

 <b>EXECUTIVE</b> <b>3 SEPTEMBER 2008.</b>		<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>SCRUTINY OF FLOODING</b>	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Councillor Alan Boad, 01926 339822, email <a href="mailto:alan.boad@warwickdc.gov.uk">alan.boad@warwickdc.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Service Area</b>	Councillor	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	None	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Committee 3 June 2008	
<b>Background Papers</b>	Minutes and papers of the meetings held by the Panel along with evidence list contained within scoping document of the review.	
<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No	
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	No	
<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report authors relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Relevant Director	8/8/08	Chris Elliott
Chief Executive		
CMT	14/8/08	
Section 151 Officer		
Legal	8/8/08	Simon Best
Finance	8/8/08	Marcus Miskinis
Portfolio Holder(s)	8/8/08	Councillors Kinson
<b>Consultation Undertaken</b>		
As following participated as part of the scrutiny: Emergency Planning WCC; Emergency Planning WDC; Warwickshire Police; Warwickshire Fire Service; West Midlands Ambulance Service; Severn Trent; The Environment Agency; WCC Highways; Health Protection Agency; Warwickshire Primary Care Trust; Representatives from Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS); St Johns, the Red Cross; Kenilworth Town Council; Royal Leamington Spa Town Council; Ashow, Burton Green & Stoneleigh Joint Parish Council; Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council; Lapworth Parish Council and British Waterways.		
<b>Final Decision?</b>	No	
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>		
Report the recommendations to executive in September		

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report details the work undertaken by a joint Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council Scrutiny Committee set up to review the services provided to householders (including vulnerable people), businesses, the impact to transportation routes following the severe weather of June and July of 2007, which led to the flooding of homes and businesses in Warwick District. To consider what can be done to lessen the impact of similar severe weather in the future and if services provided by key utilities e.g. electricity sub stations, water treatment will need additional measures to protect these in future.

## **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The final report at Appendix 1 to this report along with recommendations contained within are approved:
  - 2.1.1 To promote self protection that residents are encouraged to prepare for an emergency, this could be a box with a torch, contact numbers, Environment Agency flood leaflets including the blue book plus advice on how they can protect of the property such as flood boards, etc. Suggest the Environment Agency lead on this with the support of WCC and WDC by using all means to raise awareness.
  - 2.1.2 Both Emergency Planning Unit and Member Services for WCC and WDC to work together to ensure that emergency guidance and the contact information is provided annually to Councillors. This could be included when diaries are given out.
  - 2.1.3 WCC and WDC to ask the PCT and other agencies that support vulnerable people to provide further information to the Humanitarian Assistance subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum on how neighbours can help vulnerable people in an emergency without putting themselves at risk and this information is coordinated where possible by Emergency Planning Unit.
  - 2.1.4 Emergency Planning Unit to review the communication proposals outlined in (Appendix 1, paragraph 4.6) to see whether these could be implemented and report back to the Local Resilience Forum in 6 months time.
  - 2.1.5 Councillors and residents to be given information in leaflet or card form so they can contact the right provider (Environment Agency - brooks, rivers; British Waterways – canals; and Severn Trent – sewage). The panel to decide who should be given this task and have them report this information to Communicating with Public subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum in 6 months time.
  - 2.1.6 The Communicating with the Public subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum to consider the feasibility of having named individuals, such as the flood wardens in the past, with the remit to update the Council on river levels.
  - 2.1.7 With the Environment Agency's assistance and training that existing groups such as Neighbourhood Watch (especially in urban areas) are encouraged to set up a flood awareness group in conjunction with the Emergency Planning Units community emergency planning initiatives.

- 2.1.8 As part of the emergency planning process that District, Town and Parish Councils consider where would be the best places to store flood warning signs, sandbags, emergency boxes with supplies, etc. to ensure that they can be easily accessed in an emergency situation. It is an opportunity for an enhanced role for all councillors to take part in helping their community. This to be reviewed by Emergency Planning Unit in 6 months time and for them to report back to Warwick Area Committee
- 2.1.9 The Environment Agency to conduct a feasibility study to hold a road show in Leamington or other appropriate sites in Warwick District to raise public awareness. To arrange and invite the Emergency Planning Unit, Severn Trent, PCT and any other emergency providers they consider would be useful for the public to meet to obtain information. The Road Show could also provide an opportunity to raise awareness with landowners on their responsibility for clearing ditches to prevent run off onto roads.
- 2.1.10 The Planning Department to liaise with Severn Trent and British Waterways to clarify and develop new protocols and report back to Warwick District Council in 6 months time.
- 2.1.11 WCC Highways to provide guidance and warning signs to Parish Councils to enable them to erect these to slow down traffic. This would help ensure that residents are not put at risk due to floods and reduce damage to nearby properties. Suggest that Warwick Area Committee may want to consider reviewing the effectiveness of providing warning signs to Parish Councils in 12 months time or after a flooding event.
- 2.1.12 A copy of the report to be given to Warwick District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Executive, Warwick Area Committee, WCC Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, WCC Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Local Resilience Forum and all those that participated in the review to comment on the findings and recommendations of the panel.
- 2.1.13 The Local Resilience Forum to continue to monitor the outcomes of the Pitt Review and report this to the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2 An update report be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in February 2009 as part of their Work Programme.

### **3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Working Party formulated their recommendations following a series of meetings with partner agencies who had a duty to respond during emergencies and had responded to the floods in June and July of 2007 and therefore they are based on sound reasoning.
- 3.2 The Overview & Scrutiny Committee supported the recommendations at their meeting in July at asked for them to passed to the Executive with their endorsement and requested an update report in February 2009 as part of their work programme.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 The Committee could decide against approving the recommendations but because they were based on evidence supplied by partner agencies and organisations and have very minimal impact for the Council, it would be prudent to approve them as set out in the report.

#### **5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 There are no significant budgetary impacts for Warwick District Council within this report and those recommendations that require resources from Warwick District Council can be met within existing budgets.

#### **6. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 6.1 This scrutiny was undertaken to see if there was a more appropriate way the Council and its partners could respond to a flooding emergency and therefore ties in with the underlying theme for the Corporate Strategy for this Council of the ambition to deliver a better quality of life for communities within Warwick District.

#### **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1 In the summer of 2007 over 55,000 homes and businesses in the UK were flooded. Since rainfall records began in 1766 there had not been a wetter May to July period, which meant the ground was saturated and could no longer absorb rainfall. Extreme rainfall in late June and late July caused flash flooding where it fell and accumulated in rivers to extend the impact to the floodplain.
- 7.2 The main difference in these floods was that a much higher proportion of flooding than normal came from surface water rather than rivers. Surface water was at its worst in cities such as Hull, but many villages and individual properties were affected, because drains and sewers were overwhelmed.
- 7.3 This was the main cause of flooding in Warwick District, which affected approx 222 properties including businesses<sup>1</sup>. The areas that reported flooding to properties in 2007 were:
- Bishop Tachbrook
  - Cubbington
  - Leamington
  - Kenilworth
  - Radford Semele
  - Stoneleigh
  - Whitnash
  - Warwick
- 7.4 Although the panel recognised it was bad for those affected, it could have been worse if the rainfall had been as heavy as it was in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.

