

Emergency Planning
Annual Audit Commission Self-Assessment Tool 2008/09
Cabinet Meeting 6th July 2009

Agenda Item 9c

Portfolio Area: Environment and Sustainability
Report Presented by: Councillor Roger Walters

Background Papers: Audit Commission self-assessment tool for Local Authorities
 Emergency Planning and Business Continuity
Corporate Implications: Yes
Options: None
Risks: Lack of preparedness in the areas Emergency Response and Recovery under the Civil Contingencies Act 2005 will have an adverse impact on the Authorities 'duty of care' to the Districts Communities, ability to deliver the 'business' of the Council and loss of reputation.

Executive Summary

The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the state of preparedness for a major emergency and that appropriate Business Continuity arrangements are in place to meet the Council's 'duty of care'. Details of the action taken to improve emergency response following the recent flooding in the district are also highlighted within the report.

Audit Commissions Self assessment

To ensure that the council has sufficient resources and procedures in place to respond to any form of emergency, it must annually assess itself against the audit commissions self-assessment framework. In doing so the council will identify areas for improvement and be confident that it has effective procedures in place to deal with any emergency situation.

The 2008/09 self-assessment shows continual improvement from 2007/08, and the Audit and Insurance Manager has further developed the Strategic and Operational Risk Management Register and ensured that Services are developing robust business continuity plans.

The annual Business Continuity training exercise took place with Corporate Management Team and Senior Managers focusing on how the organisation would respond to a Pandemic Flu incident.

Revision of our emergency procedures for flooding

Our plans were recently put to the test at the beginning of the year when the district suffered widespread snow fall and flooding. Internal and external de-briefs with partners have enabled plans to be reviewed and highlight areas for improvement to enable an effective and efficient Emergency response to be maintained for our communities.

Decision

Members are requested to note the self-assessment position statement for 2008/09 and action taken to ensure the emergency preparedness of Braintree District Council

Emergency Planning Position Statement for 2008/09

Self-assessment

The Audit Commissions self-assessment tool for Local Authority Emergency Planning and Business continuity is an optional checklist which Braintree District Council have used since 2005/06 as a basis for reviewing the councils preparedness for a major emergency. It aims to provide a framework against which the Authority can review current level of preparedness and identify areas for improvement.

The tool has over 200 questions looking at the main duties for Local Authorities as outlined in the Civil Contingencies Act 2005 with the aim is to ensure that we maintain our current performance as 'green'.

The key improvement areas for 2008/09 were identified as:-

- Information sharing,
- Business Continuity Management and
- Promoting the County and Local Community Risk Registers

Key issues for 2009/10

- Continue to develop secure systems for Information Sharing and Data Protection.
- link local risk register with Parish Plans.

Attached as Appendix 1 is a copy of the Self-Assessment tool showing comparisons and action taken from 2006/07 to 2008/09.

Revision of emergency procedures for flooding

There is no better way to test an emergency plan and procedures other than in a real emergency. During 2008/09 the Authority effectively responded to the February 2009 Flood incident which affected communities throughout the District. Having developed the Authorities Emergency Response and Recovery procedures form Flooding incidents during 2001-2003 the Emergency Team responded effectively and efficiently to assisting Communities affected by potential river and surface water flooding.

Internal and external de-briefs with partners enabled emergency procedures, guidelines and risk assessments to be reviewed and improvements identified to ensure that Braintree District Council Emergency Preparedness remains effective and responsive.

Risk Assessments have been reviewed and updated to highlight the potential risks of calling out Officers in the hours of darkness during severe weather. The control measures implemented to reduce the risks are:-

- During severe weather events and during the hours of darkness, trained emergency response staff may not be able to travel any great distance in a vehicle and access the emergency due to flooded or blocked roads.
- work with the Parishes to improve their community resilience, offering training in opening and receiving evacuees into the Rest Centre.
- prepare grab bags which can be sited at the Parishes designated Rest Center, containing emergency blankets, paperwork and contact details for the BDC

- Emergency team. This will enable Parishes to offer an initial response until BDC staff can safely travel to the rest centre.
- Review of the issue of sandbags guidelines to support the out of hours Duty Facilities Officer - who was inundated with calls from the public demanding sand bags - by clearly stating that sandbags will not be delivered during the hours of darkness and offering advice to members of the public via an answer phone message. The message will offer the facility to leave contact details to enable Emergency response staff to assist members of the public immediately the Emergency Operations Centre is activated.

