



<b>Subject:</b>	Emergency Planning Service Report 2016-2017
<b>Date:</b>	13 June 2017
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<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on emergency planning and civil contingencies matters of interest over the last 14 months and to highlight updated mutual aid arrangements between councils and partner organisations.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• note the information contained in the report and to agree to the Council engaging in the arrangements set out in the following protocols and Memorandum of Understanding. These arrangements will enable the Council to receive and provide support in certain emergency situations.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ District Council Mutual Aid Protocol</li> <li>○ Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and each district council regarding epizootic diseases</li> <li>○ Protocol to enable Belfast and the other district councils to use the NI Housing Executive's Emergency Call-Off Contracts</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● approve the development of a protocol between the Council and the relevant voluntary and faith organisations to enable the Council to seek assistance (if required) when co-ordinating the recovery aspects from a major emergency.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.0</b></p>	<p><b>Main report</b></p>
<p>3.1</p>	<p><b><u>Emergency Incidents between April 2016 and April 2017</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There was flash flooding on the 12<sup>th</sup> and again on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2016 which caused a significant number of surface water related incidents and internal flooding to a small number of properties, with 4 Belfast residents receiving £1000 payments.</li> <li>● The number of security alerts when the Council Emergency Planning team was required to respond was fewer than in previous years. The main need for community support centres continued to be at night when residents were most vulnerable. Six centres were made available during the last 14 months.</li> <li>● A number of significant fires occurred during the year, including one at a waste treatment plant in West Belfast on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2016 when a major incident was declared by the NI Fire and Rescue Service. The fire continued to burn for a number of days. On 11<sup>th</sup> January 2017 there was a large fire at a Petrol Station on the Stewartstown Road. This had the potential to be very dangerous with the risk of explosion. Residents were evacuated from six homes and went to stay with friends and family. An Emergency Rest Centre was kept on standby at Sally Gardens Community Centre during the incident.</li> <li>● A prolonged power outage in west Belfast on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2016 was significant and at one point consideration was given to evacuating the Syrian Refugee Welcome Centre where a new group of refugees had just arrived. Emergency Planning made arrangements for the evacuation but NI Electricity Networks were able to provide a generator and restored power to the Centre before this was necessary.</li> <li>● There were a number of responses to gas related incidents during the year including a suspected gas leak at Mount Collyer on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2016 which resulted in the evacuation of Currie Primary School. The pupils were evacuated to the Mount Collyer Centre and looked after until collected by parents.</li> </ul>

- A mains gas leak at the Old Hollywood Road on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2017 led to residents being evacuated to Avoniel Leisure Centre and provided with shelter and welfare until able to return home.
- In East Belfast on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2016 there was a carbon monoxide (CO) gas leak caused by an underground cable fire. These types of gas leaks are particularly dangerous as the carbon monoxide can make its way into people's homes through ducts for underground pipes and cables. In this incident one person received an electric shock and another person was treated for gas inhalation.

### **Training and exercises**

3.2

Council staff have been involved in a number of multi-Agency emergency exercises during recent months. These have included:

- A desktop exercise using the facilities in the City Hall Emergency Coordination Centre involving a terrorist attack on a major city centre shopping venue, with simultaneous bomb scares at local visitor attractions. The exercise was attended by various retailers and agencies including the BCC security team and provided excellent learning for all.
- Responding to a water crisis 'Operation Samba' led by NI Water,
- Setting up an Emergency Support Centre for vulnerable people at Whiterock Community Centre,
- Dealing with major industrial accidents led by external consultants Risk & Resilience
- Managing pollution control at Belfast Harbour with the deployment of a boom to contain an oil spill,
- Co-ordinating the response to a building collapse with mass casualties and fatalities,
- Managing coastal flooding at the PSNI Hydra suite (with a camera feed input from the Lord Mayor) and;
- Observation of an animal disease outbreak exercise at DAERA's Local Epizootic Disease Control Centre (LEDCC).

3.3

### **Individual Property Protection (IPP) Scheme & Flood Re Insurance Scheme**

The Rivers Agency Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme was launched in April 2016 and applications have been received from all over N. Ireland. Contractors will be appointed by Rivers Agency during the year 2017/18 to do surveys and carry out installations. There have been 96 applications in total and to date 65 have been approved, 13 of these were in the Belfast area, 7 of which have been approved. Surveys have been completed and they are now awaiting the appointment of a contractor by Rivers Agency to carry out the work.

The remaining 6 did not meet the eligibility criteria, mainly because 5 of them are in the Sicily Park / Greystown area where NI Water has drainage improvement schemes planned.

The 'Flood Re' insurance scheme was also launched in April 2016, a joint Government and Insurance industry initiative to enable homeowners who have flooded or are at risk of flooding to avail of affordable home insurance. This was communicated to Belfast residents in the July-August 2016 edition of City Matters along with the handy pull out wallet sized card of emergency contact numbers.

