
EMERGENCY PLANNING AND BUSINESS CONTINUITY REVIEW

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with information regarding Emergency Planning and Business Continuity to enable Members to understand the way in which the Council would respond to an emergency and how the work taking place will prepare the Council to meet future risks.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 In a major emergency the Emergency Services will work together with other agencies in the response. The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 legislates that these agencies need to plan and prepare to work to coordinate and cooperate with each other. This responsibility is placed on a range of organisations including Local Authorities and covering others such as the Environment Agency, Ports and Harbour Authorities, Utility companies and Health (NHS, CCGs, Public Health England and Hospital Trusts)
- 2.2 Emergency Planning is risk based; in general terms the greater risks receive the larger share of available resource that is allocated for planning and preparation. The National Risk Register considers a wide range of risks such as pandemic influenza, flooding, electricity failure, emerging human and animal disease, severe weather, transport incidents, industrial action and new risks such as space weather (for example the possible impact of sun activity on communications satellites). In addition, the County level Community Risk Register for Essex places greater emphasis on local risks such as flooding from an east coast surge tide, industrial accidents along the north Thames coast, coastal pollution or passenger vessel accidents at Harwich. At a District level the Council works to ensure it can play its part in the response to all these widespread emergencies but also plans for local risks such as London Southend Airport, flooding, the MoD activities on Foulness and local coastal pollution.
- 2.3 Closely linked with Emergency Planning is Business Continuity. This concerns the Council's ability to maintain its services in the face of major disruption; for example the loss of its offices due to a fire, or other less severe incidents. As the Council's response to an emergency is based on reprioritising our resources to meet the needs of the incident, this will have an impact on our normal service delivery. Consequently Business Continuity becomes part of the emergency response. This is recognised in the legislation which places a responsibility on the Council to undertake Business Continuity Planning.
- 2.4 The Council employ an Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer to lead on this work and ensure the Council meets its legislative requirements for Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

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- 2.5 An effective response to an emergency requires the different responding agencies to work together. Work to ensure they cooperate and coordinate responses is led by the Essex Resilience Forum. With a membership of senior officers from the key organisations, the Forum identifies the work that is required and, through a system of working groups, delivers plans, guidance and training. The Council is a proactive member of this group.
- 2.6 As stated within our Emergency Plans, the Council's aim is to "work with other agencies to support those affected and help in their recovery". The Council achieves this initially through a meeting of the Leadership Team to decide on how we can reprioritise our resources to meet the needs of our residents, whilst still maintaining essential services.
- 2.7 To assist the Leadership Team in delivering this aim, there are a number of supporting plans; some are generic to help with the process of the response, others contain specific information and guidance on dealing with particular risks. All the plans are published on the Council's website.
- 2.8 The key plans that outline the Council's response are:
- RDC - Our Response to an Emergency (Appendix 1)
 - Emergency Information Centre (Appendix 2)
 - Communications (Appendix 3)
- 2.9 The Emergency Information Centre is set up by taking staff from their usual duties to gather information on the emergency. This could include sending staff to the scene or to act as liaison officers at multi agency meetings, as well as establishing contact with the emergency services and taking part in telephone conferences. The aim is to compile this information into a briefing for the Leadership Team so that they can make informed decisions about the way in which the Council will reprioritise its resources. This information, plus the decisions made by the Leadership Team, is then given to a Communications Team (led by our Communications staff, but with assistance from other staff) to share with members, staff, residents, professional partners and the media.
- 2.10 For these plans to be effective they need to be maintained, reviewed and developed to ensure they are current, that staff can deliver what the plans say they will and that the supporting services are practiced. The plans act as a prompt to enable the Council to establish the mechanisms for the initial response, but, as there is a move to recovery from the emergency, the longer term aspects will develop to meet the particular circumstances.
- 2.11 An example of this process is the response to the flash flooding in previous years. During these incidents officers visited the sites and reported back to the Leadership Team. Teleconferences with partners around the County were held and the Leadership Team were regularly briefed. The Leadership

Team agreed immediate actions to help those affected, including emergency accommodation and free removal of flood damaged goods. Debriefs were held which helped formulate the plans in their current form and also assisted in developing the work programme for the Council's local Flood Forum. The Forum brought together representatives from the Council, Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Highways to address the problems highlighted by residents and Members. This led to the Forum identifying preventative work and finding funding for it to be completed. The Government offered grants for property level flood protection and this was heavily promoted in the District resulting in over 40 homes and businesses getting flood protection. There was also action to help prevent roads flooding and becoming impassable. As a result of this process the effect of subsequent heavy rainfall has been mitigated for residents and businesses.

