

**Briefing to the Emergency Advisory Group
From the Deputy Director, Commercial Services**

Consequential Actions Emanating from the Vale Flood Review 2007

20 May 2008

The purpose of this Briefing Report is to:

1. Update the Emergency Advisory Group on matters relating to the emergencies in the Vale in general and flooding in particular
2. Act as prompt to the EAG for items for future consideration.

The relevant structural documents relating to flooding comprise:

- The Vale Emergency Response and Recovery Plan 2008
- The Vale Flood Management Policy
- The Vale Official Internal Review of the Flood Emergency 2007
- The Oxford Area Flood Information Booklet
- The District (Vale) Operational Plan

The floods of July 2007 raised many concerns which were highlighted in the Flood Review and have subsequently been addressed. Most of the points discussed emanate from the Recommendations of the Flood Review.

The Executive may request updating on the actions and developments relating regarding emergencies and flooding and this paper should provide the detail required.

It should be noted that the Policies may require Council approval in due course.

1. Acceptance of Terms of Reference for the group

At its meeting of 7 Dec 2007, the Executive accepted the recommendations of the Flood Recovery Grant Advisory Group as well as giving it a new name, (i.e. the Emergency Advisory Group) and terms of reference.

The Group may consider its future role and whether to accept the terms of reference.

2. Executive Meeting - 7 December 2007 - Report recommendations

In addition to the renaming the Group and setting its terms of reference, the Executive referred to the 16 recommendations made by the Group. Although taken verbatim from the Flood Review the first 13 were agreed as operational recommendations, to be implemented by officers, whilst the remaining 3 were agreed for progressing by Members.

Appendix C shows a table showing all of the Recommendations with progress reports to each. The salient points can be summarised thus:

- 1 The Emergency Response and Recovery Plan (ERRP) has been completed.

- 2 The Business Continuity Plan was completed in October 2007.
- 3 The ERRP sets out skilled teams with responsibilities.
Training and rehearsal exercises are to be arranged for staff and elected Members.
- 4 The ERRP has configured operational and strategic teams. Key elected Members will form the Member Liaison Group. Role of the Emergency Planning Officer has been clarified.
- 5 A Control Room has been set up at Abbey House with Wantage Civic Hall as an alternative venue.
- 6 The DSO arrangements with suppliers for sand at short notice.
Stocks of sand and bags are kept at Challow Depot.
There are 4 drop-off locations at: Abbey House, Abingdon - Elm Court Car Park, Botley - Portway Car Park, Wantage. - Southampton St Car Park, Faringdon.
A schedule of priority addresses is being devised highlighting areas that are more prone to flooding.
- 7 The DSO is purchasing vehicles that are multi-functional and capable of being used in emergencies.
- 8 Incident Officers will act as field officers who will report directly to the Emergency Centre on the development of incidents.
- 9 People with expert or local knowledge and experience are to be invited to participate including elected Members, staff, local residents, community groups, Parish Clerks and local wardens.
- 10 A Communications Team will be involved at the start of an incident and regular information updates will be issued to staff and elected Members regarding developments during an emergency situation.
- 11 Provision has been made within the Emergency Centre for dedicated telephone land lines, computer technology, internet and website.
- 12 ICT Services have commenced on a review of the communication technology needed for general service and in an emergency.
- 13 An appropriate officer will be nominated to ensure the health and welfare of staff and the public who are involved in an emergency.
- 14 The EPO is assisting in setting up local community groups to develop self-help provision for the protection of individual properties or local areas
The Council has hosted a Flood Prevention Products Fair at Abingdon in February 2008 in conjunction with the Environment Agency and the National Flood Forum
The Council is continuing to work with the Environment Agency and other relevant organisations to promote and instigate schemes for flood alleviation and defences.
The Council awaits the second Pitt Review (due in August 2008) which will move the Government to give direction to Councils, the Environment Agency, etc.
- 15 Specialist training will be arranged for staff and elected Members.
- 16 The ERRP encapsulates the Council's intentions to perform well in cases of flooding and debriefings will be arranged following each incident.

3. Update on Policies

The 2 key documents relating to flooding and watercourses in the Vale have been updated and combined as one document, now called the Vale Flood Management Plan.

Part 1: General Arrangements for Flood Defence - sets out the Council's responsibilities and commitments.

Part 2: Enforcement Powers for Clearance of Ordinary Watercourses - deals with the enforcement procedure and scoring matrix.

This simplified document provides the Principal Engineer (Property Services) with the mechanism to manage the demands of legislation with expectations of the communities whilst working within limited financial resources. In addition, working schedules are used to provide the support necessary to implement the requirements, eg.