After the 2001-2002 floods, Parishes have been encouraged to hold a stock of sandbags as rivers and roads in the District become impassable during a flood event. Sandbag stocks are reviewed annually and after the February flood event Parishes were contacted to replenish or consider holding a stock of sandbags.

A Parish 'Flood Awareness' evening has been arranged for the 12th September 2009 with speakers from the National Flood Forum and the Environment Agency. Flood protection exhibitors have been invited to discuss alternative flood protection to the traditional sandbags. This integrates with the element of the duty of 'warning and Informing' the public under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and Braintree District Council's strategy of actively promoting community engagement and improving local response in an emergency.

Corporate Implications			
Financial:	None		
Legal:	None		
Equalities & Diversity:	None		
Customer Impact:	Parish Evening will Improve awareness for Parish Representatives of alternative products for flood protection.		
Environment & Climate Change:	None		
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Local Committees		Partners
	Public		Staff
Key Decision:	No		
Public/Private Report:	Public		
Officer Contact:	Kathy Brown		
Designation:	Health Safety and Emergency Manager		
Ext No:	2753		
Email:	katbr@braintree.gov.uk		

Emergency Planning Self-Assessment Checklist

Y = Yes

P = Potentially

N = No

N/A = Not applicable

	Key Issues and Questions	2006/07				2007/08				2008/09				Action Taken /Areas for Development	
		Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A		
Corporate Arrangements															
1.	Are senior managers and Members aware of their authority's emergency planning responsibilities and performance?														Corporate Mgt Team and Key Officers all hold Emergency Plan. Distribution list in EP of all officers who are key responders and their roles in an emergency. De-briefs are held after emergencies. There is also a published plan available to the public online & in hard copy .
2. a	Are <i>business continuity arrangements</i> seen as service management responsibilities and are they included in Performance Management Reviews and job descriptions?														Reviewed & exercised Business Continuity plan on 4 th March 2009 Included in Service Plans for individual services within BDC. Responsibility for internal BC lies with the Audit Insurance & risk Manager. Awareness level has been raised within BDC Management & Service unit Managers
2. b	Are <i>emergency arrangements</i> seen as service management responsibilities and are they included in Performance Management Reviews and job														Seen as District Emergency Planning Officer role – included within Job Description of DEPO and Emergency Planning Team. Each Director has a responsibility & Job Description (Directors &

	Key Issues and Questions	Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A	Action Taken /Areas for Development
	descriptions?													Senior Mgrs) have now been amended to include Emergency Planning & Business Continuity responsibility
3.	Is there a programme of regular joint exercises and reviews to validate integrated emergency plans/arrangements (including business continuity plans), both within the authority and with external partners, with joint review/debriefing meetings held after these?													Training is now in fourth year of annual programme - good participation levels attained. Annual CMT exercise provided, and annual partnership emergency accommodation exercise. Training programme is flexible and adaptable
4.	Are there arrangements to ensure consistency and integration between business continuity plans and emergency plans? (Between units and departments).													Through communications between District Emergency Planning Officer and Audit, Insurance and Risk Manager (Business Continuity Management) of Key staff have been identified in the Business Continuity Plan and Flu Pandemic Plan. Information prepared by the Emergency Planning Team is promoted to Local Business' via the Head of Enterprise and Culture. Partnership working via Essex Business Continuity Forum
5.	Do you have arrangements to ensure that contractors will, where relevant, support the authority's response to an emergency, and be able to continue critical services in an emergency?													Requirement in all tender documents for companies to had Business Continuity Plans. Some direct agreements with Service providers and partners. eg. SERCO and DCL. The Audit, Insurance and Risk Manager will reviews the procedure annually with Services to identify main contractors..