3 THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

- 3.1 The Leadership Team have taken part in exercises, both planned and without notice, to prepare them in directing resources to help in an emergency. These have covered various scenarios including flooding, fires and building evacuation. After the exercises, and also after real events, a debrief is held to analyse what happened and the decisions made, to see if improvements and learning can be identified should a similar situation occur in the future.
- 3.2 Further detailed development work is also taking place with Assistant Directors to look at specific aspects of services. For example, the Assistant Director - Community and Housing Services is working with the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer to consider how the Council would respond to a large number of homeless people following an emergency. As a first step, approaches have been made to the two Essex Housing Groups to agree mutual aid in principle. The next step is to review the capacity in the County as a whole and see how this might meet the needs of homeless families. If this reveals a significant capability shortfall then a request will be made for the Essex Resilience Forum to commission work to investigate options.
- 3.3 For the Leadership Team to make informed decisions they need to understand what is happening. They are briefed by a team running an Emergency Information Centre, gathering intelligence from the Emergency Services, our Liaison Officers, officers sent to the scene and links to our Parish Councils. We do not have staff allocated to these roles; these have to be agreed at the time, with consideration given to the impact of taking them from their normal work. Training is conducted with members of staff who are willing to undertake these roles on a voluntary basis, including outside normal office hours.

4 COMMUNICATIONS

- 4.1 The Communications Team has a vital role to play in an emergency, ensuring that the media, website, social media, residents, Parishes, Members,

Customer Services and staff are kept informed. They work closely with the Emergency Information Centre to understand and share the latest information.

- 4.2 A recent exercise based on the experiences of Kensington and Chelsea Council, following the fire at Grenfell Towers, exposed potential areas to address regarding allocating sufficient resources to support a large scale communications response. As part of the debrief process, options are being investigated to increase the resilience of the Communications Team; these include enhanced training, mutual aid and increasing the number of Emergency Volunteers.

5 EMERGENCY VOLUNTEERS

- 5.1 The Emergency Volunteers are members of staff who have agreed, in principle, to help respond to an emergency. They undertake training and exercises to assist in this role, including how to run an Emergency Information Centre, how to open and run a Rest Centre and familiarisation with some of the risks in the District, such as visits to the Airport and Foulness Island. The Emergency Volunteers also agree to be contacted out of hours to help with a response. Because of their training, experience and availability, the Emergency Volunteers are the first call to initiate the key elements of a response.
- 5.2 All staff were invited to attend training during 2017 to explain how they may be called on to assist in an Emergency. The training covered the risks in the District as well as national risks, the way in which the Council responds and the role they may be asked to play.
- 5.3 The Council has a reasonable number of Emergency Volunteers in relation to its overall staffing level, but the intention is to recruit more with the help of an attractive training programme during 2018, which will include training, exercises and site visits plus a development opportunity to provide support to the Communications Team.

6 REST CENTRES

- 6.1 Rest Centres are one of the key ways in which the Council may be asked to support our residents. These are where the Council uses its Leisure facilities to provide emergency accommodation for those evacuated from their homes, whilst assisting them to find alternative accommodation. The Council's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer has been leading a programme to review and improve this process and there is now a common procedure for all the local authorities in Essex. This has made mutual aid more effective and has enabled the production of a joint training programme.

7 BUSINESS CONTINUITY

- 7.1 In diverting resources to aid the response to an emergency, the Council needs to ensure that our core services do not suffer. Business Continuity plans exist to enable the Leadership Team to balance the needs of our

residents. The Business Continuity Plan has been exercised, most recently in August this year, by using the scenario of a fire in a block of flats. This was a no notice exercise calling together the members of the Leadership Team available on the day. The aim was to manage the demands of making staff available to help with supporting the displaced residents whilst maintaining our normal services.

- 7.2 In terms of real life events, the Business Continuity Plan has also been implemented following recent IT outages.
- 7.3 A rolling programme of review will run every year, with a different service each month updating its plan. There will then be an annual exercise to bring together and test these service plans.

