

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES UPDATE

Summary

It has been a busy 12 months with contingency planning for three elections, EU Exit preparations and reporting, and an increase in reported incidents. There have been five business continuity incidents (listed below), of which two were significantly disruptive, and several external emergency planning incidents: Severe Weather x 2, Coastal Pollution x 2, Cliff Falls x 2, Sheringham Sinkhole and nine days' worth of High Tides resulting in Flood Alerts or Flood Warnings plus surface water flooding.

EU Exit Planning

The council is working with our partners in the Norfolk Resilience Forum to help plan for a no-deal exit from the European Union. Most of the planning is rated Official-Sensitive and can only be shared on a 'need to know basis' so cannot be included here.

The fortnightly Task and Finish group meetings morphed into weekly Strategic and Tactical Coordination Groups which then became the Multi-Agency Information Cell. The frequency of reporting has changed throughout the year but includes reports via the local resilience forum (which includes the emergency services and Health) into the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and also via the Local Government Association - which advocates specifically for local authorities whose role might otherwise be overlooked.

It is acknowledged that any other incidents, e.g. due to severe weather occurring at the same time as a no-deal EU exit, would stretch staff resources.

Business Continuity Incidents

- **Accessing Barclays issue for Finance, Dec 2018** – Both Barclays.net and their Contingency Payment Access (CPA) system were unavailable. Manual workarounds ensured that payments were made. Debrief held.
- **Fire Alarm due to Faulty Sensor, April 2019** – Little working time lost, debrief is being progressed by Corporate Health and Safety.
- **Media Response to Sand Martins Netting, April** – Significant impact on staff and councillors involved and reputation issue. Debrief held at the end of April. Action Plan still to be signed off.
- **IT Disruption, June** - Significant impact internally. Multiple debriefs held and Action Plan created.
- **Power outage, Sep** – UK Power Networks issue in Cromer. Little working time lost.

Business Continuity Plans

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 local authorities are required to put in place their own business continuity management arrangements and to provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

To ensure that NNDC complies with this statutory requirement the two-page, entry-level plan for businesses has been amended and trialled at a 'Coffee means business' networking event. There may be opportunities to deliver this via the Economic Growth Team in future.

After discussions with managers new, more user-friendly, templates have been developed in conjunction with three other district councils for the, now separate, Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and Business Continuity Plan documents.

The amended BIA has been piloted by the Finance Team, incorporating a new Impact Table (see Appendix 1). This uses the same service risk impact descriptions from the Risk Management Policy and Framework but also describes customer and reputational impacts. An impact score of 4 or 5 within a week would be considered NNDC-Critical. The Impact Table has been reviewed by the Risk Management Board.

The improved BIA will give the IT department a clearer picture of which systems are critical to different service areas at which times throughout the year. The BIA template will be introduced by the end of March 2020 together with appropriate support and challenge to ensure that all risks and interdependencies are understood. The Corporate Business Continuity Plan will then be revised based on the data from the Business Impact Analyses.

In view of the planned changes, managers have been asked to keep contacts information up to date in their business continuity plans, but not to complete a full review of them; this will be achieved by the introduction of the new BIA and BC plan documentation.

A Policy, Performance and Risk Review meeting is timetabled for 17 December to discuss additional performance monitoring measures on the Management Information System, InPhase.

Emergency Planning Incidents

- **High tides at the beginning of January** – There were several alerts and warnings affecting Bacton to Ostend, including Walcott. In Bacton one resident was evacuated from a caravan on the sea wall and there was minor damage to two caravans. There was positive feedback for the new drains, the pre-warnings received from NNDC and for the co-ordinated multi-agency response which received multi-media coverage.

At our request, the Environment Agency reviewed historic observations and meteorological data and adjusted the Flood Alert threshold at Walcott to take wind

direction into account. There is now a 20cm lower threshold for a Flood Alert when the wind is above Force 6 and from a northerly direction. This change has been welcomed by the local flood wardens.

The sandscaping scheme completed this summer is reducing the wave action at Bacton and Walcott. The EA is monitoring the effects closely but there is currently no intention to change the Flood Alert/Warning thresholds again.

A tabletop exercise was held the Coastguard 's base in Bacton in October to ensure that responding parties were clear on their roles and each other's operational capabilities during an evacuation and flood rescue scenario. Positive feedback has been received from this.

- **High tides at end of September** – Flood Alerts for Salthouse, Cley and Wells were upgraded to Flood Warnings in late evening. The rest centre at Wells was activated on 30 September ready for the morning tide. Since then we have worked with coastal communities, Flood Wardens and the Environment Agency to improve the wording of the Flood Warning messages.

This example of partnership working with the EA was tweeted as part of the Local Government Association's "Our Day" (#OurDay) campaign on 19 November 2019.

- **Sheringham Sinkhole** – There was a delay in NNDC being notified about this incident. Support was given to businesses by Economic Development and NNDC arranged for 30 mins free parking on the Morris Street car park to help support the town. A Multi-Agency debrief was held in Cromer on 24 June to identify lessons from the Sheringham Sinkhole response and Sheringham Town Council held their own debrief on 7 November.
- **Coastal Pollution** - There have been intermittent incidents of coastal pollution involving lumps of palm oil/paraffin wax deposits on several North Norfolk beaches this year. Our waste contractor, Kier, undertook additional patrols to remove the material when needed.
- **Cliff Falls** – Warning signs were put up at strategic access points following cliff falls at Sidestrand and Trimingham in June which also caused minor damage to sea defences.

Alison Sayer
Resilience Manager

Appendix 1 – Business Impact Analysis: Impact Table (a score of 4 or 5 within one week is considered NNDC-Critical)

Level Descriptor	1. Negligible	2. Minor	3. Moderate	4. Major	5. Extreme
Service Provision	No effect	Slightly reduced	Service reduced significantly – minor customer impact	Service suspended short term - significant customer impact	Service suspended long term or statutory duties not delivered - major customer impact
Health & Safety	Insignificant injury	Minor injury	Threat of violence or serious injury	Extensive or multiple injuries	Fatality or multiple major injuries
Financial Impact (Loss - Service level)	Loss of £0 - £10K	Loss of £10K - 75K	Loss of £75K - £300K	Loss of £300K - £500K	Loss greater than £500K
Performance against Objectives	Little or no effect on Council objective	Personal or team objectives not met	Significant impact on the success of the Service Business Plan	One or more Key Objectives in the Business Plan will not be achieved	The key objectives in the Business Plan will not be achieved
Reputation	Insignificant damage to reputation	Minimal negative coverage in local multimedia	Significant negative coverage in local multimedia	Significant negative coverage in national multimedia	Extensive negative coverage in national and international multimedia