

- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION YES

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2nd April 2008

Report of the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer

Recommendation

That the Committee notes the report on the progress of the Local Resilience Forum and the review of resilience structures in Warwickshire and comments as appropriate.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 became law from April 1st 2005.
- 1.2 The Act aims to deliver a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century

2. Category 1 and 2 Responders

- 2.1 The Act places a very clear statutory duty to carry out a range of civil protection duties on what it terms Category 1 Responders. Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority are both Category 1 Responders. Other Category 1 Responders are District Councils, Police, Ambulance Service, Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts, the Health Protection Agency and the Environment Agency
- 2.2 There is also a group of Category 2 Responders who are required to support Category 1 responders in their duties. This group includes utilities, railway and airport operators, the HSE and the Strategic Health Authority.

3. Duties under the Act

- 3.1 All Category 1 Responders have duties placed on them which can be summarised as follows:
 - (i) Risk assessment
 - (ii) Emergency planning
 - (iii) Communicating with the public – to warn and inform them before, during and after any emergency
 - (iv) Information sharing with other local responders to enhance co-ordination

- (v) Co-operation with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
 - (vi) Business Continuity Management
- 3.2 There is an additional duty that solely falls on local authorities. This is to provide advice and guidance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

4. Warwickshire Local Resilience Forum

- 4.1 One key element of the Act was that it required the establishment of a 'Local Resilience Forum' (LRF) with the aim of ensuring co-ordination and co-operation between responders at the local level.
- 4.2 The Warwickshire LRF meets on a quarterly basis. The LRF is chaired by Jim Graham or in his absence William Brown and is well attended by senior officers/managers from all Category 1 Responders across the County as well as representation from the Regional Resilience Team at GOWM and the military.
- 4.3 Warwickshire LRF is well established and partners have commented on how efficiently it operates as a strategic policy making group overseeing progress on resilience issues across the County.
- 4.4 To ensure the Act is implemented in a coordinated manner, a number of sub groups have already been formed beneath the LRF comprising nominated officers from all Category1 Responders in the County. The groups are as follows:
- (i) Act Compliance Group (ACG). This group looks at the current state of emergency preparedness across Warwickshire and provides feedback to the LRF on areas requiring further work.
 - (ii) Risk Assessment Working Group (RAWG). This group deals with the risk assessment process that culminates in the production and publication of the Community Risk Register (CRR) for Warwickshire. The CRR is regularly reviewed and can be viewed on:

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/Web/corporate/pages.nsf/Links/4A84C7918A244A35802570A7005A9823>
 - (iii) Training and Exercising Sub Group – to look at multi agency training and awareness raising.
 - (iv) Communicating with the Public Sub Group – to look at ensuring the public have access to useful and timely information before, during and after emergencies. One example of this work is the County Council's Emergency Planning Unit web pages. These are referred to as an example of best practice by the National Steering Group on Warning and Informing.

- (v) Business Continuity Management Sub Group – to bring together BCM practitioners from partner agencies to share best practice.
 - (vi) Recovery Working Group – to manage the return to normality for communities and organisations following any major emergency such as the summer floods in 2007.
 - (vii) Critical Infrastructure Sub Group – to bring together category 2 responders such as utility companies.
 - (viii) Telecomms Sub Group – to ensure compatibility of communications equipment and procedures across Category 1 Responders in the County and agree relevant protocols.
- 4.4 There will also be a new Sub Group established in April 2008 to bring together local authorities, the Voluntary Sector and other partners to look at humanitarian assistance during and following emergencies.
- 4.5 All the above groups are chaired and administered by the Emergency Planning Unit. The groups will continue to meet on a regular basis and will feedback information on progress to the LRF via the ACG.

5. Key areas for development 2008/09

- 5.1 The priority areas for LRF development over the forthcoming year are as follows:
- (i) A review of the resilience structures in place in Warwickshire. The current structures have mainly been in place since the Act first became law in 2005. The LRF is coordinated by the Manager of the EPU and all of the sub groups are chaired, administered and coordinated by the EPU team. This situation, whilst effective, is not sustainable in the long term and a review is currently being carried out to recommend and explore other models of resilience in place across the Country. The future coordination and management of the LRF, and in particular the funding of this activity, will feature prominently as part of this review.
 - (ii) Ongoing review of the Warwickshire Pandemic Influenza plan. A draft of this plan had to be completed by 28th February 2008 and returned to the Cabinet Office. The LRF is currently awaiting feedback on the plan but has to have tested it by the end of December 2008.
 - (iii) Implementation of a strategic training package for senior managers and officers. This is ensure that those who may have to operate as part of a Strategic Coordinating Group or “Gold” group have been fully prepared for this role.
 - (iv) Clarification of the requirements for security clearance of senior officers and managers to ensure that all relevant information can be shared with them in all types of emergency situations.

- (v) Monitoring the implementation of a program of measures to enable the communities of Warwickshire to access information before, during and after emergencies. This includes a feasibility study into the establishment of a Warwickshire LRF website to act as a single portal for all information for both the public and partners during emergencies.
- (vi) Agreeing a multi agency protocol for the establishment and management of a Strategic Coordination Group

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The Local Resilience Forum and its related sub groups are currently operating in an effective and efficient manner but both work streams put considerable pressure on the Emergency Planning Unit. The review of resilience will need to be agreed by all partners and a series of reports will be taken to the LRF during the 2008/09 financial year with the aim of any new procedures being in place by April 2009.

Continued progress in all these areas will ensure that Warwickshire continues to be as prepared as possible and is able to respond in an effective and coordinated manner to any future emergency situations.

This committee will be updated on the progress of significant changes in the functions and operation of the LRF and it's sub groups as work progresses.

WILLIAM BROWN
Strategic Director of
Community Protection and
County Fire Officer

17th March 2008.