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<sup>1</sup> There may have been other properties affected, but this was the number recorded by the Emergency Planning Unit,

- 7.5 Following the severe weather of June and July of 2007, which led to the flooding of homes and businesses in Warwick District a joint panel of councillors from Warwick District Council (WDC) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC) was set up to review the services provided to householders (including vulnerable people), to businesses and the impact on infrastructure such as transportation routes and key utilities e.g. electricity sub stations. The panel wanted to consider what could be done, by planning or organisation, to lessen the impact of flooding and similar emergencies in the future and if the services provided by key utilities e.g. electricity sub stations, water treatment needed additional measures to protect them in future.
- 7.6 The panel wanted to establish whether it is possible to lessen the impact of severe weather conditions in Warwick District. Taking into account:
- The response to these events in June/July
  - Whether any improvements in response could be made
  - What measures could be taken to alleviate the damage caused by the flooding
  - Maintaining access to utilities and ensuring these are protected
- 7.7 It was the panel's intention to provide a joint response to the findings of the Pitt Report by the 31 March 2008, but due to time constraints this was not possible. However, two members of the panel did attend a conference at Worcestershire where they discussed with other authorities the findings of the Pitt Report, Warwick District Council's experiences of last year's flooding event and the key findings of the review so far.
- 7.8 The complete report by the Panel is attached as appendix 1 to the report for consideration.
- 7.9 This was a joint scrutiny exercise and therefore the report will also be considered by the Warwickshire County Council Warwick Area Committee, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

# **Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council Flooding Review in Warwick District Final Report of the Joint Panel**

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In the summer of 2007 over 55,000 homes and businesses in the UK were flooded. Since rainfall records began in 1766 there had not been a wetter May to July period, which meant the ground was saturated and could no longer absorb rainfall. Extreme rainfall in late June and late July caused flash flooding where it fell and accumulated in rivers to extend the impact to the floodplain.
- 1.2 The main difference in these floods was that a much higher proportion of flooding than normal came from surface water rather than rivers. Surface water was at its worst in cities such as Hull, but many villages and individual properties were affected, because drains and sewers were overwhelmed.
- 1.3 This was the main cause of flooding in Warwick District, which affected approx 222 properties including businesses<sup>2</sup>. The areas that reported flooding to properties in 2007 were:
- Bishop Tachbrook
  - Cubbington
  - Leamington
  - Kenilworth
  - Radford Semele
  - Stoneleigh
  - Whitnash
  - Warwick
- 1.4 Although the panel recognise it was bad for those affected, it could have been worse if the rainfall had been as heavy as it was in Worcestershire and Gloucestershire.

## **2. Aims and Objectives**

- 2.1 Following the severe weather of June and July of 2007, which led to the flooding of homes and businesses in Warwick District a joint panel of councillors from Warwick District Council (WDC) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC) was set up to review the services provided to householders (including vulnerable people), to businesses and the impact on infrastructure such as transportation routes and key utilities e.g. electricity sub stations. The panel wanted to consider what could be done, by planning or organisation, to lessen the impact of flooding and similar emergencies in the future and if the services provided by key utilities e.g. electricity sub stations, water treatment needed additional measures to protect them in future. (See Appendix F – The Joint Panel's Terms of Reference for the Flood Review)
- 2.2 The panel wanted to establish whether it is possible to lessen the impact of severe weather conditions in Warwick District. Taking into account:
- The response to these events in June/July

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<sup>2</sup> There may have been other properties affected, but this was the number recorded by the Emergency Planning Unit,

- Whether any improvements in response could be made
- What measures could be taken to alleviate the damage caused by the flooding
- Maintaining access to utilities and ensuring these are protected

2.3 It was the panel's intention to provide a joint response to the findings of the Pitt Report by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, but due to time constraints this was not possible. However, two members of the panel did attend a conference at Worcestershire where they discussed with other authorities the findings of the Pitt Report, Warwick District Council's experiences of last year's flooding event and the key findings of the review so far.

### **3. Scope**

3.1 The panel decided that the review should include:

- The factors that are likely to cause flooding in Warwick District.
- How do emergency services and related agencies communicate with each other and the public?
- How does the public find out where to go, whom to contact, where/how to obtain help?
- What services do voluntary organisations provide in an emergency?
- How are voluntary groups involved when there is a flood?
- What services are immediately available in key flooding locations?
- What self- help measures are available that the public can use?
- How Councillors could provide support/help in this emergency situation?
- How Local Authorities and other agencies identify and support vulnerable people during an emergency?

3.2 However, it was decided that this review would not include work that is already being done by existing committees and forums on flood alleviation, planning decisions or the recovery work following an emergency.

3.3 The panel decided that they needed to obtain information from the many agencies involved with flooding. Two meetings were arranged and held in select committee style, where the following either attended or provided the panel with information:

- Emergency Planning WCC
- Emergency Planning WDC
- Warwickshire Police
- Warwickshire Fire Service
- West Midlands Ambulance Service
- Severn Trent
- The Environment Agency
- WCC Highways
- Health Protection Agency
- Warwickshire Primary Care Trust
- Representatives from Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS), St Johns and the Red Cross
- Kenilworth Town Council, Royal Leamington Spa Town Council, Ashow, Burton Green & Stoneleigh Joint Parish Council, Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council and Lapworth Parish Council

- British Waterways

- 3.4 There was a very good response to the invitation to take part in the review and those that did respond welcomed the chance to engage with the panel. The details of these meetings can be found in Appendices C and D.
- 3.5 Arrangements were made for the panel to assess the emergency planning arrangements at WCC and WDC and to attend a seminar. This provided the background information on what happens in a flooding emergency and to consider what questions they would want to ask the agencies and others that provide assistance in such an emergency. See Appendices A and B.
- 3.6 Two councillors also attended the Pitt Review Event in Worcestershire. The key findings of what they found out about the summer floods in 2007 can be found in Appendix E.

#### **4. Findings of the Panel**

- 4.1 The panel established that the factors that caused the flooding in 2007 related to surface water and exceptional weather conditions, which were impossible to predict. Self protection was considered the way to build good resilience especially on occasions when the emergency services will not be able to get to residents. They recognise that it is therefore important that residents should be prepared for such an emergency and they should not assume that it would never happen here. Had the weather conditions been slightly different, the damage in Worcestershire could have easily been in Warwickshire.
- 4.2 Most people have become used to placing a smoke alarm in their house to protect against the danger of fire and the panel consider that the same approach needs to be taken with flooding or other emergencies. Simple measures that may help reduce the distress flooding causes would be to;
- Have a list of emergency contact numbers
  - Have a box with emergency equipment - such as a torch, information leaflets, etc.
  - Keeping or moving important personal items - such as photographs upstairs
- 4.3 The same message that came out of the meetings with the Emergency Planning Unit and the Category 1 and Category 2 Responders (Appendix C paragraphs 26, 47, 73 & Appendix D paragraph 17). They consider that people could be more prepared to help and protect themselves, their properties and others in such an emergency.
- See Recommendation 5.1**
- 4.4 At the seminar the panel were made aware that there is emergency guidance for Councillors on the do's and don'ts and contact numbers for the Emergency Planning Unit (Appendix A, paragraph 9). None were aware of being given these and recommend that these should be reissued annually. This would ensure that the contact information is current and ensure that Councillors remain aware of what they should do in an emergency.
- See Recommendation 5.2**



