to assess risk, put emergency plans in place and to share information and cooperate with other local responders. In respect of emergency preparedness planning this is generally achieved through the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) with an annual programme of multi-agency meetings progressing work streams and reviewing plans. North Norfolk District Council pays an annual contribution to the NRF towards administration costs and the training and exercising programme. The council's contribution has stayed the same for the past two

years (£2,386) but this is likely to change since a review of the structure of the NRF secretariat is currently being undertaken.

With the Covid-19 response winding down, the NRF introduced an accelerated programme of Risk Assessment reviews, held fortnightly with a pool of emergency planners from across Norfolk and introduced a weekly Risk and Information Group meeting to enhance preparedness. Changes to emergency planning nationally, increasing preparedness activity at the same time as maintaining response capability, is expected to mean changes to Local Resilience Forum structures next year.

- 2.2 **Exercises** – Multiple exercise planning meetings have been held this year re Exercise Birch (Bacton Gas Terminal mandatory Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) exercise), Exercise Lemur (NRF power outage exercise) FloodEx22 (national flood exercise) and Exercise Bacton Vanguard (local exercise for Bacton, Walcott and Ostend).
- 2.3 **Exercise Birch** - The terminal operators were hosted in the Committee Room at NNDC on 8 September for part of Exercise Birch which tested the revised External Response Plan for Bacton Gas Terminal, evacuation procedures, IT, communications and virtual attendance of the Tactical Coordination Group.
- 2.4 **Exercise Lemur** - was developed by the Emergency Planning College and approved by the Cabinet Office as an off-the-shelf tabletop exercise package that all Local Resilience Forums were asked to undertake. On 18 October Norfolk Exercise Lemur brought NRF agencies together with national ones such as British Telecom, National Grid and UK Power Networks to explore the local issues around a National Power Outage (NPO). This exercise was held in preparation for Exercise Mighty Oak, which is a national Government-led NPO exercise being held at the end of March 2023. Seven key workstreams have been identified as a result of learning from Norfolk Exercise Lemur which need to be progressed before Exercise Might Oak and which will include participation from several NNDC departments.
- 2.5 **FloodEx22** - The national flooding exercise 'FloodEx22' finally took place 14-18 November 2022, having been rescheduled initially due to Covid-19 and postponed again from 19-23 September 2022 due to the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II. This exercise was designed to test national and county response, information exchange and mutual aid during back-to-back major flooding events in the River Trent catchment and also along the East Coast from Northumbria to Kent. Exercise planning for this was very time-consuming both nationally and locally. One of the local objectives was to test the Multi-agency Information Cell (MAIC) concept developed in Norfolk. The last date change resulted in a reduction in the availability of many agencies to participate fully and a downsizing of the scope of the exercise. It is anticipated that NNDC will take the opportunity to test local evacuation response in 2023 to support the objectives of the NRF. The national flooding exercise will be repeated in 2025.
- 2.6 **Exercise Bacton Vanguard** - is a local evacuation and communications exercise based around Bacton, Walcott and Ostend. The exercise has been fully planned with local agencies and it is envisaged that it will take place in 2023, following the learning identified from FloodEx22, to further test the MAIC.