8 OUT OF HOURS RESPONSE

- 8.1 The Council operates an out of hours response. This has two aspects to cover both routine and emergency out of hours calls. The routine calls are dealt with on our behalf by Tendring Careline. This is a new contract, established in 2016, to replace the previous arrangement with Basildon Careline. Calls are answered out of hours, in line with information provided by our service areas. The new contract was an opportunity to review the advice and how it was managed by Careline, resulting in the production of a new guide for the operators.
- 8.2 If there is a call requesting urgent action by the Council following an emergency, this is referred to our On Call Officer. The on call officers operate via a rota and are on duty for a week at a time to receive emergency calls and take initial action on behalf of the Council. They undertake training and briefing to develop their understanding of emergency response.

9 ESSEX RESILIENCE FORUM

- 9.1 The Essex Resilience Forum is the key way in which the Council discharges its duty to cooperate and coordinate with other responding agencies. Where it is more effective to do so, the Forum will initiate joint working groups to develop procedure, guidance, plans or training for use by all responding agencies in Essex. The primary way in which this is achieved is through work groups involving Emergency Planning Officers from different agencies.
- 9.2 Projects are on a task and finish basis and has been highly successful in delivering valuable work on a range of topics including:
- Command and control
 - Dealing with mass casualties
 - Reservoir failure
 - Recovery coordination centres
 - Pandemic influenza
 - Supporting vulnerable people

- Humanitarian assistance
- Site clearance
- Operation London Bridge (death of the Monarch)
- Enhanced mortuary arrangements at Southend
- Flood high risk areas
- Widespread power failure
- Provision of psychosocial support
- Working with the voluntary sector, working with spontaneous volunteers
- Rest Centres

9.3 These pieces of work provide the Council with plans and guidance that can be used at District level knowing that they are understood and supported by our partner agencies and will make mutual aid much easier.

9.4 The Council Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer has taken an active role in this work, representing all the Essex District Councils on many of the groups and leading on some of the projects.

10 LOCAL LIAISON

10.1 Collaborative working is key to emergency planning, the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer is a member of the London Southend Airport Emergency Planning Group and also works with QinetiQ around the MoD activities on Foulness Island.

10.2 QinetiQ operations on Foulness come under the Control of Major Accident Hazards regulations. The local authority responsibilities under the Act are discharged by Essex County Council, with our support, as required.

10.3 We also work with our neighbouring local authorities on mutual aid, joint training and other issues of local benefit. We have engaged with the Parish Councils to establish contacts we can use in an emergency and to encourage them to think about how they can assist their residents during an emergency.

10.4 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer has attended Parish Council meetings to discuss how they might plan to assist in an emergency. Sessions have been included in the Parish Summit events and, at the request of one Parish Council, an emergency exercise was carried out for local residents.

Benchmarking

10.5 There is no current formal assessment or audit of how well the Council meets the requirements of the Act, but informal benchmarking against similar local authorities indicates that the Council is in a good position, although work to further enhance its plans continues. Through the testing of its plans the Council is focussed on the practicalities of the response and has a good number of staff trained in emergency response and undertaken various

exercise. The Council is engaged with the Essex Resilience Forum and has strong links with local organisations. The Leadership Team is fully engaged and has demonstrated confidence in dealing with a range of potential emergency situations. The Council has also an established and effective out of hours response.

- 10.6 The Council is not complacent and recognises that further work will be required to ensure the plans remain current and that continue to be tested and improved where necessary.

11 TRAVELLER ENCAMPMENTS

- 11.1 Emergency Planning also has a role in dealing with unauthorised traveller encampments. This is primarily because reports tend to arrive out of hours and action is initiated through the emergency response arrangements. The Council has contracted the Essex Countywide Traveller Unit to act on our behalf in taking the required steps to remove unauthorised encampments; the situation is monitored and communicated using the emergency response mechanisms. The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer also conducts debriefs after an encampment and uses this to improve the way we respond; for example, investigating ways in which we can reduce the impact of refuse left by travellers.

12 COUNTER TERRORISM

- 12.1 Emergency Planning includes work on Counter Terrorism issues. The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer has undertaken training with the National Counter Terrorism Security Officer to be able to deliver training modules for key staff. Primarily this is to enable advice to be given on post room, bomb and reception procedures, but has the potential for a wider application for staff.
- 12.2 The Government strategy for dealing with international terrorism is known as CONTEST. This is divided into various parts one of which is “Prepare” which covers the preparations organisations can make to respond to a terrorist attack, such as Emergency Planning and the work indicated above. The second part of CONTEST is “Prevent”, this concerns work to stop people becoming radicalised. The Assistant Director Community & Housing is leading on the role out of all staff training in this area.

