
PROVISION OF FLOOD DEFENCES AT THE DEPOT

1 SUMMARY

This report highlights to Members the need to maintain simple flood protection measures. The Council must be in a position to respond to its own needs. The Council is not obliged to provide equipment or materials to the public, although there is a high expectation by the public that "the Council" will act. The Fire and Rescue Service does not carry sandbags on its appliances, and looks to local authorities when in need.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 A number of events over the past 18 months - 2 years have indicated that flooding is possibly on the increase. Accordingly, it would be prudent to ensure that dedicated funding is available for simple flood defence measures, usually in the form of traditional sandbags. (There is a drawback. Filled bags rot and the sand becomes unusable). New, "high-tec", absorbent products are now available. (These are easier to store, load and distribute, as they have little weight and volume until they absorb water).
- 2.2 Although the Environment Agency, (EA), has made it clear that householders are responsible for their own premises, there is a high public expectation that the local Council can and will provide sandbags. There is perhaps a case for assistance in extreme circumstances, although it may not be possible to assist every caller, nor necessarily in time to prevent flooding. Essex Fire and Rescue do not carry sand and/or filled sandbags on fire appliances. They too seek assistance from local authorities as necessary.
- 2.3 In response to the flooding events on 8 February, the Council dispensed 100 sandbags, filling a further 500, some now held as stock, and used 13 tonnes of sand. The cost of the sand and sandbags was £1,561, met from the general emergency planning Equipment Tools and Materials fund.

3. THE FUTURE

- 3.1 Subject to a review of storage facilities and the longer term health and safety implications of filling sandbags etc., with the associated possibility of using modern absorbent products, and set against an identified need to maintain some flood defence stocks, it is proposed that the Council makes a specific financial provision each year for the above.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS.

- 4.1 Based on previous experience, a sum of £2000 would appear to cover the level of flooding that the Council may possibly face at any one time. The exact response will be measured against the actual requirement on the day.

- 4.2 There are human resource implications, again subject to the time of day, or night, during which an emergency response is required.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 With regard to the provision of bags to the public, the Council is not legally obliged to provide sand or sandbags. Where it does respond, it is on humanitarian grounds only. There is no liability in the provision of sandbags, nor is any expertise or guidance provided.

6. PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Flooding occurred in a number of Parishes. It is difficult to predict how this may occur in the future.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS**

That a provision of £2000 be put in the estimates each year for the provision of simple flood defence measures as described in the report. (CPM)

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