

CIVIL CONTINGENCIES REPORT

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 the Covid-19 pandemic.
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

Contact Officer, telephone number and email: Emily Capps, Assistant Director for Environmental and Leisure Services. Emily.capps@north-norfolk.gov.uk 01263 516274

1. Introduction

1.1 It has been exceptionally busy year again for the Civil Contingencies Team, at times dealing with multiple concurrent incidents on top of the ongoing Covid-19 response. Unfortunately, the Resilience Manager has been off on long term sick leave since January 2021. However, the wider Environmental Health team have supported and covered the most pressing parts of the role and have responded when necessary to emergency situations. With winter approaching and increased risk of incidents such as severe weather, a Resilience Officer has been seconded to NNDC from NCC initially for a 2-month period. The North Norfolk Safety Advisory Group coordinated by the NNDC resilience team has again supported events throughout the District, bringing together stakeholders both internally and externally to ensure that the appropriate advice is given to event organisers with a particular focus on Covid-19.

2. Emergency Planning and Incidents

2.1 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 group 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. This year, as last, the council's contribution is **£2,386**.

The Norfolk Resilience Forum pre-planning work resumed with a pool of emergency planners across Norfolk, working together virtually to review and revise the multi-agency, countywide plans; including completing the review of the Evacuation and Shelter Plan amongst others. This close collaboration is intended to improve the resilience across the County and simplify mutual aid when it is required.

- 2.2 The national 'CoastEx 2021' exercise, planned for 12-14 October 2021, was postponed due to Covid-19. This event was designed to exercise national and county response, information exchange and mutual aid during a major flooding incident along the East Coast from Northumbria to Kent. It has been rescheduled to September 2022, when it is anticipated that NNDC will take the opportunity to test local response.
- 2.3 In respect of single agency plans, the Council's Operational Flood Plan has been updated and the Flood Warden Risk assessment have been reviewed. Work is currently ongoing to review the NNDC Emergency Response Plan (ERP).
- 2.4 The council has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the British Red Cross (BRC), to provide support at rest centres to supplement the numbers of council staff. This costs NNDC £1200 per year and is a valuable and important investment, especially during the pandemic as there is an inherent risk of concurrent incidents; which would necessitate additional rest centre staff being required.
- 2.5 **Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance** – Following torrential rain and associated flooding, across multiple locations in Norfolk over the Christmas period. Norfolk County Council under the chairmanship of Lord Dannatt set up a new multi-agency group to identify areas at greatest risk of flooding to try and introduce new mitigation measures. This group brought together agencies such as the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority (NCC), Independent Drainage Board, Anglian Water and many over Norfolk Resilience Agencies. In September 2021 Full Council Ratified the Norfolk Strategic Flooding Alliance Strategy and Action Plan. A multi-agency exercise EX Tempesta was held in October, from which an action plan was formed. Two groups were created one for inland areas and the other covering Coastal areas. There work is ongoing with initiatives such as encouraging parish communities to take responsibility for aspects of response to flooding in their areas. North Norfolk District Council are an exemplar with their well-established flood warden scheme, involving around 120 voluntary flood wardens covering 16 parishes.

- 2.6 A virtual meeting of the Senior Flood Warden Liaison Group is planned and will be held on the 2nd December. A guest speaker Mr Phil Berry who is a National Tactical Flood Advisor will be giving a presentation. This will include an overview of the new Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA).
- 2.7 The Environment Agency acknowledged that the intelligence, pictures and videos from the council and coastal and river flood wardens had been very useful to them; as a result, they have amended the Flood Alert level in the Potter Heigham area to a lower level. This is a very positive step which will give the Flood Wardens and local communities, much more confidence in the Environment Agency warning system.
- 2.8 **Covid-19** - Planning for, response to and reporting around the Coronavirus pandemic continue to create additional tasking for the Civil Contingencies Team and the wider council. The command and control structure within the council, has changed from SCG and TCG participation, to weekly Recovery Co-ordination Groups (RCG) with detailed outbreak information delivered by the Health Protection Board (HPB). This is supplemented with regular reporting and analysis. These arrangements ensure a timely response including targeted messaging to this rapidly changing situation.

The council's reporting structures have helped to inform both internal decision-making and external shared situational awareness with partner agencies in the NRF and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, sometimes at very short notice.

- 2.9 **EU Exit Transition** - The Covid pandemic has caused many of the EU Exit critical dates to be delayed and some of the reasonable worst case scenarios are yet to be pressure tested. The NRF Transition Group continues to monitor the situation and circulates information appropriately. It is ready to resume meetings and escalate to TCG / SCG level as necessary. Our EU Transition Lead Officer for NNDC, the Head of Economic & Community Development, who will now lead this work going forward.

- 2.10 **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 River Bure 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:

- 16 Jan 2021 – Amber Warning for Snow issued by the Met Office.
- 6 Feb 2021 – Yellow Snow warning led to Storm Darcy widespread travel disruption, worked with NRF multi-agency to set up 4x4 Cell. This was essential to ensure critical care and health workers could continue with their duties.
- 17 Feb 2021 – Amber and yellow warning for rain coincided with a period of tidal locking in the river Bure. This led to the issue of flood alerts in that area,

overtopping occurred in Horning, Ludham and Potter Heigham but no major damage.

- Feb, Mar and April 2021 – outbreaks of Avian Influenza required national restrictions to be managed across Norfolk.
- 15 Apr 2021 – Op Forth Bridge Death of the Duke of Edinburgh
- 30 May 2021 – Sea Pollution incident reported at Brancaster, from Yacht minor spillage.
- 20 Sep 2021 – Unexploded Mortar shell located on a farm near Roughton, Army Bomb Disposal Unit made safe.
- 24 Sep 2021 – National fuel disruption caused by a shortage of HGV drivers and communities reaction to media messaging. Focus on ensuring critical workers and services retained the ability to obtain fuel and carry out their duties.
- 21 Oct 2021 – Flood Warnings and alerts issued for the North Norfolk Coast, coinciding with the first spring tides as we approach winter.
- 14 Nov - Suspected unexploded ordinance on Walcott Beach. Made safe no further issues
- 22 Nov - Suspected unexploded ordinance at Holt Country Park. Made safe no further issues
- 27 Nov – Yellow weather warning for high winds

2 Business Continuity

- 3.1 Due to the long term absence of the Resilience Manager and the number of emergency planning incidents, elements of planned Business Continuity Management work have been delayed. NNDC has taken steps to address this by recruiting a Resilience Officer from NCC 2 days a week for the next two months. The existing plans are all fit for purpose, however, many plans are due their annual review in November and December 2021. This task will be prioritised to ensure plans and teams are best prepared for winter.
- 3.2.1 The council has continued to maintain all its critical activities, and to maintain service to our customers throughout the entirety of the Covid-19 emergency and lockdown periods. The council's business continuity management arrangements have been tested fully and proven to work.

4. Conclusion

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

5. Implications and Risks

It is acknowledged that the ongoing response to Covid-19 and ongoing risks associated with EU Transition, mean that response to concurrent severe weather incidents etc. will be continue to be a challenge.

6. Financial Implications and Risks

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

7. Sustainability N/A

There are no sustainability implications directly arising from this report.

8. Equality and Diversity

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

9. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

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