- The Register of Areas at Risk of Flooding from Ordinary Watercourses
- Maintenance Schedule of Ordinary Watercourses 2008-09
- Flood Prevention Capital Programme

The updates should provide a more effective framework in which (i) the maintenance of watercourses can be prioritised and implemented and (ii) enforcement action against offending riparian owners can be more efficiently and fairly exercised.

4. Operational Plans

These documents have been devised in conjunction with other organisations and are dependent on their input and agreement. They contain useful information and guidance to the public and communities regarding the behaviour of watercourses in the Oxford and Vale areas and ways of coping in an emergency. A review of all such papers is being carried out but will require some additional time to complete.

- Oxford Area Flood Information Booklet
- Vale District Operational Plan
- Vale Flood Advice Leaflet

The Deputy Director (Commercial Services) has also presented the Emergency Advisory Group, for its approval, a summary review, recently produced as a Land Drainage Report by the Principal Engineer (Property Services), relating to the July 2007 Floods.

5. Draft Emergency Plan

The Deputy Director (Commercial Services) has completed the Emergency Response and Recovery Plan and recommends the Emergency Advisory Group to approve and make further recommendation to the Executive for its approval.

6. Flood Reviews (Summary from Deputy Director, Commercial Services)

- ***The Pitt Review***

In December 2007, Sir Michael Pitt published his Interim Report on lessons learned from the 2007 floods. It highlighted 15 urgent recommendations believed to be necessary to prevent or mitigate flooding which might occur before the final report is published. These recommendations were not just for government, they also called for urgent action by local organisations, the private sector and the public.

The Government accepted all of the urgent recommendations and undertook to work with all organisations involved to deliver changes as quickly as possible.

There were another 72 recommendations all of which related to flooding and which also need addressing. Workshops were held in all areas of the country and Sir Pitt made personal visits to many affected Councils.

The most significant issues arising appears to be that of the increasing adverse effect of excessive surface water drainage and the maintenance of watercourses. Whilst the recommendations are appear reasonable most of the costs of delivering are expected to be found from Councils' reserves.

The final report is due to be published in August 2008.

- ***Environment Agency Reviews***

The Environment Agency published its national review in December 2007. Since then 5 local reviews have been published which deal with areas in the Vale.

- Abingdon
- Buscot and Kelmscott
- Letcombe Regis, Wantage, Grove and East Hanney
- Stanford in the Vale, Charney Bassett and Lyford
- Steventon

These reports highlight the EA's position and responsibilities and have identified some areas for consideration. They have also emphasised the limited resources available and the need to prioritise projects.

7. Resources

Members have expressed their concerns about having available adequate levels of staffing, equipment and vehicles to meet the demands during an emergency.

- ***Staff***

The DSO has recently recruited an additional technician in response to increased business. This will provide 14% more resource.

The Council's landscape contractors, ISS, and Abingdon Town Council have indicated willingness to provide additional workforce. The agencies used by the DSO, Patersons and Calber, have also offered assistance.

Agreements are to be obtained in writing.

- ***Equipment***

The DSO already has a large range of tools and equipment. However, there is a need to increase the quantities of some items such as sand fillers, work canopies, signs, tabards, etc.

- ***Vehicles***

The DSO is in process of their annual vehicle replacement. Discussions have taken place with 4 main commercial vehicle manufacturers. Purchases will be made once the expenditure budgets are agreed.

8. Financial Summary

Flood 2007	Income (£)
Recovery Grants (Government Funding Aug 2007)	(250,000)
Distribution of £250 recovery grants by Vale to residents	179,000
Cost of Operations (Labour and Material, etc.)	47,449
Funding of Cost of Operations – by the Vale	(23,000)
Funding of Cost of Operations – by Bellwin	(24,449)
Vale Capital Programme Budget 2008-09	(101,000)
Balance (Total of Capital and Revenue Funds available) 2008-09	172,000

Other Sources of Funding	£
Possible European Union Restoration Funding (£31M overall)	
<i>If 60% distributed between all Councils in UK, each Council would receive</i>	43,000
Possible Vale share?	£40k – 50k

9. Use of funding

- ***What could be needed during emergency situations?***
- ***What could be done to prevent or minimise incidents?***

Both the above questions are for Members to consider. The table below provides some ideas for using funds effectively.

Ideas for Use of Funds 2008-09	£
1. Purchase of vehicle(s) - to withstand severe weather conditions and flooding	12,000
2. Watercourse meter gauges	6,000
3. Flood relief grants (FRGs) - based on 50:50 matching contribution subject to maximum of £5k per application	28,000
4. Minor flood protection devices (e.g. gel sandbags, air brick covers, etc.) – based on 50:50 matching contribution subject to maximum of £50 per application	18,000
5. Purchase of flood barriers	10,000
6. Continuation of programmed Capital Schemes 2008-09	80,000
7. Contributions to Community Groups	10,000
8. Miscellaneous	8,000
TOTAL	172,000

- ***Individual applications for funding?***

There have been a number of enquiries from individual house owners and parishes about the availability of funding or grants for those who have been affected by flooding. There is scope to consider applications for proposals that might make a significant difference to the community and/or facilitate budgetary savings to the Council. Some cases for discussion include:

- St Helens Mill, Abingdon
- Mill Stream, Wantage
- East Hanney Parish Council
- Community Group Initiatives

Members are invited to consider the introduction of such a scheme for 2008-09. This will first require clearance of legal issues and then devising a protocol or procedure to process applications.

