



Report Reference Number: S/19/24

To: Scrutiny Committee
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Author: June Rothwell, Head of Operational Services
Lead Officer: June Rothwell, Head of Operational Services

Title: Emergency Planning Update

Summary:

This report seeks to summarise the Council's arrangements in respect of the Council's statutory obligations regarding civil contingencies and emergency planning, including the partnership with North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum.

The report provides details of the work and incidents in the Selby District in the last six months.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Scrutiny Committee note the Council's arrangements for emergency planning and the incidents for which an emergency response has been necessary during the last 6 months.

Reasons for recommendation

Selby District Council is a category 1 responder for civil emergencies and the report identifies its responsibilities in direct response to such emergencies.

1. Introduction and background

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local authorities, as a category 1 responder. Selby District Council is therefore a category 1 responder for civil emergencies (the same category as the emergency services) and as such required to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- put in place emergency plans
- put in place business continuity management arrangements

- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only)

In North Yorkshire this is delivered in a two-tier local government structure which we choose to manage through a partnership with North Yorkshire County Council. A long-standing partnership exists, formalised in a service level agreement, with a strong track record of effective and successful delivery of the service. Examples include effective response and recovery to: -

- Sherburn-in-Elmet tyre Fire in 2014
- Great Heck waste recycling fire in 2015
- Christmas floods in 2015
- Suspect explosives at a property in Barlow 2016
- Thorpe Willoughby Fire (Former mushroom farm) 2017
- Local response to the raised national terrorist threat in 2017
- Methane Gas leak at Tadcaster 2018
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All of the above major incidents have been completed or controlled with multi-agency strategic and tactical plan objectives achieved (and formally signed off) and positive multi-agency debriefs undertaken.

In addition to the major incidents that occurred or had the potential to occur in Selby District the authority will routinely receive notification of other major incidents through the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (NYLRF) along with Severe Weather Warnings and Flood Advisory Telecons via the Environment Agency.

2 The Report

2.1 The following provision is made for the service of Emergency Planning:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning

The North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (NYLRF), this being a formal body comprising North Yorkshire County Council and all District Councils and other category 1 partners, has a County-wide risk assessment (reviewed annually) to fulfill this requirement. The District Council engages with this through attendance at NYLRF task groups and through partnership with NYCC.

It is worth highlighting the significant risk of flooding given the geography of our District and historical flooding incidents.

- put in place emergency plans

These have been in place for a substantial number of years. Selby's local plans (formerly the major incident plan, communications plan and emergency control centre plan) have been amalgamated into one plan – Selby District Council Emergency Plan. No significant changes have been made to this plan during the last 12 months.

There are a range of plans produced by North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum, notably the Response to Major & Critical Incidents. This sets out a framework for multi-agency command and control of civil emergencies and appropriate triggers to determine when incidents should be escalated to multi-agency response.

The key documents for Strategic (Gold) and Tactical (Silver) Commanders are:

- **Selby District Council Emergency Plan**
- **Selby District Council Command Contacts Directory**
- **North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum - Response to Major & Critical Incidents**

These plans include arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.

The North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum Communications Plan covers the above (principally) and the Communications & Marketing Manager represents the Council on the relevant North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum Subgroup.

- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination

This is achieved through the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum - Response to Major & Critical Incidents framework and other plans (Communications plan), and the Council's Emergency Plan, our partnership arrangements with NYCC and engagement with North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum.

The North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum - Response to Major & Critical Incidents sets out specific structures (Strategic, Tactical and Operational) to ensure dynamic situational co-ordination during incident and response.

- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency

This is achieved through the above arrangements. It is also worthy of note that North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum have a training subgroup and arrange regular multi-agency training. During 2018 training for Selby staff included:

- Selby hosted Loggist training on 21 and 26 June 2018
- Attended the Local Authority Forum based around Cyber issues on 29 November 2018
- Carried out a Rest Centre Exercise at Selby Leisure Centre on 1 May 2018
- Hosted Bronze Commander training on 9 October 2018
- Attended the Gold Symposium on 22 November 2018.

The training involved some of our Directors, Heads of Service, and Operational staff.

- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only)
- Principally provided by NYCC but supported by the Council. A particular current focus is the development of community resilience plans, building upon the success of effective community resilience, for example arising from the flood incidents across the District.

Responding to a Civil Emergency

The Council has a well-established command structure which includes the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service. This has the potential to provide significantly increased capacity & resilience for the organisation to respond to civil emergencies.

The Head of Operational Services – June Rothwell has lead responsibility for emergency planning and all Heads of Service are required, by virtue of the new job specifications, to act as Tactical Commanders (Silver) and Directors to support the Chief Executive in Strategic (Gold) Command. This has the potential to mitigate significant risks, for the Council, in terms of its capacity to command sustained major incidents, which typically (as we saw during the Christmas floods of 2015) require Tactical Command, for three eight hour shifts per twenty-four hours, for a number of days. (Historically, this has been at Fulford Police Station).

On a day to day basis Wayne Palmer – Environment Health Team Leader manages the partnership with NYCC, our nominated NYCC Officer being Wendy Muldoon – Senior Emergency Planning Officer.

The Council currently has a twenty-four hour, seven days per week, stand-by facility (Duty Officer) provided by Selby DC Operational Service Officers and the Ryecare call centre, which includes civil emergency response. When benchmarked with other Districts this exceeds typical provision which relies, in many other authorities, on ad-hoc availability of officers with no formal arrangements in place.

