

BEST VALUE - EMERGENCY PLANNING

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1** The aim of this report is to open up the review of the Emergency Planning service for challenge by Members.

2 INTRODUCTION - THE CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1** Recent years have seen an increase in Emergency Planning activity. Planning for the Millennium IT problem improved inter-agency networking. Examples of recent use of Emergency Planning procedures includes reacting to:

- ◆ the severe, but highly localised, flooding incidents in October 2000 and May 2001 required action by the Council, (previously reported to Members),
- ◆ the Foot and Mouth incident in the District during Spring 2001,
- ◆ a fire outside the District in June 2001 resulting in the release of chemicals into the stream running by Rochford Reservoir. Emphatic and swift action was required on a Sunday morning to alert and remove some half-dozen fishermen.

- 2.1.1** The Emergency Planning and Health and Safety Manager has attended three other-agency large-scale exercises since taking up the post. These have served to underline the need for a regime of training sessions, and exercises to improve Rochford's capability to respond.

- 2.2** Central Government began a national review of Emergency Planning in Autumn 2001. The results of the national consultation were published in mid-February this year. A copy is available in the Members Room. The Cabinet Office, with whom Emergency Planning now sits, will prepare a set of proposals for new legislation for introduction as soon as parliamentary time allows.

- 2.3** Essex County Council has concluded its Best Value review, which gives little, if any, direction to Districts' for inclusion in their Best Value reviews. The County is working up a training programme for itself, and partner agencies (NHS, Utilities, Districts and Boroughs). One outcome could be a biannual main exercise, involving all Districts. This could provide a focal point for District training needs.

3. RESOURCES

- 3.1** Historically, Emergency Planning is not considered a high priority service, yet there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that there is a strong public perception that appropriate and focussed action must be taken by "the local authority" in times of crisis.

4. FINDINGS OF THE OFFICER REVIEW TEAM SO FAR

- 4.1** In line with Government guidelines, every Best Value review needs to consider how services can best be provided to meet the needs and expectations of the customer, both in terms of quality and cost.
- 4.2** For the purposes of this review, the team has divided up the Emergency Planning service into 5 natural but distinct functions and considered the likely anticipated issues for customers within each of those functions. The current ability of the service to adequately address each issue was assessed and a rating out of 10 assigned.
- 4.3** The matrices at Annex A to this report show the results of this exercise.
- 4.4** There is little physical evidence to back up these assessments. The ratings are therefore based on officer experience and knowledge of the service.
- 4.5** Areas rated **7** or below are considered to be the weaker aspects of the service and will be reviewed in some detail to determine what improvements can be made.
- 4.6** Those rated **8** and above are classed as the stronger elements of the service and, as such are thought to have less potential for significant improvement. Consideration will only be given to these areas where it is thought that cost/quality improvements to the service can be made with minimal cost/effort to the authority.
- 4.7** Before proceeding any further, and by reference to Annex A, the officers would now like This Committee to consider whether:
- ◆ the team has focussed on the most relevant issues
 - ◆ there are any queries in relation to the issues raised
 - ◆ there are any other areas which Members would like the team to consider
- 4.8** Having received endorsement of these issues, the officer review team will begin a period of comparison, consultation and analysis. Views and information will be gathered from a range of sources including staff, the

public, best practice authorities, Central Government and other stakeholders in order to assess how the service can best be provided in the future. Options for improvement will be formulated and presented for Members to consider in due course.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider the Best Value report and comment accordingly. (CEx)