Additional Information

Appendix A: Draft Emergency Response and Recovery Plan.

Appendix B: Draft Vale Flood Management Policy

Appendix C: Actions from the Vale Internal Review of the Floods 2007

Appendix F: Maintenance Schedule for Ordinary Watercourses 2008

Appendix E: Register of Areas at Risk of Flooding from Watercourses

Appendix F: Details of the Flood Prevention Capital Programmes

Recommendations	Progress
1. The Emergency Plan should be updated urgently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The corporate Emergency Response and Recovery Plan (ERRP) has been completed ✓ Details identifying personnel and contact references have been separated from this generic document. Provision has been made to obtain necessary data via other sources, e.g. Duty Officer handbooks, Business Continuity Plans and the HR Pro database ~ This should ensure maximum staff confidentiality and remove the uncertainty caused by outdated references
2. The work currently being carried out in producing the corporate Business Continuity Plan should also be completed in order to compliment and enhance the requirements of the Emergency Plan and Civil Contingencies Act.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The corporate Business Continuity Plan was completed in October 2007 ➤ Rehearsal exercise being arranged with Garrison Continuity for July 2008 ➤ Updating of telephony at Wantage Civic Hall ~ Business Continuity is currently undergoing internal and external audits
3. The Emergency Plan should provide for a sufficient number of teams , depending on the scenario, which should be made up of suitably skilled officers who must be given proper training and clear instruction as to their roles and authorities .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Suitably skilled teams, which can be composed at the time of the incident, are identified in the ERRP ✓ Clear responsibilities are identified in the ERRP supported by individual Advice Note. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Training and rehearsal exercises are to be arranged
4. The roles of officers and elected members involved in emergency planning should be defined more clearly and in particular that of the Emergency Planning Officer .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Operational and strategic teams have been configured in the ERRP ✓ Potential team leaders have provisional names for squad members ✓ Key elected Members have been designated a role within the Member Liaison Group as set out in the ERRP ✓ The role of other elected Members to be considered by the Emergency Advisory Group ✓ The role of the Emergency Planning Officer is highlighted in the ERRP. The main functions of this post is to be the first contact officer on behalf of the Council, provide technical advice in emergencies and liaise with community groups

Recommendations	Progress
<p>5. A well-positioned and properly equipped control room should be set up to act as the incident base with all the necessary technical and administrative facilities in place. An alternative venue should also be agreed in case Abbey House is put out of action.</p>	<p>✓ A dedicated Emergency Centre (Control Room) has been set up at Abbey House with necessary ICT and telephony technology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wantage Civic Hall has been identified as the alternative venue for an Emergency Centre. Further work is required to establish similar technology arrangements
<p>6. Arrangements should be made for stocks of sand and sandbags to be readily available at short notice and prioritisation system should be devised and implemented with sandbag drop off points to be agreed and policed</p>	<p>✓ The DSO has made arrangements with several local companies for the delivery of sand supplies at short notice as set out in the Emergency Plan</p> <p>✓ Plentiful stocks of sand and bags are also kept at Challow Depot</p> <p>✓ 4 different locations identified in the Vale for deposit of sand stockpiles, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ~ Abbey House, Abingdon ~ Southampton St Car Park, Faringdon ~ Elm Court Car Park, Botley, Oxford ~ Portway Car Park, Wantage <p>✓ Tools and equipment will be supplied by the DSO for use by volunteers and self-helpers at these locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A schedule of priority addresses is being devised highlighting areas that are more prone to flooding due to heavy rainfall, surface water surges, low lying land and watercourse and river flooding
<p>7. There should be access to appropriate and sufficient numbers of vehicles and equipment to deal with an emergency response and severe weather conditions.</p>	<p>✓ The DSO has arrangements with other Council services for access to vehicles that can be used in emergencies and severe weather conditions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The DSO are in the process of replacing vehicles and will soon have several units that will be multi-functional and within the Service's direct control
<p>8. Managers should assess the skills base within their team for dealing with emergencies, and feed that information into the emergency plan so that the correct resources/skills are directed to the correct task.</p>	<p>✓ As in recommendation 4 above, operational teams will be chosen according to the skills required for the scenario. Deputy Directors are to be encouraged to advise on the skill sets possessed by their existing staff.</p>