	Key Issues and Questions	Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A	Action Taken /Areas for Development
6.	Have you identified the hazards within the area and neighbouring areas, which could have an impact on the local area or community?	Y				Y				Y				<p>Sites at Haverhill – links to Sturmer Parish council & St Edmondsbury DC, Bradwell, Pipelines within the District, A12, Stansted Airport, Airfield at Earls Colne. Flooding in various areas of the District.</p> <p>Cross border meetings and direct meetings with industry have taken place where relevant Local Community Risk Register frequently updated and made available to mgrs on intranet for potential impact on Services - Parishes are being made aware of Community Risk Register</p>
7.	Do you share information internally to help early identification of potential hazards and hence preventative/risk reduction work?	Y				Y				Y				<p>Internal (informal) communications via e-mail & managers – severe weather warnings to staff if above 50% probability. Any issue which may affect BDC services i.e. refuse collection, staff travelling in from a distance etc Local Community Risk Register available on intranet. Also any issues affecting Highways across Essex, are disseminated to staff.</p>
Risk Assessment														
8.	Are the results of risk assessment used in planning and prioritising preventative and/or mitigation work?	Y				Y				Y				<p>Strategic Risk Management Register and Operational Risk Management is in place. Also through Local Community Risk Register which has been published on I-Connect Training programme has been implemented for Business Continuity Management and to address issues highlighted on the Local Community Risk Register.</p>

Key Issues and Questions		Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A	Action Taken /Areas for Development
9.	Do you provide information of risk assessment that is able to influence the risk management undertaken by service managers													Yes. Strategic Risk Management Register and Operational Risk Register in place. Lead Officer Audit, Insurance and Risk manager. Emergency Planning Local Community Risk Register is available on I-Connect. Developing information booklet on the Community Risk Register.
Emergency Planning														
10.	1 Do you have appropriate up to date and flexible local plans or formal arrangements to deal with the consequences of a major incident, whatever the cause?													Revised and amended February 2009. Public copies distributed to partners and available via web page.
1.	1 Do you have a media plan or formal arrangements for use in emergencies that have been discussed with your emergency service partners and are your press/communications officers clear about their roles?													Officers are clear about roles – there is a co-ordinated response - Emergency Plan states that each responding agency should liaise together. Further enhanced by District Promotions Manager being Vice Chair of Media & Public Information Working Group on Essex Resilience Forum
2.	1 Do your plans and arrangements (including business continuity plans) take account of the particular needs of vulnerable individuals and local diverse communities?													BDC plan links direct to Social Care, PCT and Greenfield's CH. Responding officers should also liaise with Parish Councils. Public also self refer or relatives/neighbours self refer. List of vulnerable groups identified within Plan – ongoing work locally & at ECC
3.	1 Do you have an Emergency Operations Centre/Control Room adequately													Members Room –and “extending” reception area telephone points TV radio access – logs &

Key Issues and Questions		Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A	Action Taken /Areas for Development
	equipped for a major emergency, with staff that know how to access and use the centre and its equipment?													message forms and other resources in locked filing cabinet. Communications training outlined in training plan.
1 4.	Do you have contingency arrangements if your main EOC is unavailable or your main method of communication cannot be used?													Committee rooms/Braintree Town Hall or Rooms within Institute may be suitable – would link into ICT for Business Continuity Plan - mobile telephones, satellite telephones, airwave radios and alternative telephone network at Millennium Tower
Resources														
1 5.	Are there clear procedures for authorising additional emergency resources/expenditure in a major incident?													There is an emergency code available for use which District Emergency Planning Officer, Management Board & Liaison Officers are aware of
1 6.	Have you reviewed with voluntary agencies and partners, reliance on limited contractor and/or voluntary agency capacity?													Contact ECC for voluntary sector availability Self reliant for food and cooks. Promoting “self resilience” although contractors used for Sandbags, and specialist vehicles, in house staff used for vehicles & GCH referred to for housing issues through SLA. Have a Voluntary Forum Directory which is regularly updated via Essex voluntary Forum meetings.
1 7.	Do you know how much useable emergency equipment you have and is emergency equipment easily accessible in an emergency?													Phones/radios/ satellite phone & airwave/specialist clothes/emergency bedding & beds & fleet resources – improved through Communications training – emergency resources stored in basement EP room.

