

Civil Contingency Consultation Group

Minutes

Wednesday, 29 January 2014 at 14:00

PRESENT:

Councillor T Wainwright (in the Chair), Councillor's Hanton and B Walker.

Robert Read, Jane Beck, Jan Davis and Karline Smith (GYBC Officers)

John Morse (Great Yarmouth chamber of Commerce Representative), John Ellis (Norfolk County Council), Inspector Dave Rust (Norfolk Constabulary) and John Wilby (Great Yarmouth Fire Service).

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Welcome and Introductions were carried out.

2 BACKGROUND TO THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES CONSULTATION GROUP

It was reported that the group was set up to review any major incidents in the Borough.

3 REVIEW OF THE TIDAL SURGE EVENT OF 5/6th DECEMBER

The Customer Services Director reported that the group had been convened to review the tidal surge event on the 5-6th December 2014 along with the report attached to the agenda and produce action points for future events. It was reported that 12 residential properties had been flooded along with businesses in the Southtown and Runham Vauxhall areas.

Key Issues:-

(i) Evacuation

It was reported that fewer people evacuated to Rest Centres in 2013 than in 2007 and concern was expressed that the more frequent that incidents occur the less likely people would be to evacuate. It was reported that 9,000 houses were door knocked by the police and that there was more traffic and sightseers coming into the Borough than was leaving.

The Fire Service stated that there were more views to their website on the Wednesday, Thursday and Friday as people were looking for up to date information and suggested that more social media such as Twitter and Facebook should be used.

Norfolk Constabulary reported that they were designing an off the shelf Police evacuation plan which would assist internal processes.

It was suggested that more agencies should have the tactical flood plan. It was suggested that during an event of this nature it may be necessary to restrict sightseers coming into the town, however, consideration needed to be given to critical staff required for essential services such as hospital and power station staff who would need to be allowed access.

Jan Davis stated that he was trying to increase the number of local resilience groups so that they could assist in the response in future. for example, to assist in door-knocking door with the police who may be from out of the area to give local advice and guidance.

(ii) Flood Maps

Two flood maps were displayed at the meeting. The first map shown was of the worst case scenario with no flood defences in place and the second map shown was with flood defences in place which indicated fewer households requiring evacuation, such as in North Yarmouth, but that other areas, such as Southtown and Cobholm, were at considerable risk. The mapping could aid in the future prioritisation of areas for evacuation.

(iii) Power Cuts

It was reported that UK Power Networks would cut the power prior to a flood which would leave a large number of people affected by no power and this would need to be incorporated into the plans. On the night of the surge UK Power visited each of the rest centres to assess their emergency generator needs in case the power was cut. The two main sub stations in Great Yarmouth are both at risk of flooding. The pumping station at Runham Vauxhall appeared to have suffered a power failure which may have contributed to the flooding on Bridge Road.

The Fire Service reported that UK Power have temporary flood barriers that they can install around the substations and on the night of the tidal surge they had helped to protect one of the sub-stations and were also asked to protect the Emergency Services Airwave Mast.

It was suggested that as the power would be cut prior to a flood then a meeting should be held with the utility companies affected to discuss the implications and contingency plans for such an event.

Norfolk Constabulary expressed concern they believed the police station was in an area that could possibly have been flooded. Their Police Station power supply is in the basement which could be flooded with consequent impacts.

The Chamber of Commerce representative stated that his company has generators that could be used in an emergency and suggested the creation of a list of local

companies that have assets which could be used in a flooding event. It was agreed that this was a good idea.

(iv) Sandbags

50,000 sandbags and 500 tons of sand were given out. It was agreed that there needed to be a police presence from the start of an event at each of the sand dumps in the future to prevent disorder.

Jan reported that he would be having a stand at Market Gates in the near future to talk about alternatives to Sandbags for residents to use as part of an ongoing effort regarding property level flood protection.

(v) Rest Centres

It was reported that working with the schools and offering them training had paid off. Over 100 school staff had volunteered as rest centre staff. Great Yarmouth Borough Council has a Memorandum of Understanding with the British Red Cross to provide support at Rest Centres and this worked very well in December.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council is in discussion with Christchurch on King Street regarding their availability as a rest centre should there be a need in the centre of town. Care homes would be looked at to see if they had any extra capacity for people with care needs that needed to be evacuated. Centre 81 reported that some care homes had excellent plans but some didn't have any.

(vi) Recovery

Great Yarmouth Borough Council with GYBS were working together on recovering from the flooding and coastal erosion that took place including assisting homes to remove damaged goods.

Mutual Aid support was provided by Norwich City Council, Broadland and Breckland District Councils.

The Fire Service reported they had 40 staff from outside the Borough that offered mutual aid and that they had a robust system in place for mutual aid. The Fire Service expressed concern that a proper evacuation cell should have been set up during the response and they should have been involved.

(vii) Information Sharing

The SCG level felt that information sharing was poor during the response and could be improved in the future.

It was agreed that a wider business group would be set up based on the Great Yarmouth Mutual Support Group to discuss assets that could be made available in an event. The Chamber of Commerce representative stated he would be happy to be the contact through the Chamber to local businesses and to provide a list of what assets they can provide.

The Key Learning Points and recommendations were summarised.

4 FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE GROUP

It was agreed that the group would meet every 6 months.

The meeting ended at: 15:35