- 4.5 Both the Primary Care Trust and Severn Trent have lists of vulnerable people who would be at risk when there is a flood, but there was not one database that held all this information. At this stage it is not clear whether having one database would be helpful, because it would require careful management to keep this up to date and ensure this information is accurate. Warwickshire PCT thought it was essential that the local communities need to be aware of what they can do to help and support their vulnerable neighbours who may be at risk so they can provide assistance in an emergency (Appendix C, paragraph 47). **See Recommendation 5.3**
- 4.6 The panel recognised that communications between the Emergency Planning Unit and the responders generally worked well, but there were times where there could have been better engagement with the Health Protection Agency (who were not contacted) or WRVS (Appendix C, paragraphs 31, 32 & Appendix D, paragraphs 30, 32). Communication about river flooding is good, but flash flooding revealed weaknesses such as information about road closures, Appendix B paragraph 53). However, it is a two way process and all responders considered there could be consistency of approach and opportunities to share best practice, which could help improve communication. The Emergency Planning Unit would like a single location for the co-ordination and dissemination of all information in an emergency. The HPA would like emergency responders to consider other ways of working such as tele/video phone conferencing. **See Recommendation 5.4**
- 4.7 The panel were made aware by the Emergency Planning Unit that they had received fewer emergency calls, than expected, from some areas that had not experienced flooding before. However it was difficult to establish whether residents did not know who to contact in an emergency or if they were too busy with the flood to call. (Appendix B, paragraph 24, 70) Whatever the reason, the panel considered any delay could prevent residents from getting the most appropriate response and suggest there should be an awareness raising campaign with leaflets, which provide information on what to do when there is a problem such as contact Severn Trent for sewage overflow or WCC to clear a gully. These should be regularly updated to ensure that telephone numbers do not become out of date and the contact centre is robust and resilient in an emergency. **See Recommendation 5.5**
- 4.8 Residents living near rivers appear to be more aware of who to contact, what is available, have measures in place to help prevent damage to property and help each other in an emergency (Appendix C, paragraphs 18, 20). The panel were made aware that flood wardens in the past provided a valuable service to residents by warning them of the possible risk of flood, but these were withdrawn, because of the risk of being sued (Appendix C, paragraph 18). The panel established that groups such as Neighbourhood Watch could be a useful way of providing additional information to a community, especially for those in urban areas (Appendix C paragraph 17). The panel consider that community groups would be a useful means of having a two way dialogue between the community and the council's Emergency Planning Unit. This could be incorporated into the ongoing Parish Community Emergency Planning initiative run by the County Emergency Planning Unit. **See Recommendations 5.6 & 5.7**
- 4.9 Also the panel have been made aware on how important the role is for Councillors in an emergency, as community leaders in assisting the public as well as providing 'on the ground' information to the Emergency Planning Unit. The review identified that Councillors would benefit from having more information and resources to hand

such as empty sandbags to help with the immediate situation, rather than relying on the Emergency Planning Unit to provide them, especially when flooding can cut off routes to the affected areas (Appendix paragraphs 18, 19, 22). **See**

**Recommendation 5.8**

- 4.10 The Environment Agency expressed an interest in meeting members of the public in a community setting to discuss how they can better help themselves (Appendix D paragraph 17). They have three leaflets which explain what to do before a flood, during a flood and after a flood. The panel considers that such a meeting could be extended to include the Local Authorities, Severn Trent, PCT and others by holding a Road Show in Leamington. **See Recommendation 5.9**
- 4.11 Severn Trent, British Waterways identified that it would be helpful if they were involved earlier with the Planning Department in the planning process for building developments (Appendix D, paragraph 16). **See Recommendation 5.10**
- 4.12 The panel were made aware by parish councillors that flooding tended to attract visitors with large vehicles and the turbulence created by going through the flood water can cause damage to properties nearby. They felt it would be helpful if they could close the road and educate the public on the consequences of their actions (Appendix D paragraph 19). Unfortunately only the police have the power to close a road, but WCC Highways do have the responsibility to provide warning signs and in certain circumstances could provide these to Parish and Town Councils. However, this would have to be 'in the mind of the highway authority' and not as a resident or with some other motivation (Appendix paragraphs 61, 62). **See Recommendation 5.11**
- 4.13 The services involved in providing help in an emergency did express concern about not having a plan of the Critical Infrastructure in the County to ensure utilities are protected. The main reason given to them was that information could not be made available because of security concerns. It is difficult to establish whether or not having this information is placing residents at significant risk. However, the panel was assured that Warwickshire did not have any major utilities that would cause water shortages or cut off electricity for a significant time. At worst electricity and water supplies in Warwickshire may be cut for a few hours, but the main areas of concern would be outside the county. The panel was satisfied that a recommendation was not required from this part of the review with the information they had been given.
- 4.14 The panel recognise that the information obtained from conducting this review will be going as a report to WDC and WCC for comment. However they consider that all those that participated, plus relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Local Resilience Forum should have a copy of the report to enable them comment on the findings and the recommendations the panel have made relating to their area of business. **See Recommendation 5.12**
- 4.15 The panel wanted to ensure that the findings and recommendations are implemented taking into account the outcomes from the Pitt Review. They consider that the Local Resilience Forum would be the best way to take these forward and report this to the WCC Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee. **See Recommendation 5.13**

## 5. Recommendations

The panel recommend that:

- 5.1 To promote self protection that residents are encouraged to prepare for an emergency, this could be a box with a torch, contact numbers, Environment Agency flood leaflets including the blue book plus advice on how they can protect of the property such as flood boards, etc. Suggest the Environment Agency lead on this with the support of WCC and WDC by using all means to raise awareness.
- 5.2 Both Emergency Planning Unit and Member Services for WCC and WDC to work together to ensure that emergency guidance and the contact information is provided annually to Councillors. This could be included when diaries are given out.
- 5.3 WCC and WDC to ask the PCT and other agencies that support vulnerable people to provide further information to the Humanitarian Assistance subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum on how neighbours can help vulnerable people in an emergency without putting themselves at risk and this information is coordinated where possible by Emergency Planning Unit.
- 5.4 Emergency Planning Unit to review the communication proposals outlined in 4.6 to see whether these could be implemented and report back to the Local Resilience Forum in 6 months time.
- 5.5 Councillors and residents to be given information in leaflet or card form so they can contact the right provider (Environment Agency - brooks, rivers; British Waterways – canals; and Severn Trent – sewage). The panel to decide who should be given this task and have them report this information to Communicating with Public subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum in 6 months time.
- 5.6 The Communicating with the Public subgroup of the Local Resilience Forum to consider the feasibility of having named individuals, such as the flood wardens in the past, with the remit to update the Council on river levels.
- 5.7 With the Environment Agency's assistance and training that existing groups such as Neighbourhood Watch (especially in urban areas) are encouraged to set up a flood awareness group in conjunction with the Emergency Planning Units community emergency planning initiatives.
- .
- 5.8 As part of the emergency planning process that District, Town and Parish Councils consider where would be the best places to store flood warning signs, sandbags, emergency boxes with supplies, etc. to ensure that they can be easily accessed in an emergency situation. It is an opportunity for an enhanced role for all councillors to take part in helping their community. This to be reviewed by Emergency Planning Unit in 6 months time and for them to report back to Warwick Area Committee