13 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Corporate Risk Register recognises that a failure to respond adequately to an emergency represents a risk to the Council’s reputation. As such, policies and procedures are drafted, tested and reviewed in order that they are fit for purpose should they be needed in the event of an emergency

14 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 Inevitably, some larger emergencies carry environmental implications, for example tyre fires or costal pollution. By working with partners in advance, to prepare and plan our joint response, we are able to mitigate the worst impacts to the environment.

15 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 There are no direct resource implications arising as a result of this report. The Council employs an Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer to ensure the Council meets its legislative requirements; in addition six officers are paid an allowance to act as Out of Hours contacts in the event of an emergency. The costs associated with this are already assumed in the budget.
- 15.2 In the event of a major emergency there may be unavoidable costs that have to be met quickly by the Council; in this case monies would be drawn from the General Fund in the first instance and a claim then made back to Central Government via the Bellwin Scheme to recover these costs. Therefore the operational revenue budget is not expected to cover these costs.

16 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 16.1 The relevant legislation is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This places responsibilities on us as a “Category 1 Responder”. This is the same category as the Emergency Services and recognises that District Councils have a valuable role to play in the response to an emergency and in the recovery process afterwards. The Act also places a responsibility on the Council to cooperate with other responding organisations and to ensure what we do is coordinated with their response.
- 16.2 There is also the need to maintain a Business Continuity plan, recognising that the Council needs to maintain services whilst also making resources available to deal with the effects of an Emergency.
- 16.3 Emergency Planning and Business Continuity have also been the subject of internal audits and the recommendations completed.

17 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1 Parish Council’s have benefited from support from the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer in the drafting of their own local plans regarding the role they can play in responding to an emergency.

18 RECOMMENDATION

- 18.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES** to note the contents of the report.



Matt Harwood-White

Assistant Director, Commercial Services

Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Jeff Stacey (Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer) on:

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

Our Response to an Emergency

Our Aim

In an emergency Rochford District Council will work with other agencies to support those affected and to help in their recovery.

How we will achieve this

The resources of the Council will be reprioritised to meet our aim, whilst still ensuring that we maintain our essential services.

This policy outlines the actions we will take to:

- Understand what is happening.
- Decide on the actions we will take.
- Work with other agencies.
- Share information on what is happening.
- Provide practical support for those affected.
- Make sure we are prepared.
- Provide mutual aid to other Local Authorities

These actions apply to all types of emergencies although the support we provide will vary with the circumstances. For certain incidents a briefing note will be provided setting out any key actions by Rochford District Council specific to that type of incident.

The operational detail of these actions are contained in procedural notes that are used for reference and training.

1 **Understand what is happening**

Understanding the situation is key to providing the most effective response. Rochford District Council will take the following actions to ensure that we have good information on which to make decisions:

- **District Emergency Information Centre**

Staff will run an Emergency Information Centre the main purpose of which will be to compile and manage information about the emergency and its impact, the response by other agencies and how the situation may develop. This will be reported to the Chief Executive and the Leadership Team to enable them to make decisions about the response by the Council.

The Emergency Information Centre will be set up in the Rochford offices for most incidents, but depending on circumstances we may choose other locations, or provide the service on a virtual basis.

- **Liaison Officers**

In order to ensure that the Council has good information and its interests are represented, we will send Liaison Officers to work with appropriate partners and groups of partners. In particular we will seek to have representation at Strategic Co-ordination Group meetings, either in person or by telephone conference.

Liaison Officers will report back to the Emergency Information Centre.

- **Sending Officers to the Scene**

To help with our assessment of the emergency we will send Council Officers to the areas affected to report back on the situation. Out of hours our On Call Officers will lead on local assessment. Valuable information can also be gained from our contractors, in particular those on the waste collection rounds.

This information will be reported to the District Emergency Centre.

- **Links to the Parish Councils**

We value contact with the District and Parish Councillors during an emergency to aid in our understanding of what is happening and encourage Parish Councils to develop Parish Emergency Plans to help them work with us and support their local community.

Information from the Parishes will be reported to the Emergency Information Centre.

2 Decide on the actions we will take

In response to an emergency the Chief Executive will call together the Leadership Team to agree the action to be taken by Rochford District Council. Depending on circumstances this meeting could be held by phone conference. A strategy to meet the needs of the Rochford residents will be formed to cover both the initial response and to consider our role during the recovery period.