3.4

#### **Community Emergency Plans**

Community Emergency Plans continue to enable residents in flood risk areas to prepare for flooding incidents. In Belfast five plans have been established for Sydenham, Braniel, Cregagh, Finaghy and Orchardville areas. Communication and preparedness arrangements with the residents worked well during the heavy rain in June 2016.

In these areas sandbag containers have been provided along with some Flooding road signs, empowering residents to deploy sandbags based on weather warning information and discussion with the Emergency Planning team. Sandbag containers are now well distributed around the city and are regularly checked by the Emergency Planning team for stock and access. Additional equipment such as brushes, shovels, wheelbarrows and first aid kits have also been placed in the main sandbag containers for community use. The information at Appendix A gives details of sandbag container locations, numbers of sandbags and other community resilience equipment placed in the containers. The emergency planning team will liaise with the Met Office and drainage agencies at times of severe weather to ensure the containers are accessible to communities in flood affected areas. Please note the proposed change of location for the container at Andersonstown Leisure Centre, it is moving to Whiterock Leisure Centre, and the proposed new container at Orchardville Day Centre.

3.5

#### **Flood Risk and Planning**

Following on from Rivers Agency presentation to the CG&R Committee in September 2015 there have been five very successful meetings between Rivers Agency and the Council (Planning, Emergency Planning, Property and Projects) and latterly NI Water and DfI. Useful discussions and information sharing has taken place concerning flood risk and implications for the Local Development Plan. This included a presentation by Atkins Consultants on the 'Belfast Tidal Study', detailing recommendations to protect Belfast from tidal flooding.

3.6

### **Multi-Agency Protocols**

Prior to local government reform Belfast City Council had signed a number of protocols and memorandums of understanding to support effective emergency response and recovery arrangements both in Belfast and across the region. These arrangements have recently been reviewed and updated and district councils have been asked to sign the updated protocols. These include a DAERA Epizootic Disease MoU, this was previously held between the Council and DARD and involved the Council potentially providing manpower and equipment to the Department in the event of a major outbreak of a disease such as Foot and Mouth. The MoU is not binding and resources would only be provided on a full cost recovery basis. The second is a District Council Mutual Aid Protocol, which enables councils to assist each other during a major emergency incident; and the third is a protocol to enable the councils to use NI Housing Executive Emergency Call-Off Contracts during major emergencies such as serious flooding incidents. All three documents have been reviewed and approved by Belfast City Council's Legal Services. Members are requested to agree to the Council signing up to these arrangements as they will benefit the people of Belfast during emergency situations.

A range of voluntary and faith organisations such as Red Cross, Salvation Army, the NI 4x4 Response Club and St. John Ambulance provide support in the response to emergencies via agreements with public sector organisations such as the emergency services and local Health & Social Care Trusts. Following the response phase of an emergency the Council often has responsibility for coordinating the multi-agency recovery aspects. However Belfast City Council does not currently have formal protocols in place with voluntary and faith organisations in relation to recovery. Organisations such as Samaritan's Purse, Street Pastors and those mentioned above have expressed a wish to help with this work. We would therefore seek approval from Committee to begin the development of a protocol between the Council and relevant voluntary and faith organisations to assist with recovery following major emergencies.

3.7

### **Emergency planning in Local Government**

A review of civil contingencies arrangements in local government in NI was commissioned by the district councils and was completed late 2015. The report included a number of significant recommendations, particularly around legislation, structures for planning and response, leadership, and financial support for civil contingency arrangements. The Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) worked with the Executive Office and DfC regarding implementation of the recommendations and a five year business case for funding

<p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<p>the local government sector was agreed with DfC in January 2016. Belfast City Council has submitted a claim to DfC for its allocation of £102K for 2016-2017. Funding for the first quarter of 2017-2018 has now been offered by DfC and a further letter of offer is expected when issues to do with central government budgets have been resolved. On the strength of the agreed business case Belfast City Council agreed, on behalf of the other district councils, to host a regional officer post for local government civil contingencies; this was on the understanding that the full costs of the post and a support officer post would be met by DfC. The recruitment process was recently completed and the regional officer will be appointed in due course.</p> <p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p> <p>The offer from DfC for the first quarters funding for the sub-regional multi-agency planning work for Belfast is encouraging, as is an undertaking to continue to give this funding priority despite ongoing budgeting issues.</p> <p>Appointment of the regional officer post will be subject to continued funding by DfC being made available for the post.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>A process is in place to ensure the Council's emergency planning arrangements are screened for equality issues.</p>
<p><b>4.0</b></p>	<p><b>Appendices – Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>Appendix 1 - Sand Bag Container Distribution List</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and each district council regarding epizootic diseases;</p> <p>Appendix 3 - District Council Mutual Aid Protocol</p> <p>Appendix 4 - Joint Protocol 'Emergency Call-Off Contracts' between Northern Ireland Housing Executive and Northern Ireland District Councils.</p>