- 5.9 The Environment Agency to conduct a feasibility study to hold a road show in Leamington or other appropriate sites in Warwick District to raise public awareness. To arrange and invite the Emergency Planning Unit, Severn Trent, PCT and any other emergency providers they consider would be useful for the public to meet to obtain information. The Road Show could also provide an opportunity to raise awareness with landowners on their responsibility for clearing ditches to prevent run off onto roads.
- 5.10 The Planning Department to liaise with Severn Trent and British Waterways to clarify and develop new protocols and report back to Warwick District Council in 6 months time.
- 5.11 WCC Highways to provide guidance and warning signs to Parish Councils to enable them to erect these to slow down traffic. This would help ensure that residents are not put at risk due to floods and reduce damage to nearby properties. Suggest that Warwick Area Committee may want to consider reviewing the effectiveness of providing warning signs to Parish Councils in 12 months time or after a flooding event.
- 5.12 A copy of the report to be given to Warwick District Council, Warwick Area Committee, Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Local Resilience Forum and all those that participated in the review to comment on the findings and recommendations of the panel .
- 5.12 The Local Resilience Forum to continue to monitor the outcomes of the Pitt Review and report this to the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- 1 The aim of this seminar on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2007, to which all district councillors were invited, was to provide information about the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 and raise councillor awareness of their role in an emergency.
- 2 The CCA is a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. This Act defines WCC and WDC as Category 1 responders, which means they have the same level of responsibility as the Police, Ambulance and Fire services, Primary Care Trust, Acute Trusts, Health Protection Agency and the Environment Agency. Category 2 responders include the utilities, railway and airport companies, Health and Safety Executive and Strategic Health Authority
- 3 Emergency planning and resilience has had an increasingly high profile following the international, national and local events in recent years
- 4 Warwickshire Local Resilience Forum, chaired by Jim Graham (Chief Executive, WCC) or William Brown (County Fire Officer, WCC), heads up the Act Compliance Group and five working groups, which cover:
  - Risk Assessment,
  - Training & Exercise
  - Communicating with the Public
  - Business Continuity
  - Critical Infrastructure
- 5 The aim of emergency planning is to ensure that WCC and its partner agencies are best prepared to respond to any emergency through Service Level Agreements (SLAs).
- 6 The CCA requires WCC & WDC to look at 7 areas of civil protection duty, which are:
  - cooperation between all local and multi agency responders
  - information sharing between local & multi agency responders
  - assessment of risks facing the community
  - emergency planning
  - business continuity management
  - communicating with the public to warn and inform
  - advice & assistance to business & voluntary organisations
- 7 The role of Councillors in an emergency is to:
  - Understand the Council's responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
  - Be aware of the hazards and risks within their own local area
  - Share relevant local knowledge with the Emergency Planning Unit
  - Consider reports provided by the Community Protection Directorate/EPU on resilience issues
  - As part of their duties ensure that relevant resources are made available to allow for the effective delivery of the emergency planning and emergency response unit

- 8 An important role for Councillors is to act as community leaders and represent the affected area, during an emergency. They are a channel of communication to and from their electorate. As part of the Emergency Committee they can agree policy, provide support to those responding and where services may be reduced, identify vulnerable people and assist in a coordinated media response. In the recovery stage Councillors can represent the community at specific functions, participate in community self help groups and assist with other elected officials such as MPs, MEPs and VIPs who may visit the affected areas after the emergency.
- 9 To aid Councillors there is guidance available such as briefing cards with information on the do's and don'ts, pitfalls to avoid and contact information for EPU & District Officers.
- 10 Councillors will also need to take into account of the following when considering emergency planning measures:
- Business Continuity Management – flu pandemic would have an impact but there is still a requirement to provide services
  - Using scrutiny to monitor progress on compliance
  - Planning – Statutory - contingency to major accident regulations, (COMAH 1999) Kingsbury, Pipeline Safety Regulations (PSR) 1996 (gas), emergency involving radiation (Radiation Emergency Preparedness and Public Information -REPPPIR). Local Authority – WCC Major Emergency Plan, EPU SOPs, Directorate plans, District MEP & departments, parish councils.
  - Functional plans – rest centres, joint media, resilience mortuary, psychological welfare. Partner Agencies- advice & guidance role
- 11 The seminar discussions that followed revealed that there could be problems in dealing with some emergencies. Two key ones were:
- Warwickshire has common boundaries with many counties outside the West Midlands region
  - When assisting the elderly, there is immediate help with shelter, but generally people are left to their own devices following an emergency. It was generally recognised that more help should be given and it should be a key priority for councils to do something about this.
- 12 The seminar finished with the Emergency Planning Unit informing Councillors that preparations are being made in the event of the next Pandemic Flu and this should be in place by February 2008 and tested by the end of the year.

**Emergency Planning Arrangements at Warwickshire County Council & Warwick District Council**

Warwickshire County Council

- 1 Either the Chief Executive of WCC or the Emergency Unit Manager will decide when to declare an emergency and set up the WCC Emergency Centre.
- 2 The centre provides accommodation for all WCC departments to work in the same room and respond to the situation. This allows the departments to coordinate their response, because most emergencies require some level of response from all to the situation.
- 3 The Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) are responsible for the set up of the EPU centre and ensure that it is open within 15 minutes (of the Chief Executive or EPU being notified of an emergency) and fully operational within 1 hour.
- 4 The WCC EPU operates a duty officer system. All EPU staff and WCC Caretakers live near to the centre, which ensures a quick response and the majority of incidents are dealt within a matter of hours.
- 5 The Armed Forces is a resource which can be called upon, but usually only in major emergencies where there is serious risk to life or Critical Infrastructure, but the Police still remain in control of the event.
- 6 Hospitals obtain their information from the Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance Services, who assess the situation and inform the hospital if necessary. However if there is a major emergency everyone is informed as soon as possible.
- 7 If for whatever reason the centre becomes unavailable there are other facilities that can be set up very quickly to respond to an emergency.

Warwick District Council

- 8 Warwick District Council has rooms and emergency planning arrangements similar to the emergency planning arrangements in WCC with computers, telephones, contact information and other resources. If for whatever reason this facility was made unavailable such as flooding or fire, they also have other facilities in the district they can use.

### Emergency Planning Unit - Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council

Present: Roger Jewsbury – Warwick District Council  
Jeremy Lee – Warwickshire County Council

- 1 An emergency is declared when an incident give rise the need for an extensive, coordinated, multi agency response. On occasions the District and County may already be dealing with an event as part of normal work, but each party will always inform the other of what is happening.
- 2 Unlike river floods, there is no real warning for flash surface water flooding other than a two hour advanced warning of severe weather from the metrological office. In severe weather the Police may declare an emergency. However, these warnings are very general and non-specific on location and people may still be caught up in an emergency situation they were not expecting.
- 3 In an emergency the Customer Service Centre at WDC have procedures in place on where to pass information in an emergency, e.g. flooding of highways would be forwarded to WCC Highways and flooding in council house properties to the Housing Department.
- 4 Councillors are informed of flooding by email or updates on the Council website and specific Ward Councillors that are directly affected, would be advised on how they could assist, by phone in the first instance and then regularly updated via email.
- 5 Currently there are a limited number of phone lines available within Riverside House, because the system has reached capacity. However, a new system is being introduced where it will be easier to establish numbers and lines at short notice. The panel consider that this should be implemented as soon as possible.
- 6 There is a defined role for councillors in assisting and providing information which is in the WDC Emergency Plan.
- 7 In an emergency situation the Emergency Planning Unit find the information from Councillors helpful, because it enables them to get part of an overall picture of what is happening. They would also find it helpful if councillors could contact the relevant Council for the services they provide, although they recognise it is not always clear which authority provides which service
- 8 When surface water is being pushed into properties WCC Highways do have the power to close roads and put out flood warning signs. This is not necessarily when the road is impassable but when properties are being affected. The call should be made through to the usual Highways team, who will arrange for the flooding to be assessed and appropriate action taken.
- 9 WDC is taking the lead on issues relating to surface water, following the recommendation made in the Pitt Report, through the Flooding Forum along with Severn Trent, the Environment Agency and WCC. However, different agencies do lead on different works as appropriate, e.g. because the work in Kenilworth was mainly work by Severn Trent, they have led on that series of programmed works.



