

Pewsey Area Board

7 March 2011

Community Resilience – Town and Parish Council Emergency Plans

Intention

The intention is that all parishes have an up to date Community Resilience Plan to replace where necessary the Initial Response Plan that some parishes (the minority) had written some years ago. These plans once written will be kept up to date by a nominated person (nominated by the Town/Parish Council) who will maintain ownership of the plan keeping it fully up to date.

Bradford on Avon Community Area Board who were part of a pilot scheme have fully endorsed the initiative. Subsequently the Emergency Planning Team has emailed all Parish Clerks.

A Government template and guidance notes written for Bradford on Avon are available on request. It is the intention that the remaining 17 Area Boards will have notes tailored to their region to assist the authors of the plans.

Introduction to Community Resilience

In order to ensure that Wiltshire Communities are truly resilient it is vital that they are aware of the risks which affect them. This will help the Town and Parish Councils to decide which threats they are comfortable with, without having to take any preventative action and those where a more proactive approach may be required.

This information will also be made available to each member of the community to ensure that they are able to take necessary measures such as preparing an 'Emergency Box', purchasing sandbags to protect their property or carrying out a business impact analysis for a Business Continuity Plan for example.

Recent studies have shown that the 'just in time' society in which we live has had a major effect on the way in which people view their own safety and their reliance on the local authority and emergency services. Whereas in the past people tended to be very much aware of the precautions they could and should take to look after their family, property and/or business, they are now more reliant on assistance from public services. Whilst this document does

not advocate the derogation of the public service responsibility to care for its population, it is intended to highlight areas where members of the public can be more proactive in protecting themselves and their communities.

Community Resilience is not just about the Community Safety agenda, it is much more involved than that. It is about how the community, the individual within that community and businesses can best prepare to meet the challenges they may face if confronted with a major incident. It is also about how the community can continue to operate for as long as possible and how it can adapt to its new circumstances once the incident has passed. This is best outlined by the following definitions:

Resilience: The capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable function, structure and identity.

Community Resilience: Communities and individuals harnessing local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of the emergency services.

We can't stop disruptive challenges from happening, but we can mitigate their effects on the community by comprehensive preparations on the part of both the public services and members of the public, and by carefully planning the recovery from such events. Recovery from a major incident is covered in a separate document which outlines how the local services intend to approach restoration and improvements to communities affected by a major incident in order to help them adapt to their new, post incident circumstances.

If anyone wishes to discuss this matter further they should contact Nicholas Bate, Emergency Planning Officer on 07747 804604 or email nicholas.bate@wiltshire.gov.uk