- 2.7 The British Red Cross has revised its support offer in respect of Rest Centres and has voided the Memorandum of Understanding. Although there is a mutual aid agreement between districts to support one another it is acknowledged that all districts would be stretched if there was a need to open more than couple of rest centres at the same time. Work is ongoing to address this.
- 2.8 The Norfolk Local Authorities' Airwave radio contract extension was discontinued as of 31 March. Airwave handsets can be borrowed from the Police during incidents if needed.
- 2.9 Three virtual meetings of the Senior Flood Warden Liaison Group have been held in the last 12 months and materials have been produced to support communities with high proportions of second homes, to recruit new flood wardens and to support new teams.
- 2.10 Community engagement – a few communities have shown interest in developing Community Emergency Plans, this is supported on a one-to-one basis.
- 2.11 The Council's Operational Flood Plan has been updated. Work is currently ongoing to review the NNDC Emergency Response Plan which is planned to go to Cabinet in May 2023.
- 2.12 Fuel station forecourt visits have been undertaken to ensure supply for critical workers. NNDC was the first district to complete this, retaining all six existing stations and added one more to improve coverage.
- 2.13 **Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance** – The NSFA group is currently chaired by Lord Dannatt and brings together agencies such as the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, Independent Drainage Boards and members of the Norfolk Resilience Forum. The purpose is to collaborate and improve response and recovery to flood situations, identify key geographical areas of risk and develop flood mitigation measures. A strategic flood meeting was held at Potter Heigham on 13 April with representatives from NNDC, the Environment Agency, Broads Authority and Anglian Water, Directors from Herbert Woods, Duncan Baker MP and Lord Dannatt's representative. As a result of this meeting improvements to flood defences have been undertaken.
- 2.14 The Environment Agency acknowledges that the intelligence, pictures and videos from the council and coastal and river flood wardens has been very useful to them. The Flood Alert level in the Potter Heigham area is still being finessed. A change to the Flood Alert level at Bacton and Walcott is imminent, which is a vindication of the Sandscaping project.
- 2.15 **Avian Influenza** – The Trading Standards team at the County Council leads on outbreaks in captive birds, but NNDC took the lead for Wild Bird issues liaising extensively with the Animal and Plant Health Agency, Department for Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities to help ensure that best practice is shared and lessons are identified.
- 2.16 **Other incidents in the past 12 months** – The Environment Agency has issued a host of coastal flood alerts, over the past year for the North Norfolk

Coastline and inland locations affected by the Broads rivers such as Potter Heigham. Each occurrence requires a minimum of notification and coordination and follow up and, depending upon the severity, physical response.

Since the last annual report to the Governance Risk and Audit Committee the following incidents have required a response:

- Coordination of response to flood alerts on 4-6 February and re Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin in mid-February including multi-agency response to severe weather and power outages.
- Coordination of response to Storm Malik and Storm Corrie in March
- Liaison re Vale Road cliff slip 5 Feb
- Liaison re fuel protests by Just Stop Oil from 22 March onwards
- Liaison re unexploded ordnance at Walcott on 5 April and 24 August, and another UXO in Blakeney on 31 Aug
- Liaison re fuel protests from April onwards
- Liaison re Monkeypox ongoing from May
- Response to severe hot weather
- Onsite response to the wildfire in Ashmanhaugh in July
- Operation London Bridge reporting in September
- High Spring Tides 12-16 September
- Onsite Potter Heigham flood defence coordination 5 November

2.17 **The North Norfolk Safety Advisory Group** has seen a 28% increase in the number of events compared with pre-pandemic levels; 124 in 2022 (excluding the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations) compared with 97 in 2019. Several of the events have required enhanced support and there have been 18 meetings with event organisers. One-to-one support has been provided to the new event manager for the Roman Catholic Shrine at Walsingham and Parish Council meetings for events in Walsingham have been attended. The aim for 2023 is to introduce a new event planning template and to triage events by introducing a Score Rating Matrix based on key risk factors such as the event type, past history, expected numbers, sale of alcohol, presence of demountable structures, traffic management etc. These changes should streamline the process and help to reduce the administrative burden.

3 Business Continuity

3.1 The Business Continuity Management Policy has been reviewed and a new Business Continuity Management Framework has been developed. These documents are for review by GRAC at the December meeting. The Corporate Business Continuity Plan is currently being reviewed and will go to Cabinet in May.

3.2.1 The council has continued to maintain all its critical activities, and to maintain service to our customers. The council's business continuity management arrangements have been tested fully and proven to work; the changes noted above are enhancements to make the council more resilient.

4 Staffing

4.1 Due to reorganisation within the Environment and Leisure Service, there will shortly be a change to both job title and line management of the

Environmental Health Admin Team Leader. The level of support for Resilience will be retained and 0.5 of the post will be paid for through the Civil Contingencies budget, as at present.

5 Conclusion

The Civil Contingencies Team and the wider council has continued to discharge its responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004.

6 Implications and Risks

It is acknowledged that response to concurrent severe weather incidents while engaged in additional national exercise planning and work around National Power Outage planning will be a challenge.

7 Financial Implications and Risks

There are no financial implications and risks directly arising from this report.

8 Sustainability N/A

There are no sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

9 Equality and Diversity

There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

10 Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

There are no Section 17 Crime and Disorder implications directly arising from this report.