- 10 Within Warwick District there are no common areas for surface water flooding. However, all areas flooded are recorded and mapped. WCC Highways has a map of the summer flood road closures in 2007
- 11 Land owners are responsible for surface water and it is an offence to discharge water on to the highway under the Use of Land Drainage Act 1991 section 25. However, there needs to be consideration of what came first, the field or the highway which cut the field in half. If evidence can be given that a landowner has changed the land to the detriment of water spilling on to the highway then there is potential for action to be taken.
- 12 The Strategic Management Group has an overview of the whole event and any changes to the emergency will bring in different services and agencies. Information from WDC's strategic team is passed to WCC and vice versa to allow the best response to be made in the right place. This allows prioritisation of resources for the whole emergency.
- 13 WCC have limited information of the critical infrastructure in Warwickshire, due to security concerns. It was considered that those at risk or who are vulnerable should be recorded so that these can be accounted for in the emergency planning process. This should also include other county, regional and national critical infrastructures outside Warwick District that could have an impact.
- 14 Key decisions are communicated as soon as possible throughout the chain of command to ensure they get to the right 1<sup>st</sup> responder.
- 15 Feedback is given to the centre via calls from the community and officers on the ground. WDC have a team of officers who go out on site to monitor river levels at key areas.
- 16 With regard to river flooding, there is the benefit of having sufficient time between rain and peak water levels to let people know and the warning process is fairly straightforward. The villages and rural communities that are likely to be affected are usually already aware and have good links with the Environment Agency telephone warning system. Flash flood events cause the main problems and this is where the communities end up informing the Council of the emergency, rather than the other way around.
- 17 In an emergency there are good existing arrangements with all Parish and Town Councils for every situation, not just flooding. Within the urban areas groups such as Safer Neighbourhood Panels, Neighbourhood Watch could be a useful way of providing additional information as long as a common source was used.
- 18 In the past there were Flood Wardens, but these were removed from post after some were sued for failure to warn residents. The panel consider that they could be reinstated to warn the Emergency Services of rising river levels.
- 19 The BBC is required under their licence to provide a public service called "Community In Crisis" where they help disseminate information via local radio stations. Coventry and Warwickshire Radio have a very good working relationship with local authorities.

- 20 Voluntary organisations play a key role in supporting not only communities in need during an emergency but also the responding services to an emergency.
- 21 In each case, when a voluntary organisation attends an emergency, their costs are reimbursed by the relevant local authority or agency.
- 22 Central Networks and Severn Trent have a list of people who need power supplies and fresh water for medical reasons. There are data sources with other organisations, but they may have lists of different vulnerable people. This makes identification of those at risk difficult and there could be vulnerable people which no organisation knows about. In the floods of 2007, WCC and WDC were not aware of any issues involving vulnerable people.
- 23 There is a Rest Centre Plan with 30 nominated locations for temporary shelter/accommodation across the county, most of which are secondary schools. The details of these are retained by EPU officers and, when in operation, the centres are supported by officers and voluntary organisations. These details are not publicised unless there is a need for people to make their way to a rest centre. Following the Easter Flood 1998 and a rest centre being flooded, the resilience of all rest centres was reviewed and none are now situated on known flood plains.
- 24 Cubbington and Radford Semele were worst affected by the floods in June 2007 and this being reviewed by officer groups especially with regard to Cubbington where the Councils received very few calls. A number of reasons have been suggested such as:
- they called 999
  - they called Severn Trent
  - they didn't know who to call
  - residents were trying to resolve problems and focussing on that so much they did not call anyone
- 25 Coventry City Council and other organisations based in Coventry are very good at assisting within Warwickshire when called upon and vice versa. There are lots of joint initiatives with Coventry because of its position within the county. Coventry City Council was called upon in 1998, but not in 2007.
- 26 The Emergency Planning Unit made the following suggestions to the panel:
- Self protection is the best route for introducing good resilience.
  - Liaise with Gloucestershire on what they promote to residents.
  - Obtain information on the feedback received by the Local Resilience Forum about voluntary links with other authorities.
  - Raise awareness regarding personal and community resilience - that the Emergency Planning Unit can't help everyone and can only help, where possible, those in most need

27 The EPU would also like to see the following changes:

- Single cell for the co-ordination of all information in a dynamic environment.
- The level of risk to critical infrastructure to be reported to authorities.

Health Protection Agency, West Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust and Warwickshire Primary Care Trust

Present: Mr R Moore - Emergency Planning Manager for Coventry & Warwickshire  
Dr M Bardham - Consultant for Disease Control, Health Protection Agency  
Dr R Blythe - Emergency Planning Manager, Warwickshire PCT  
Dr Tim Davies – Public Health Director, Warwickshire PCT

- 28 The Health Protection Agency (HPA) was established following 9/11 and the possible use of dirty bombs within the UK and potential incidents such as chemical/radiation and communicable diseases. The aim was to bring together specialists in this area and provide consistent advice of the highest quality.
- 29 There are national, regional and local teams of the HPA. Each local team has specialist knowledge but within an emergency situation the HPA come together to provide the best advice on the situation. The HPA sit on the Gold Command Team as at Category 1 responder.
- 30 On the identification of a problem the HPA should be contacted as soon as possible to provide advice to minimise contamination or the potential for contamination. The HPA then advises Warwickshire Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the hospitals on control and corrective measures.
- 31 In 2007 the HPA had not received any information about the floods and it appeared that no one organisation had an overall picture of the floods or, if they did, had not passed the information on to the HPA. However, the media helicopters feeding back live images did help assess the situation.
- 32 Because the floods of last summer were the first time the HPA had been involved in an emergency event, it took them time to coordinate the best advice for the public on what to do from a medical aspect. That advice is now logged on the HPA website and is available as a resources database.
- 33 The HPA consider it important that medical supplies in anticipation of a potential health risk need to be resourced before the flood arrives.
- 34 The PCT are responsible for the response by the NHS to the emergency and provide the required medical facilities.
- 35 With flooding in general, there is the potential for contact with sewage and its possible effect could take time to show. GPs were issued with questionnaires to record the number of infections caused by contact with sewage or conditions passed on by people with illnesses caused by contact with sewage. This was monitored over time to ensure that there was not an epidemic and to monitor the spreading of illnesses.

- 36 The PCT are aware of vulnerable people that are under the care of the PCT, but not of others. Community nurses and others can provide aid in an emergency and are aware of those at risk. If a community nurse cannot get to their work base they will contact their office and are referred to the nearest community nurse office to provide help. There is also a voluntary GP register for working additional hours during an emergency.
- 37 In 2007 some GP practices in Stratford closed due to the water being at their door. Unfortunately they failed to notify the Out Of Hours Contact Service, but the procedures have been amended to prevent this happening again. The basement of Ellen Badger Hospital in Shipston-on-Stour also flooded and some papers were lost, but the patients nor the power supply were affected in any way.
- 38 In an emergency the Ambulance Trust's aim is to maintain a core service to respond to 999 calls and doctor calls whilst providing a contact to the Gold Team. To ensure there are sufficient ambulances the trust will cancel routine work such as x-ray appointments and hospital transfers.
- 39 In 2007 the situation was monitored by watching TV and obtaining metrological office reports. The police provided information on road closure notifications. This is shared with the Fire and Rescue service.
- 40 In 2007 ambulance crews did prepare and placed resources at critical locations in the county just in case the situation became worse and areas became inaccessible. Priority calls were dealt with and non-emergency calls were delayed.
- 41 The Ambulance Trust have conducted a risk assessment of its main support stations, mobile control rooms including Leamington and these are considered safe from flooding.
- 42 All local hospitals have escalation plans to relocate patients to other hospitals or locations if required. The only hospital at low risk of flooding is Warwick from the canal overtopping.
- 43 The Ambulance Trust is aware of areas which are regularly affected by flooding and therefore naturally avoid those routes, if possible, during a flooding emergency. Any flooded road discovered on call will be reported back and logged so they are avoided by other crews. If there is a need for a 4x4, the local owner groups and the voluntary sector with suitable vehicles are contacted. It must be appreciated that ambulance crews are not authorised to attend situations by boat unless they have been trained to do so.
- 44 The Air Ambulance can be used if necessary for critical cases, because they can overcome flooding obstacles and land near to where they are required. However, if the weather is bad, flying operations can be restricted.
- 45 Work was undertaken in 2000 of the critical infrastructure in preparation for the millennium bug, to ensure that service providers (e.g. Central Networks and Severn Trent) were aware of the vulnerable people within the PCT area. This link has remained in place.