Even further resilience is provided by virtue of NYCC's twenty-four hour, seven days per week, Emergency Planning Duty Officer.

Operational response (Bronze) is provided in the first instance by Officers, Team Leaders and the Managers within Operational Services some of who have significant experience of Operational (Bronze) Command.

The Communications & Marketing Manager has significant expertise and experience in emergency response communications but the Communications' team is small. Mitigation includes partnership and mutual aid through the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum Plans but this does not address internal communications and communications with key local stakeholders and the community. NYLRF focus on basic media external communications. Therefore, capacity and resilience, in particular over a sustained period, remains a risk requiring active management.

Incidents during the last 6 months

During the last twelve months there have been two incidents which has required the North Yorkshire Resilience Forum to notify NYLRF of an incident which may have a serious public or community impact in the Selby District.

This related to the notification at 09:41 on 19th December 2019 of a gas outage incident that affected circa 1400 properties in the village of Barlby. The priority was to ensure the safety of the community affected until such time as the gas supply could be safely restored by Northern Gas Network.

A Multi Agency Advisory Teleconference (MAAT) involving Selby District Council, North Yorkshire County Council, North Yorkshire Police, NY Fire Service, Northern Gas Network and Northern Powergrid was convened for 10:00 on the 19th December 2019. The teleconference provided an opportunity for a review of the incident and action already taken along with confirmation that an incident centre had been set up at Osgodby Village Institute and support for residents directly affected. Selby District Council had a nominated Bronze and Silver Commander for the incident and Neighbourhood Officers from the Council were active in Barlby to support residents and also worked with colleagues from other agencies to identify any vulnerable groups or individuals. Subsequent teleconferences took place at 15:00 on that Thursday and also at 09:30 the following morning. The gas supply was gradually restored to the properties over the 20th December 2019. In addition to the above live incident the Council has also been made aware of minor isolated flooding issues in the months of October and November, but these would not be classed as incidents in the context of Emergency Planning and when required these were dealt with by council officers.

A multi-agency structured de-brief meeting took place on 27th November 2019 for the Tadcaster Methane Incident. The aim of this structured de-brief was to identify any potential learning from the multi-agency response in order that it can be shared with partners to improve future responses and to gain a shared understanding of the incident. A report on the findings at the meeting will be shared with partners in due course.

Risk Analysis

In accord with the corporate risk framework the risk of failure to fulfil statutory duties regarding civil contingencies (previously risk number 16 in the corporate register) is assessed as 15 (likelihood 3, impact 5) with a target of 10 (by reducing likelihood to 2 (low)). The impact score is unlikely to change. This should be distinguished from the risk of civil emergency occurrence, which it is recommended also requires active management, principally due to the risk of floods. Risk assessment of various civil emergencies is dynamic and reviewed as a minimum annually by North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum (of which we are a member). The Council is required to dynamically risk assess potential incidents and emerging incidents, on an ongoing basis, in light of intelligence from partners (including but not limited to weather warnings and flood warnings).

The Council receives a range of warnings, principally from the Environment Agency and Meteorological Office. These are administered by NYCC and have been amended, in terms of recipients, in accord with the rationale below.

- Alerts for action to be initially restricted to Operational Services (Officers within Operational Services (including those who undertake call out duties)/ key Team Leaders and Managers in Operations (Assets/Community Support/Housing/Environmental Health) the Head of Operational Services
- Operations will escalate, within our organisation, where appropriate.
- Head of Contracts & Commissioning also added for resilience & due to the key role supporting Operations through contractors (sand bags etc).
- The list of recipients and notifications of alerts has recently been reviewed and amended.

3 Legal/Financial Controls and other Policy matters

3.1 Legal Issues

There are no legal issues arising from the report

3.2 Financial Implications

The Council funds the service level agreement, with North Yorkshire County Council, in respect of emergency planning, and a contribution to the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum Secretariat (undertaken by NYCC). This is within existing base-budget held by Environmental Health.

A modest budget of £4,920.00 is held for practical resource costs (predominantly sandbags) within the Environmental Health base-budget.

The cost of response and recovery to specific incidents is more complex and dependent upon the circumstances. For example, the Council has funded emergency accommodation and gas monitoring at Tadcaster, which will be subject to specific funding from contingency. Some incidents can be subject to Government support, through the Bellwin scheme, where the relevant criteria

and thresholds are triggered. An example would be the Christmas floods of 2015.

The Council's response to incidents, can involve a significant staff resource, from Gold and Silver Officers and Operational Services (normally Environmental Health and Housing) and this is normally met from existing budget and by being flexible with resource deployment and prioritisation of work. The cumulative impact upon resources can be significant and requires active management.

In summary, due to the nature of civil contingencies funding demand is dynamic and requires active management throughout the year.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Selby District Council is a category 1 responder for civil emergencies and the report identifies its responsibilities in direct response to such emergencies. The Scrutiny Committee's interest and input into how this is managed is welcomed.

5. Background Documents

Contact Officers:

June Rothwell
Head of Operational Services
Selby District Council
jrothwell@selby.gov.uk

Wayne Palmer
Environmental Health Team Leader
Selby District Council
wpalmer@selby.gov.uk