

Report on Flood Plan Review Programme

Purpose of report

1. To update the committee on the work programme to review the council Flood Response Plan.

Background

2. The risk associated to flooding is increasing due to climate change and increased levels of winter rainfall and more intense summer rainfall. Widespread flooding is the second highest risk of the National Risk Register.
3. Within Wiltshire flooding events are the result from excessive rainfall leading to rivers overtopping their banks, excess of water beyond the capacity of drainage systems and groundwater saturation.
4. The aim of the flood plan is to detail the coordinated response that would be required from Wiltshire Council, including all service areas, officers and councilors prior to and in the event of a severe flooding within the county.
5. The plan sets out Wiltshire Council's flood management arrangements and takes into account the council's responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and Reservoirs Act 1975.
6. The latest update of the Wiltshire Council Flood Plan was released in February 2011. The plan is a live document and requires regular reviews and updating. The plan is currently due for review.

Summary of Review Programme

7. In Autumn 2013 the emergency planning resilience and response team began a review of the Council Flood Plan. The aim of the review was to incorporate a number of changes including:
 - Up to date risk assessments with regard to flooding in Wiltshire.
 - Improvements in local resilience delivered through the Wiltshire Flood and Drainage Strategy.
 - Changes to management structure across the authority.
 - Incorporating the role of Public Health and new local authority responsibilities to protect the health of the population.

8. On the 23 December 2013 Wiltshire Council began actively responding to flooding events across the county. During the Christmas period and through the first two months of 2014 Wiltshire experienced the worst and widest spread flooding event seen for over 13 years.

The most recent estimates confirm 490 homes and 52 businesses in Wiltshire were flooded during this period. Wiltshire Council has received praise from the Department of Community and Local Government and local multi-agency partners such as the Police and Fire Service on the effective way we have responded to such a prolonged flooding incident. Due to the costs incurred by the Local Authority, Michael Hudson will be making a claim for reimbursement from the central government under the Bellwin Scheme arrangement.

9. The collation of lessons learned during this most recent flooding event and staff debriefings took place throughout the incident and continue with a full strategic debriefing scheduled to take place on 14 May 2014.
10. The drainage team is using their network of local flood warden and parish and town councilor contacts to map the exact nature, duration and impact from of the recent flooding. This information is being collated and shared with colleagues from the Environment Agency and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service to create an invaluable resource of real life flooding information.
11. The Emergency Planning Resilience and Response Team are committed and currently in the process of capturing and coordinating all the intelligence gathered from this most recent flooding experience. This informed will be used to inform the pre-programmed Flood Plan Review.

Recommendations

The committee is asked to note and support the current review programme with a view to receiving the complete updated Flood Review Plan for consideration in September 2014.

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