- 46 The Ambulance Trust is made aware of vulnerable people via 999 calls, but dealing with these does not allow them to be proactive to find more vulnerable people. The 999 calls are prioritised and callers are informed if the ambulance cannot get to them as quickly as normal. Regular press releases also inform the community if ambulances they can't get out to them or if it will take longer than expected.
- 47 The HPA, PCT and Ambulance Trust made the following suggestions to the panel to take forward:
- a) To help people manage in an emergency it may be helpful if people are provided with information or courses on basic skills on how to cope. Residents need to realise that if they can't get out then ambulances can't get in as quickly either.
  - b) The PCT consider it is essential that the local communities need to be aware of what they can do and support their neighbours who may be at risk.
  - c) To improve communications if the Category 1 responders cannot get to the emergency centre they could communicate by tele/video phone conferencing.

#### Police and WCC Highways

Present: David Patterson - Warwickshire Police  
David Elliston - Warwickshire County Council Highways

- 48 The police command and control the response to an emergency and WCC Highways are responsible for the management of traffic flows and signage information. Highways also contact and deploy sandbags to those properties at risk of flooding from water leaving the highway.
- 49 The police rely on information from the Metrological Office and phone calls from the public and partners. They recognise that they need to gather evidence via other sources rather than just through local contact. Highways monitor the weather directly with the Metrological Office and liaise with the EPU. The Call Centre forwards the calls from the public direct to the Area Office.
- 50 The police recognise there is an issue with sharing information with other agencies and have officers out on road to feed information back in. Highways are not directly involved with sharing information with partners this is the role of the EPU team.
- 51 The police and highways expect Councillors to provide positive leadership for passing and reviewing information to and from the County Council. They would expect Councillors to assist the Police by disseminating information to the community helping to keep them informed and calm. Also for Councillors to report dangerous situations, that they consider, have not been reported previously. There is a joint media plan for use during an emergency.
- 52 Information on road closures can take an hour from enforcement to reporting to WCC Councillors via email. This is shared between the Police and Highways, but the Fire & Rescue and Ambulance services are not informed.
- 53 Generally there is good communication between the Police and Highways with only occasional delays or breakdowns.

- 54 During the summer floods in 2007 60 roads were closed in the County. These included the M40, A46, and the Fosse Way and Shipston-on-Stour was cut off. The closures were logged on a map and this was inspected by the panel.
- 55 Alternative transport routes are set up based upon local knowledge of the most suitable routes and there are blocks of signs for pre-determined alternative routes. In June 2007 nearest diversion routes were used as the situation developed and receded. Regular contact between Highways and the Emergency Services was maintained throughout.
- 56 There is a large scale plan showing main road closures, previously inspected by the working party. However the plan does not show the roads affected by the floods of 2007 as many of the areas had never experienced flooding before, such as the Fosse Way. It was considered there was not much benefit in producing a plan showing runoff, because this varies according to the weather conditions, for example, the A4177 at Shrewley had no previous history of this problem before 2007.
- 57 The flooding in Welsh Road, Cubbington was caused by service companies blocking the Severn Trent drainage system, a problem which is not uncommon across the country.
- 58 WCC has a cyclic gully clearing programme where each gully is cleared at least once a year. The cleaners employ a GPS system which reports when a gully is cleaned. If a gully cannot be cleaned then a report is logged stating why for the Highways teams work to resolve the problem.
- 59 Sometimes adjoining pipe work is the problem and not the gully. WCC are working with Severn Trent to resolve these issues.
- 60 Performance for cleaning blocked gullies was subject to a 12 month backlog due to substantial numbers of collapsed gullies and pipe work. However this has now been resolved by not cleaning the gullies in areas where they tend not to experience blockages. This has freed resources to use another vehicle to focus on more problematic areas.
- 61 Highways do have the responsibility to provide warning signs for surface water, but in certain circumstances Parish and Town Councils could be allocated with corrugated plastic 'Flood' warning signs, to put up by proxy if required especially if roads are impassable. 'Road Ahead Closed' can also be viewed in much the same way, as long as it used sensibly and in the right circumstances. Whoever puts the sign out must do so 'in the mind of the highway authority', and not as a resident or with some other motivation.
- 62 Whilst accepting the splash and damage to property that can be done by traffic ploughing through standing water, if a 'Road Closed' sign were used inappropriately and it was still passable, it could be deemed as an obstruction.
- 63 Police have the power to close any road in exceptional circumstances. However to do this requires an officer and potentially a patrol car at each end of the road and any adjoining roads along that stretch of carriageway. They recognised that they do not carry enough road closure signs in patrol cars and this was something they were looking into increasing for this very reason.

- 64 Landowners have the responsibility for flood runoff onto roads and Highways have the power to make sure that this is put right via the Land Drainage Act 1991 section 25.
- 65 WCC has produced a guide called 'Farming and the Public Highway', which is available for all landowners and has been passed to landowners where there are problems. It was also issued on a county-wide basis to 1250 landowners in February 2008.
- 66 The Police can call on resources and help from outside the county through a national and regional agreement they have with other Police Authorities which can provide support, general manpower or specialist knowledge. WCC Highways can also call on support from outside the area as and when required.
- 67 Remote villages obtain their emergency information from a joint media plan with Category 1 responders which covers Radio (BBC Connect In A Crisis), TV, web sites and the Environment Agency hotline. The police and WCC consider there could be a role for Neighbourhood Watch, councillors and others in an emergency. Any additional communication systems may improve self action and resilience to flooding of property.
- 68 They have found it difficult to identify whether there were any problems from last year's flooding, because few residents contacted the emergency services. WCC Highways was contacted by the Parish Councillor in Cubbington, but only in reference to the High Street and Welsh Road.
- 69 Highways took over 700 calls, 90% of these were from the Police. The Police received 194 calls from residents concerning flooding.
- 70 A sub-regional flood forum had been created to look at these issues.
- 71 The police were not able to disclose details of the critical infrastructure in county, because it is sensitive information. However, they consider there is a national and local need for this to be identified and assessed for vulnerability in regards to flooding. There needs to be a balance on what information could be made available.
- 72 The Police and WCC Highways made the following suggestions to take forward:
- a) Farmers/landowners to keep their ditches clear to reduce surface water runoff the main cause of flooding in 2007.
  - b) Issue more sandbags and flood warning signs to Parish and Town Councils.
  - c) Take account of the findings from the Pitt Report. However there could be resource implications for all parties.
  - d) Ensure all residents have an emergency kit as suggested in the Pitt Report. Councils could actively promote this.

- e) To consider investing in basic self-resilience actions in the short term and the procurement period of flood alleviation schemes in the medium to long term – say 2-8 years.