Where there is advance knowledge of a risk, for example advance warning of severe weather, the Leadership Team will meet in advance to prepare its response.

Departments will report back to the Emergency Information Centre on the actions they are taking. This will be incorporated into future reports to the Chief Executive and the Leadership Team.

3 Work with other agencies

All organisations responding to an incident will be prioritising their resources to meet the requirements of the emergency. It is important that we work with other agencies to ensure a coordinated and effective joint response. Through the staff in the Emergency Information Centre and the use of Liaison Officers we will maintain a dialogue with partners.

We will ensure that we maintain links to any co-ordinating groups that might be established, in particular a Strategic Coordination Group.

4 Share information on what is happening

The Emergency Information Centre will work with our Communications Team to ensure information on the emergency response is available to the residents of Rochford District. They will work to ensure that the current situation is reflected on the Council's website and shared through social networks. We will provide updates to the broadcast media, in particular to local radio stations. Briefs will be provided for District and Parish Councillors and updates will be put on the Council's intranet to keep staff informed.

5 Provide practical support for those affected

If people are displaced from their homes the Council will open its Leisure Centres to act as assistance centres. They will provide information on what is happening and, if required, emergency feeding and accommodation. Once these basic needs are met Council staff will work with individuals on their specific needs. In certain circumstances schools may also be used for these functions.

We will also support local assistance centres established through Parish Council emergency plans.

The Chief Executive will work with the Leadership Team to assess any other ways in which the Council resources may be redeployed to support those affected.

6 **Make sure we are prepared**

To ensure that we are able to meet the aims outlined above we will undertake the following actions:

- Maintain procedural documents to record the operational detail of the actions outlined in this policy.
- Identify staff to assist in the roles of Emergency Information Centre operation and Liaison Officer.
- Ensure we maintain a capability to respond by all Departments.
- Undertake training for both general and specific response roles.
- Hold exercises to test our capabilities.
- Work with other agencies to ensure we understand each others' response and capabilities (mainly through the Local Resilience Forum).
- Consider the main risks to the District and plan to meet them.
- Ensure we are able to make an initial response out of hours via our On Call Officer system and that the Council can take action within a reasonable time scale at any time.

7 **Provide mutual aid to other Local Authorities**

We will be prepared to assist others when our District is not at risk.



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Emergency Information Centre

Our Aim

An Emergency Information Centre will be set up to collate information during an emergency and provide briefings. These briefings will be used by the Leadership Team to make decisions about the response by Rochford District Council and by the Communications Team to keep staff, Councillors, public and media informed.

How we will achieve this

- Decide to activate the Emergency Information Centre.
- Set up a base to manage information.
- Organise staffing.
- Make contact with the relevant organisations, groups and individuals involved in the response.
- Link with RDC staff involved in the response.
- Monitor emails, warnings, websites and conference calls.
- Compile briefings.
- Support the Communications team.
- Operate out of hours if required.

1 Decision to Activate the Emergency Information Centre

The need for an Emergency Information Centre can be identified by any Assistant Director, with the agreement of the Chief Executive. The Emergency Planning Officer or On Call Officers may provide advice on activation following the receipt of alerts and warnings.

The Emergency Information Centre may be established to provide support to the Leadership Team during the build up to an emergency (such as a surge tide or severe weather), as a result of a sudden emergency (such as a major fire or chemical release) or during the recovery period.

2 Set up a Base to Manage Information

The requirement is to have access to telephones, computers and room to collate information and prepare briefings. The location for this can be flexible depending on the circumstances, but the default location will be the Old House.

The Emergency Information Centre operation will be based in the room opposite the Communications Team and will work closely with them. The Old Hall and other offices can be utilised as required.

An early assessment will be made of the requirements to support an ongoing emergency response and an agreement reached with the Leadership Team.

3 Organise Staffing

The Emergency Information Centre will initially be staffed by members of the RDC Emergency Volunteers, but as the response develops other staff will be tasked to assist with the operation. Training will be given to the Emergency Volunteers and Emergency Information Centre Managers will be identified.

The level of staffing and the hours of operation of the Emergency Information Centre will be agreed by the Leadership Team. Assistant Directors will be asked to identify staff and their availability (including out of office hours) and a rota will be prepared by the Emergency Information Centre staff.

4 Make Contact with others involved in the Response

An essential part of collating information is making contact with those who have knowledge of what is happening. This will vary depending on circumstances but the Emergency Information Centre should consider contacting:

- Police and Fire Control Rooms.
- Strategic Coordination Centre.
- Essex County Council County Emergency Response Centre.
- Parish Councils.
- Any agencies with a particular role in the response such as the Environment Agency.