Recommendations	Progress
9. <i>Members and staff with knowledge of local areas should be utilised and sources of additional manpower should be identified in the plan.</i>	<p>✓ Incident Officers have been identified, within the ERRP, to act as field officers who will report directly to the Emergency Centre on the development of incidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People with expert or local knowledge and experience are to be approached and added to the resources needed in emergencies. These include elected Members, staff, local residents, community groups, Parish Clerks and local wardens
10. <i>The Communication Team should be involved at the start of an incident so that responses to that information can be co-ordinated.</i>	<p>✓ A Communications Team, headed by a Communications Officer, has been identified in the ERRP and will be involved at the start of an incident</p>
11. <i>Appropriate methods of communication between teams, including the use of technology should be explored.</i>	<p>✓ Provision has been made within the Emergency Centre for dedicated telephone land lines, computer technology, internet and websites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ ICT Services have commenced on a review of the communication technology needed for general service and in an emergency ~ Service managers are encouraged to promote the latest cost effective equipment, including photo- and video- technology, in order for staff to perform to their maximum potential
12. <i>Arrangements should be made to ensure that elected Members and staff receive up to date accurate information as to the emergency situation as it is develops and what action the Council is taking to respond.</i>	<p>✓ It has been agreed that the Communications Officer will provide regular information updates to staff and elected Members regarding developments during an emergency situation</p>
13. <i>A dedicated officer should be nominated for monitoring and maintaining the welfare of staff and the public involved in dealing with the emergency e.g. ensure adequate breaks, food, drink etc.</i>	<p>✓ The ERRP makes provision for an appropriate officer to be nominated to ensure the health and welfare of staff and the public who are involved in an emergency</p>

Recommendations	Progress
<p>14. The Council should do more to encourage owners in areas at risk to properly protect their properties and should explore the possibility of promoting and instigating a scheme of installing individual flood barriers.</p>	<p>✓ The Council has hosted a Flood Prevention Products Fair at Abingdon in February 2008 in conjunction with the Environment Agency and the National Flood Forum</p> <p>~ The Emergency Planning Officer is currently assisting in setting up local community groups. One purpose of these groups is to make self-help provision for the protection of individual properties or local areas</p> <p>~ The Council is continuing to work with the Environment Agency and other relevant organisations to promote and instigate schemes for flood alleviation and defences</p> <p>~ The Council awaits the second Pitt Review (due in August 2008) which will move the Government to give direction to Councils, the Environment Agency, etc.</p> <p>~ The work the Council can offer will be subject to the resources available in the future.</p>
<p>15. Training and scenario-based workshops should be provided to all elected Members and staff likely to be involved in an emergency planning.</p>	<p>➤ Specialist training will be arranged for staff and elected Members</p>
<p>16. The Council should carry out a review of its response action and resources in cases of flooding.</p>	<p>✓ The ERRP encapsulates the Council's intentions to perform well in cases of flooding</p> <p>✓ Debriefings will be arranged following each incident</p> <p>~ The Council will need to consider separately and formally its policies with regard to response action in flooding incidents – this will include the charging for sandbags, payment to staff, attitude to enforcement ref. riparian responsibilities, etc.</p>

MISCELLANEOUS

Some issues for attention

Challenges	
Establishment and development of Community Groups	EPO is working with several communities – Cane Lane; Sharland Close; Kingfishers; Denchworth Road and Pill Ditch in Grove – the Letcombes – the Hanneys – Kennington
European Union Restoration Fund	A response has been made to CLG regarding the protocol and principles. The Council will then be invited by CLG to bid for funding in June 08.
Red Cross hardship grants	207 residents who were displaced from their homes since July 07 have been mailshot inviting applications.
Main concerns for the Council?	Pitt Review consequences Council's preparedness Public's expectation
Future provisions	
Work to be done	
Training	Members, SMT, staff, workforce, public
Control Room	Telephones - Internet - Intranet - Maps - TV - Set up @ Wantage Civic Hall
Vehicles	Purchasing
Suppliers	Confirmations - sand
Contact Details	EMT, SMT, Operational Teams, Members, etc
Funding	EU Restoration Funds Red Cross
Flood Prevention Products	Work with Community Groups, Householders
Publicity	Website
Capital Schemes	
Tools & equipment	
Technology	
Additional manpower	
Communications & Media	

What we are doing for Vale Residents

Enforcement of riparian owners' responsibilities and enforcement
Updating Council policies, etc
Residents need to be helped to cater for themselves
Setting up and assisting local community flood groups. Grove – Wantage - Kennington (SHI) – Buscot - Hanneys - Sutton C - Steventon - Abingdon
Flood fairs, training opportunities, etc.
Fulfilment of Flood Review Recommendations
General and technical advice
Avoid raising hopes and expectations we cannot achieve