### **Summing up of the day**

- 73 Communication between WCC, WDC and partners appears to work well, but there have been occasions when they have not been engaged in the emergency procedures or provided with information, such as HPA.
- 74 There are positive roles which could be undertaken by local groups such as Neighbourhood Watch.
- 75 Other issues identified following the discussions:
- Identify the internal groups for communication
  - Public – who do/should they contact?
  - Land owners responsibility for stopping run off
  - Councillors - who should they call?
- 76 Additional issues to be considered:
1. Who would best placed to provide information/campaign to raise the awareness for the need for self protection
  2. Where would be the best places to store supplies of flood warning signs to ensure that they can be accessed and used as and when required
  3. To meet with Jeremy Lee and Roger Jewsbury, following the Category 2 responders meeting, to discuss the findings from both meetings.
  4. Look at why Cubbington residents did not call emergency services - did they call someone else?
  5. Whether the panel could get the critical infrastructure details to assess whether there are areas in Warwickshire that are at risk.
- 77 Following the meeting an additional recommendation was suggested by the panel, which was to consider reinstating the Flood Wardens so they can update the Council on river levels, but without responsibility for informing residents of imminent flooding.



### Environment Agency

Present: Sue McCarthy

- 1 The flood warning duty officer monitors flood levels, rivers and flood forecasting teams model the rain levels. A computer system triggers the lead time, which is usually about 2 hours.
- 2 Operational delivery teams monitor on the ground and check pinch points such as bridges, rain gauges and water courses but not rain run off.
- 3 The problems identified from last year were Alcester and others in Stratford plus Cubbington. The Environment Agency is conducting feasibility studies to minimise risk next time.
- 4 There is a report of the 'Internal Review on their website which can be found through the flooding page 'What's happened near you'
- 5 Pitt Report – the Environment Agency are acting on their recommendations but monitoring groundwater is not in their remit – stronger legislation is required
- 6 A basic map showing surface water will be completed by 2013 and will be available for the public
- 7 To set up flood defences in Warwickshire would require a feasibility study, groundwork and a cost study on whether this would be beneficial. On the Severn it works well, because they have 3 days warning which gives 24 hours to set up defences, but in Warwickshire they are too unpredictable.
- 8 The Environment Agency is in the early stages of setting policies on the use of temporary and demountable defences. They are waiting for an impact assessment.
- 9 The Environment Agency would encourage self help and suggest that Parish Councillors could provide advice, support to set up a flood watch group. They would like the parish representatives to contact the Environment Agency rather than the Agency to contact them but the parish representatives would find it helpful if they received some feedback. Residents could be directed to sign up for information on what material they would find useful in a flood.
- 10 There are three documents on the Environment Agency website that would help residents, businesses and councillors in the event of a flood occurring again.

## Severn Trent and British Waterways

Present: Frank Quinn, British Waterways  
Anthony Pratchett, Severn Trent Water Ltd

- 11 The role British Waterways in the event of a flood is to look after people that live on the canals and also look after reservoirs. They can protect a section of canal by reducing the water levels and work with the Local Authorities and others to either reduce or inform them on how they can reduce water levels. British Waterways rely heavily on volunteers which are mostly boat owners. There is an Out of Hours number that can activate a response team. The panel were made aware that Northamptonshire are looking to use volunteers in an effective way.
- 12 British Waterways let out water from the canals last year into rivers, ditches and streams. Farmers/landowners not clearing ditches has meant there are fewer places to relieve the canal, which has put additional pressure on the areas available. Birmingham is the peak for all water in the canals and it drains down towards Warwick. There are maps of canal flooding points but these are old and will be reviewed to update and place them onto a computer.
- 13 Severn Trent is responsible for the supply of clean water, foul sewers and combined sewers (household and surface water drains) in ten counties. They are not responsible for all surface water drains. In periods of heavy rain the flood waters go into ground tanks at the sewage works, but these can be compromised in extreme conditions.
- 14 They encounter problems when utility companies dig through pipes and cause blockages. In the event of a flood they can shift resources from one county to another if required. However, they sometimes cannot do anything if the river levels become too high because this stops the excess rain water flowing away as in Cubbington.
- 15 Severn Trent has conducted network-wide examinations to identify the stress points in the water supply. In Warwickshire there are no critical areas, which means although there may occasions when there may not be any clean water it would only be for a couple of hours and no longer.
- 16 Severn Trent and British Waterways provide the information above and work closely with the Emergency Planning Team. However they would find it helpful if they were consulted earlier by the Planning Department in the planning process. The panel consider it would be helpful if the two parties were to meet to develop protocols
- 17 The key messages from both British Waterways and Severn Trent for the panel to take forward are:
  - a) To work more with Emergency Planning
  - b) Severn Trent would be happy to be involved more with the community, but does have limited resources so will need time to respond
  - c) Severn Trent is making significant investment in Warwick District to alleviate flooding concerns
  - d) The Environment Agency would be happy to go out to the community and attend events to let people know about flood watch and what they can do in a flood situation

- e) Headline message would be to improve communication, utilise volunteers, consistency of approach, share best practice and the customer to know who to contact (Environment Agency - brooks, British Waterways – canals, Severn Trent – sewage)
- f) To assess the combined sewers in Warwickshire and consider whether there would be benefits in separating household and surface water drains, which can cause problems with raw sewage when there is surface water flooding.
- g) Provide information to empower people to help themselves

Eathorpe, Hunningham and Offchurch Parish Council and Royal Leamington Spa Town Council

Present: Cllr A Phillips, Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council  
 Cllr W Redford, Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council  
 Cllr A Wilkinson, Royal Leamington Spa Town Council

- 18 The parish councils are aware of the areas likely to be flooded and have a flood warning system in place involving the EPU. They coordinate what needs to be done such as providing sandbags or moving cars that could be affected. They have a limited stock of empty sandbags and usually have sand at hand in a suitable container within the village. Some of properties have been flooded in the past also have flood boards and caps to cover air bricks.
- 19 The parishes have two problems with the current arrangements:
  - a) The EPU will only respond when water is entering the premises. They would like them to respond earlier.
  - b) Flooding tends to attract visitors with large vehicles that like to prove they can travel through flood waters, which can cause damage to properties nearby. They would like to be able to close the road earlier and educate the public the consequences of driving through flood waters.
- 20 Eathorpe regularly experiences flooding and was affected in July 2007 plus January and February this year. Two to three properties are at risk of flood, but the village pull together to deal with these emergencies. The sandbags are not totally effective, but they can be used as weights. Furniture is moved upstairs where possible.
- 21 In Hunningham flooding occurs when water runs off the fields. They do have a programme of clearing drains, but do rely on self help to look after properties.
- 22 In 2007 Leamington was able to distribute 4 sandbags per threatened household in the 2007 event, but they could have done with more. The area is not usually affected, but on future occasions it was considered helpful if empty bags could be available at locations throughout the town. Even if there was no sand, earth could be used as an alternative.

- 23 A hardship fund was set up after the 1998 floods for families that experienced losses. It is not means tested and there have been 10 applications so far. In 2008 the problem was mainly flash floods, because they cannot be predicted it makes them difficult to deal with.
- 24 From the meeting with the representatives it was clear that the parish had experienced flooding in the past and they were prepared to deal with flood incidents, but in Leamington people were not sure where to get sandbags. It was considered it would be beneficial if there was meeting to discuss how residents/businesses could deal with an emergency with the right people so they can make improvements.
- 25 Written evidence was received from Kenilworth Town Council, Ashow, Burton Green & Stoneleigh Joint Parish Council and Lapworth Parish Council.
- 26 Kenilworth Town Council provided empty sandbags to residents and they filled these with sand sourced from various locations. In addition residents purchased sandbags from the local builders and plastic bags were also used. Contact was maintained with the County and District Emergency Planning Units.
- 27 Ashow, Burton Green & Stoneleigh Joint Parish Council raised concerns about the maintenance of ditches and rivers to ensure that water flows away more readily. They considered that the planning process should require more evidence of the drainage capacity in relation to proposed developments and their run off requirements. Finally the places that have experienced flooding in recent years should be reviewed to assess their catchment areas to increase their capacity or divert the flow.
- 28 Lapworth Parish council identified that blocked drains and culvert were the main causes for flooding in their area last year and suggest that these should be attended to when they have been reported.

