

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Environment Select Committee**

**28<sup>th</sup> October 2014**

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**Subject:**               **Wiltshire Flood Response Operational Plan**

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Jonathan Seed – Campuses, Area Boards,  
Libraries, Leisure and Flooding

#### **Executive Summary**

During the winter of 2013/14, over 500 homes and businesses in Wiltshire suffered the worst flooding in a generation.

Between December 2013 and March 2014, Wiltshire Council successfully led the coordination of council departments and other agencies during this difficult period.

Following this unprecedented and protracted flood event, a comprehensive review of all the learning from the multi-agency coordinated response to flooding has been carried out. The learning has been used to revise Wiltshire Council's Flood Response Operational Plan.

The new Plan aims to:

- Clearly set out the warning triggers, and actions that need to be taken before and during flooding,
- Accurately reflect current command and control structures within Wiltshire Council,
- Clarify roles and responsibilities of officers,
- Establish lines of communication,
- Link to proactive community resilience and flood preventative work.

Wiltshire Council cannot deliver the objectives of the Flood Response Operational Plan without the collaboration of many partners. The Council works effectively with other partners of the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum during the response phase of flooding incidents.

Critical to the success of this plan is preventative work carried out by County's Strategic Flood Working Groups.

#### **Proposal**

Environment Select Committee is requested to scrutinise the proposed Wiltshire Flood Response Operational Plan so that any comments can be taken into account when the Plan is considered by Cabinet.

**Reason for Proposal**

To provide Environment Select Committee with the opportunity to consider and comment on the Flood Response Operational Plan before it is adopted.

**Frances Chinemana****Associate Director Public Health**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To consider and comment on the proposed Wiltshire Flood Response Operational Plan before it is considered for adoption by Cabinet.

#### **Relevance to the Council's Business Plan**

2. The overall aim of The Plan is to support the Wiltshire Council Business Plan vision to create stronger and more resilient communities. The suggested improvements meet the Business Plan outcomes of:
  - People work together, solve problems locally and participate in decisions that affect them, and
  - People feel safe and are as protected as possible from harm.

#### **Background**

3. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires Wiltshire Council to work with partners to consider local risks and to prepare plans to respond to these risks. The Council is responsible for maintaining an emergency response plan for flooding.
4. Wiltshire experienced severe flooding between December 2013 and March 2014, with over 500 residential and business properties flooded and a number of roads having to be closed to traffic. The response to these incidents was prolonged and effective.
5. A series of debriefs have taken place within Wiltshire Council and with partners. The purpose of these debriefs was to capture areas of good practice and to address areas for improvement. The Flood Response Operational Plan has incorporated these improvements.
6. The risk of flooding is increasing due to pressures in urban environments, and with climate change more severe rainfall events are predicted. These will create additional challenges for communities and have implications for new developments.

#### **Links with other Plans**

7. The Wiltshire Flood Response Operational Plan specifies the council's response when alerted that flooding is imminent, or when flooding has

occurred. It is complimentary to the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum's Severe Weather Guide.

8. The Local Flood Risk Management Strategy describes responsibilities with regard to flood risk, the types of flood risk and how flood risk is managed in Wiltshire.
9. Flood prevention work is coordinated by Wiltshire Council's Strategic Flood Working Groups.

### **Wiltshire Flood Response Operational Plan**

10. The Plan is included as **Appendix 1** of this report and aims to:
  - Provide a practical operational tool for all council departments that respond to flooding incidents.
  - Set out an effective command, control and communication structure.
  - Ensure effective communication to the public during a flood response.
  - Provide appropriate public health messages to protect the health and well-being of the community.
  - Prevent duplication with strategic flood prevention measures.
  - Promote links with Parish and Town Council community resilience arrangements.
  - Compliment the Wiltshire and Swindon Local Resilience Forum Severe Weather Guide, and close working with partners including the Environment Agency and emergency services.

### **Recommendation**

11. Environment Select Committee is requested to consider the proposed Wiltshire Flood Response Operational Plan so that any comments can be taken into account when the Plan is considered by Cabinet.

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