Paul Warren

Chief Executive

For further information please contact Charles Thomas on:-

Tel:- 01702 318132

E-Mail:- charles.thomas@rochford.gov.uk

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Item 7
19 March 2002

SERVICE UNDER REVIEW	<i>Emergency Planning</i>	ELEMENT OF THE SERVICE BEING ASSESSED	<i>Temporary Accommodation</i>
Anticipated issues for the customer	Ref no.	Assessment 1=negative, 10=positive	Evidence to support assessment
<i>Availability</i>	1	3	<i>Issues around caretaker availability to open up. Use of facilities during school time/use.</i>
<i>Suitability</i>	2	8	<i>3 schools designated rest centres. All have toilet/washing facilities flat areas for sleeping.</i>
<i>Provision of clothing, bedding, food</i>	3	8	<i>Arrangements with county. Corporate credit card. Practical demonstrations</i>
<i>Communications</i>	4	3	<i>Depends on accommodation. No evidence to support.</i>
<i>Accessibility</i>	5	8	<i>Main roads to all 3 schools. Schools comply with access for disability code.</i>
<i>Location</i>	6	8	<i>3 schools from around the district</i>
<i>Information</i>	7	4	<i>Ensure there is adequate and appropriate signage available at rest centres</i>
<i>Staffing</i>	8	5	<i>Issues around 24 hour staffing arrangements over a sustained period</i>
<i>Transport to & from rest centres</i>	9	4	<i>Dependant on County Council. No local arrangements in place.</i>
<i>Pets</i>	10	2	<i>No arrangements in place.</i>
<i>Entertainment (children)</i>	11	1	<i>No formal arrangements in place</i>

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Item 7
19 March 2002

SERVICE UNDER REVIEW	<i>Emergency Planning</i>	ELEMENT OF THE SERVICE BEING ASSESSED	<i>Emergency Communication</i>
-----------------------------	----------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------

Anticipated issues for the customer	Ref no.	Assessment 1=negative, 10=positive	Evidence to support assessment
<i>Access to information</i>	1	5	<i>Untested in large scale emergency-response to smaller incidents thought OK (localised flooding, foot & mouth, pollution)</i>
<i>Quality</i>	2	7	<i>Untested in large scale emergency-response to smaller incidents thought OK (localised flooding, foot & mouth, pollution)</i>
<i>Quantity</i>	3	7	<i>Untested in large scale emergency-response to smaller incidents thought OK (localised flooding, foot & mouth, pollution)</i>
<i>Updates</i>	4	7	<i>Untested in large scale emergency-response to smaller incidents thought OK (localised flooding, foot & mouth, pollution)</i>

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Item 7
19 March 2002

SERVICE UNDER REVIEW

Emergency Planning

**ELEMENT OF THE SERVICE
BEING ASSESSED**

Pre-Emergency Communication

Anticipated issues for the customer	Ref no.	Assessment 1=negative, 10=positive	Evidence to support assessment
<i>Access to information</i>	1	4	<i>Improve communications methods and public access means</i>
<i>Education</i>	2	4	<i>Develop methods to improve public awareness</i>

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Item 7
19 March 2002

SERVICE UNDER REVIEW

Emergency Planning

**ELEMENT OF THE SERVICE
BEING ASSESSED**

Emergency Response

Anticipated issues for the customer	Ref no.	Assessment 1=negative, 10=positive	Evidence to support assessment
<i>Speed of response</i>	1	5	<i>Considered OK where tested for flooding, pollution etc., but untested at night for a large scale incident.</i>
<i>Co-ordination of response</i>	2	5	<i>Considered OK where tested for flooding, pollution etc., but untested at night for a large scale incident.</i>
<i>Evacuation</i>	3	5	<i>Untested</i>
<i>Allocation to rest centres</i>	4	5	<i>Untested</i>
<i>Transportation to rest centres</i>	5	5	<i>Untested</i>

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Item 7
19 March 2002

SERVICE UNDER REVIEW

Emergency Planning

**ELEMENT OF THE SERVICE
BEING ASSESSED**

Post Emergency Response

Anticipated issues for the customer	Ref no.	Assessment 1=negative, 10=positive	Evidence to support assessment
<i>Homelessness</i>	1	8	<i>Normal homelessness procedures come into play</i>
<i>Security of premises</i>	2	8	<i>Response to incident in West Street. Not tested in large scale emergency</i>
<i>Clearing up</i>	3	5	<i>Untested out of hours</i>
<i>Repairs to premises</i>	4	8	<i>Response to incident in West Street.</i>