#### Women's Royal Voluntary Service

Present: Jenny Wallace

- 29 In 2007 the WRVS were placed on standby at Shipston on Stour. They have contacts in the local area that can go out and assess the situation. In this particular incident local people were already dealing with the floods.
- 30 The WRVS would find it helpful if they received feedback from the Emergency Planning Unit. After being asked to be on standby they are often left not sure when it is safe to stand down. Also the information needed to be more specific and ensure they receive information about road closures. They have had the situation where they have sent someone out to only find the route was flooded.
- 31 The WRVS does not receive funding from Central Government, but have funding from Warwickshire Police Authority and a contact with WCC as and when they are required.

- 32 The key message from the WRVS representative would be to improve communication, ensure local communities can help themselves by providing emergency boxes in strategic locations with contact details and guidelines on how to deal with an emergency.

### **Summing up of the day**

- 33 The panel identified that there were still areas that required further consideration, but most of these are going to be reviewed following the Pitt Report by agencies involved in Emergency Planning. These were:
- a) No money is available from the Government for flood prevention, but it is given for flood damage, does this require a change in policy?
  - b) Should HIPS include flood risk
  - c) Rather than concentrating on sandbags would it be better to encourage householders where possible to move important items upstairs
  - d) Psychological effects of flooding
  - e) Who has the statutory responsibility for flooding
  - f) With the change of staff concerns were raised that local knowledge of drainage may have been lost
  - g) The impact of non coterminous boundaries – different for Severn Trent, Strategic Heath Authority and Warwickshire County Council

- 1 Cllr Gifford and Cllr Illingworth provided the panel with the following information and key points from the event they attended in Worcestershire:
  - a) The recovery phase has been added to the remit for the Pitt Review
  - b) Flooding last year was caused by very local weather conditions – flash flooding
  - c) More houses in the West Midlands were affected by surface water than be river flooding
  - d) Concerns raised about the secrecy around the critical infrastructure and the need to know. Security Services are concerned about this information getting into the wrong hands. However, although this would apply to the National Infrastructure considered not so important for the Local Critical Infrastructure.

## Appendix F

### Scrutiny Review Outline

<b>Review Topic</b> (Name of review)	Warwick District Flooding Scrutiny Group
<b>Working Group Members</b>	WDC – Alan Boad (Chair), Mike Britland, Bill Gifford, George Illingworth, Andrew Mobbs and Barbara Weed. WCC – Michael Doody, Eithne Goode and Tim Naylor
<b>Key Officer Contact</b>	Graham Leach and Roger Jewsbury
<b>Scrutiny Officer Support</b>	Alwin McGibbon
<b>Rationale</b> (key issues and/or reason for doing the review)	To review the services provided to householders (including vulnerable people), businesses, the impact to transportation routes following the severe weather of June and July of 2007, which led to the flooding of homes and businesses in Warwick District. To consider what can be done to lessen the impact of similar severe weather in the future and if services provided by key utilities e.g. electricity sub stations, water treatment will need additional measures to protect these in future.
<b>Purpose/Objective of Review</b> (specify exactly what the review should achieve)	To establish whether it is possible to lessen the impact of severe weather conditions in Warwick District. Taking into account: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The response to these events in June/July</li> <li>• Whether any improvements in response could be made</li> <li>• What measures could be taken to alleviate the damage caused by the flooding</li> <li>• Maintaining access to utilities and ensuring these are protected</li> <li>• To provide a joint response to the Pitt Report – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008</li> </ul>
<b>Scope of the Topic</b> (what is specifically to be included/excluded)	<p>The Review should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the factors that are likely to cause flooding in Warwick District.</li> <li>• How do emergency services and related agencies communicate with each other and the public?</li> <li>• How does the public find out where to go, whom to contact, where/how to obtain help?</li> <li>• What services do voluntary groups provide in an emergency?</li> <li>• How are voluntary groups involved when there is a flood?</li> <li>• What services are immediately available in key flooding locations?</li> <li>• What self- help measures are available that the public can use?</li> <li>• To consider how Councillors could provide support/help in this emergency situation?</li> <li>• How LAs identify and support vulnerable people during an emergency?</li> </ul> <p>The Review will not include; Work that is already being done – flood alleviation, planning decisions, the recovery work following an emergency via existing committees and forums.</p>

<b>Indicators of Success</b> (what factors would tell you what a good review should look like)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create public interest and being able to disseminate self-help information via stands in key locations (Leamington, Kenilworth and Warwick)</li> <li>• Householders, businesses and others being prepared for an emergency (e.g. possession of emergency kits)</li> <li>• Further strengthen the response in an emergency</li> <li>• Reduces public concern</li> <li>• Increases public confidence - taking measures to help themselves being more prepared</li> </ul>	
<b>Specify Evidence Sources</b> (Background Information documents to look at)		One review: City of York Council – Final Report, Flood Scrutiny Panel Executive Summary - The Pitt Report Briefing, WDC Civil Contingencies – 18 <sup>th</sup> October, 2007	
<b>Specify Witnesses/Experts</b> (Who to see and when)		To be split into category 1 and 2 responders, 2 meetings to be arranged - select committee style: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warwickshire Police</li> <li>• Warwickshire Fire Services</li> <li>• West Midlands Ambulance Service</li> <li>• Severn Trent</li> <li>• The Environment Agency</li> <li>• Highways Agency &amp; WCC Environment &amp; Economy Directorate</li> <li>• WCC - Emergency Planning (to include action taken to identify people at risk e.g. social care)</li> <li>• Customer Service Centre</li> <li>• WDC – Engineering, Environmental Health, Waste Management</li> <li>• Representatives from Voluntary Agencies/ Community Services</li> <li>• Representatives from those affected by flood</li> <li>• Town and Parish Councils</li> <li>• British Waterways</li> <li>• Rail Network?</li> </ul>	
<b>Specify Site Visits</b> (where and when)		Visit and briefing - Emergency Planning, 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2008 at WDC January 2008 visit to Emergency Planning Basement, WCC followed by a meeting with Category 1 responders (Select Committee Style)	
<b>Consultation with Stakeholders</b> (who should we consult?)		Those affected – householders, businesses and utilities Town and Parish Councils WCC & WDC Emergency Planning	
<b>Level of Publicity</b> (what level is appropriate and what method should be used)		As and when required	
<b>Barriers/dangers/risks</b> (identify any weaknesses or potential pitfalls)		Increase public expectation that flooding can be totally resolved. Go outside the agreed terms of reference. Review takes too long.	
<b>Projected Start Date</b>	20/11/07	<b>Draft Report Deadline</b>	March 2008
<b>Meeting Frequency</b>	Approx. Every 4 weeks	<b>Projected Completion Date</b>	April 2008
<b>Date to evaluate impact</b>		April 2009 or next civil emergency	
<b>Methods of tracking / Evaluating</b>		Implementation of recommendations from this review Public perception - being prepared and how the next civil emergency is managed.	