Key Issues and Questions		Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A	Action Taken /Areas for Development
Training														
1 8.	Do you have a training strategy that covers all those who have responsibilities under emergency arrangements, and an associated structured training programme?													Annual training plan developed now in 4th year – directed at in house staff – Senior Management Team & Rest Centre staff and Communications Staff as initial priority, and partnership working with ECC.
1 9.	Do you evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the training provided?													Standard template used by OD & feedback taken on the day at event and de-briefing at end of each training session
Inform and Warn														
2 0.	Is there clarity and consistency between local partners about responsibilities for warning and informing?													Yes – stated within plans - best practice to liaise with Lead Agency/Police on ground prior to incident. Clear consistent information (internal and external) on web pages as well as available to public via leaflets and public version of emergency plan.
2 1.	Do you have a programme for testing your own and/or joint arrangements for warning and informing those who may be affected by emergencies (including staff)?													INTERNAL – e-mail to all staff on Severe Weather (Severe Weather Plan) EXTERNAL – very limited – through Essex Radio Snowline and Parish website etc District Promotions Managers and PR Officer involved in Emergency Planning training and exercises to enhance understanding of roles etc Multi agency Essex wide table top exercise “Naiaid”

	Key Issues and Questions	Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A	Action Taken /Areas for Development
+ -	Information Sharing													
2 2.	Is critical information (paper based or electronic) duplicated and accessible in an emergency, with any back up/disaster recovery system tested in the past 12 months?													Key staff hold hard copies of plans at home and at office – all relevant staff hold “crib card” Memory sticks held by priority staff Procedures for manual ordering when Marketplace unavailable. All information backed up onto tape and taken off-site once a week – would need to re-build servers.
2 3.	Do critical emergency planning systems have a high priority in your authority's ICT disaster recovery strategy?													In progress with manual back up Business Continuity Service Plans in place for ICT and Serco.
2 4.	Do your information storing and sharing arrangements meet security and legal requirements, including those of any potential post-incident criminal or civil investigation?													Currently revising data security arrangements. A report will be going to the Audit Committee in June 2009. Additional ICT Security Programmes to be installed.
	Co-operation & Joint Working													
2 5.	Do you have regular links (including up to date mutual aid arrangements including costs and liability issues), with those responsible for emergency planning in all neighbouring authorities, especially where formal sub regional/regional arrangements do not include those authorities?													Revised and updated on a regular basis Local Authority Working Group – quarterly Primary Care Trust – quarterly Voluntary Working Group – quarterly Local Resilience Forum – annual Mutual Aid Agreement in place with Essex County Council and Districts and Unitaries.

	Key Issues and Questions	Y	P	N	N / a	Y	P	N	N / A	Y	P	N	N / A	Action Taken /Areas for Development
	Business/service Continuity Management													
2 6.	Are authority/service group emergency management arrangements for any service disruption clearly set out and tested through exercises?													Senior Management workshop held in March 2009. Also included “use of resources” validation for CIPFA - level 3
2 7.	Have all services assessed the potential for disruption by a structured process such as a business impact analysis that identifies risks and their potential impact on services, critical activities and dependencies?													Business Impact Analysis have been conducted with all depts & will be reviewed 2009/10. Information forms basis of Generic Business Continuity Plan and Service Business Recovery Plans – each Service needs to write its own Business Recovery Plan This will be exercised, reviewed and progressed annually by the Audit, Insurance and Risk Manager.
	Promotion of Business Continuity Planning													
2 8.	Is there clarity over who within the authority is primarily responsible for BCM promotion?													Head of Enterprise & Culture in co-ordination with District Emergency Planning Officer & Emergency Planning Team.
2 9.	Does the authority make National information on BCM available for the local business community?													National info is available via links on website and some hard copy info available in reception areas Business Continuity Booklet promoted to local business Community – Best Practice with Cabinet and BC booklet is seen as Best Practice with Scottish Executive – has been requested for use as template across UK