5 Link with RDC Staff involved in the Response

A number of RDC staff and our contractors may be involved in the response as a result of their work. For example we can get reports from the refuse collection contractors as they do their rounds. In addition there may be officers that we have sent to the scene or who are acting as liaison officers at the Strategic Coordination Centre, or the County Emergency Response Centre.

6 Monitor Emails, Warnings, Websites and Conference Calls

Further information is obtained from linking Emergency Information Centre staff in to email exchanges, monitoring warnings (for example from the Flood Forecasting Centre), checking websites that may have additional information and joining in to conference calls.

7 Compile Briefings

This is the critical aspect of the Emergency Information Centre. All the information gained from the activities above needs to be collated into reports. The key role of the Emergency Information Centre Manager is to ensure that appropriate reports are produced to meet the requests made. The primary customer is the Leadership Team and the Manager will attend their meetings to present the briefing and answer questions on the current situation. The next most important customer is the Communications Team.

8 Support the Communications Team

The Communications Team plays an important part in any emergency. They will take the briefing information and share it with staff, Councillors, the public (via the RDC website and social media) and the media.

During an emergency there will need to be close links between the Emergency Information Centre and the Communications Team and it is likely that Emergency Information Centre Volunteers will assist directly with the Communications Team work.

9 Operate Out of Hours

The Emergency Information Centre will need to be able to operate outside normal office hours. If it is staying open at the end of the working day arrangements will be made through Property/Asset Management/Maintenance. If the Emergency Information Centre needs to be opened out of hours, this will be done via the On Call Officers. They have contact numbers for the Caretakers and will ask for the offices to be opened.

Flexibility should be exercised in providing the Emergency Information Centre function out of hours. For example a small scale monitoring requirement may be met by an officer or two working from home. In such circumstances there will need to be clear arrangements for escalating the response if required. As a rule it is easier to downsize a response than to have to deploy additional resource at short notice.



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Our Communications Response to an Emergency

Our Aim

During an emergency we will share information on what is happening and on the response by Rochford District Council.

How we will achieve this

- The Communications Team will lead the communications response in accordance with the Communications Strategy.
- The Communications Team will work closely with the Emergency Information Centre to prepare information on our response to the emergency.
- The information will be distributed as follows:
 - As Press Releases to the media.
 - To our professional partners responding to the emergency.
 - As briefings for Customer Services.
 - To the Council's website.
 - As updates to staff on the Council's intranet.
 - As briefings to District Councillors and Parish Councils.
 - Via social media.
- Nominations will be put forward for media interviews.

1 **Communications Team Lead**

An emergency creates a major demand on the Communications Team and although they will lead on the communications aspects of the response, additional staff resource will be provided. Initially this is likely to be through the Emergency Volunteers, but an early request will be made to the Management Team to identify suitable staff.

2 **Emergency Information Centre**

The Centre will be opened to collate information on the incident and prepare briefings for the Leadership Team. They will work closely with the Communications Team to understand the situation and to share the decisions made by the Leadership Team. The size of the Emergency Information Centre will depend on the nature of the incident and for smaller incidents may be co-located with the Communications Team.

3 Information Distribution

Keeping people informed of the situation is a vital part of the response and the Emergency Information Centre will assist to ensure that we put the following in place:

- The Press Release is the key document for setting out the RDC response and will form the basis of the information we distribute. It will be prepared by the Communications Team based on the information collated by the Emergency Information Centre.
- As part of an emergency response there will be a lead organisation for the communications and we will ensure we link with them to maintain consistency of approach.
- Customer Services are our front line in dealing with enquiries and a briefing will be prepared for them. Some staff in Customer Services are working with the Communications Team to ensure that there are good links during an emergency.
- Current information will be maintained on the Council's web site for the public and for staff on the intranet.
- Briefings will be sent to District Councillors and to Parish Clerks via the Emergency Information Centre. Also, in an emergency the Centre staff will seek to contact members of the Parish Councils affected as part of building up information on the situation and keeping local people informed.
- Social media will be used to distribute our messages. It will also be monitored to help with information gathering and in case there is misinformation that requires a counter response.

4 Media Interviews

If there are requests from the media for interviews, the Communications Team will work with the Management Team to nominate suitable staff and ensure they are briefed.



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