

# **Spelthorne Borough Council**

## **Community Sandbag Distribution Centre (CSDC) Operational Plan**



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<b>Owner</b>	Spelthorne Borough Council
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## 1. Introduction and Aims

This plan has been developed as a result of the ongoing reflection and learning which has taken place in light of the 2013/2014 flooding event throughout the Borough. Spelthorne Borough Council will no longer pallet drop pre-filled sandbags to residential areas during a major flooding event. This mass distribution will be replaced by the following means:

- Community Sandbag Centres will be set up in strategic locations across the Borough, where volunteers will be supplied with equipment and support to fill their own sandbags.
- Spelthorne Borough Council's Depot will fill sandbags that are deemed to be operationally useful.

The principal aims of this new approach are as follows:

- To enhance the levels of community resilience in Spelthorne, and to empower the local community to take responsibility for their own properties during a major flooding event.
- To allow Borough staff to engage in activities that are more operationally beneficial to the overall response to a major emergency.
- To minimise the number of members of the public presenting at the Council Depot, thereby increasing health and safety, as well as efficiency.
- To increase the cost effectiveness associated with sandbags, through minimising waste by avoiding unnecessary distribution and, to a reasonable extent, sandbag theft.

## 2. Community Sandbag Centres (CSCs)

Community Sandbag Centres (CSCs) are locations throughout the Borough that are used to produce and distribute sandbags. Spelthorne Borough Council and volunteers from the community work collaboratively, with the Council providing the location, necessary equipment and support for the volunteers, who will assist the public in filling sandbags on site. A number of sites have been pre-defined (see section 2.2), but the decision on where to locate a CSDC will ultimately depend on the flooding context.

### 2.1 Relationship to Spelthorne Borough Council

Spelthorne Borough Council will facilitate access to sand and sandbags for distribution to the general public, however the CSDCs will be manned and run by volunteering members of the public. Support from the Council for the volunteers will include equipment, communications, refreshments and overnight storage facilities, depending on scale of flood.

### 2.2 Locations

Five sites have been pre-identified for use as CSDCs in Spelthorne.

<b>Sunbury on Thames</b>	Sunbury Park Carpark, Green Street (TW16 6RA)
<b>Laleham</b>	Abbey Drive Carpark (TW181SR)
<b>Shepperton</b>	Littleton Lane Recreation Ground (TW17 0JS)
<b>Ashford</b>	Fordbridge Park Carpark (TW15 3SJ)
<b>Stanwell</b>	Long Lane Recreation Ground (TW19 7ER)

Table 1: Locations of CSDCs

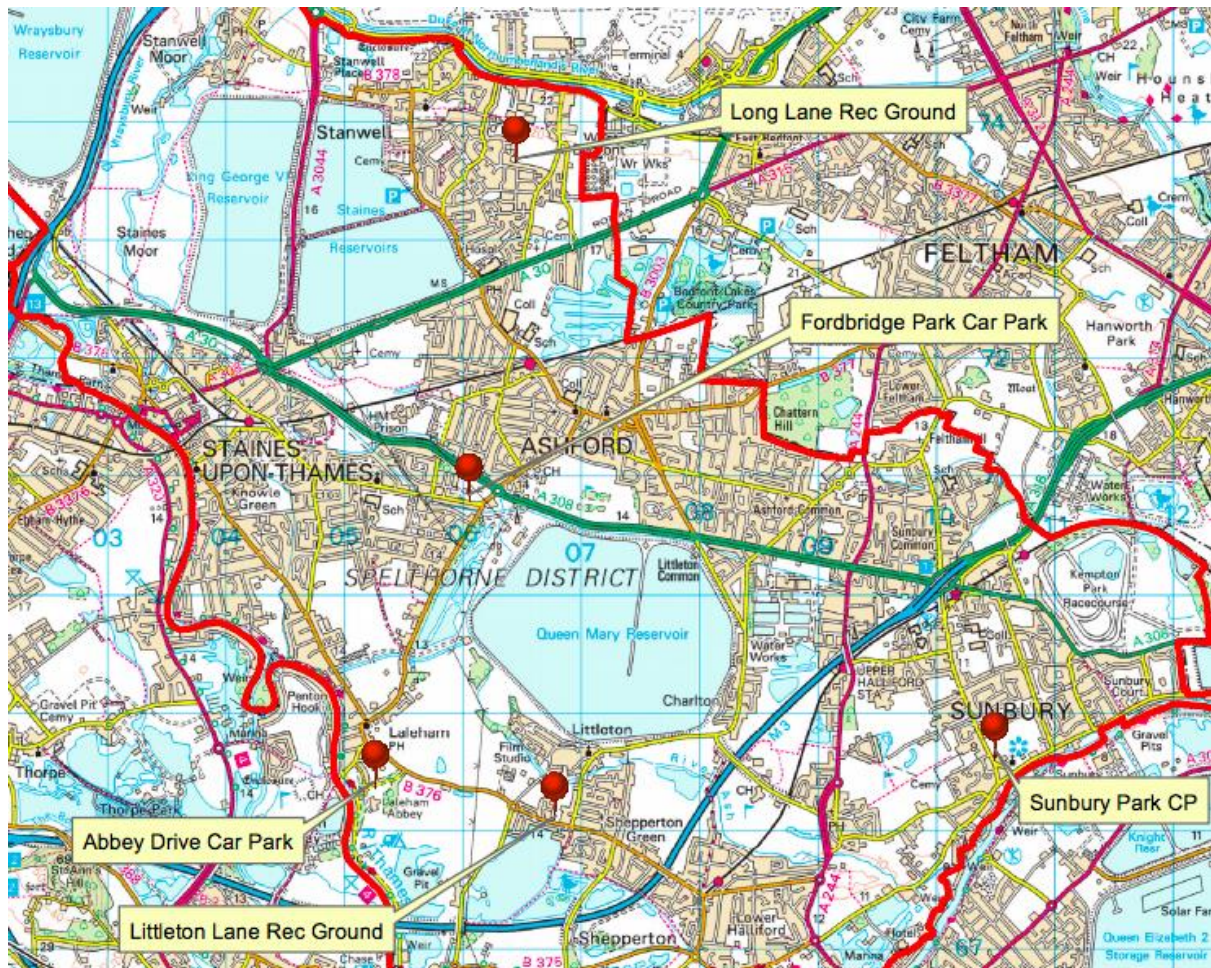


Figure 1: Map of potential CSDCs

These sites have been selected over others based on a number of factors, including (but not limited to);

- Flood Zone and Risk
- Proximity to potential affected communities
- Relative level of disruption to the public
- Facilities

Specifications will be provided for each CSDC in the coming sections (sections 3, 4 and 5). The number of CSDCs open at any one time will depend on the nature and severity of a major flooding event, and its associated effects. This decision will be made by the Incident Management Team in consultation with SBC Neighbourhood Services.



## **2.3 Staffing/ Volunteers**

The CSDCs will be community managed and led, with support from the Council. SBC will provide a limited number of staff who will assist in opening and setting up the CSDCs. Once a CSDC becomes fully operational, responsibility will be handed over to a nominated public volunteer.

During a major incident, 'Spontaneous Volunteers' (members of the public who come forward to support the response but are not affiliated with any specific community resilience group or voluntary sector organisation) may be coordinated by Team Rubicon (voluntary assistance), if the existing memorandum of understanding has been activated by Surrey County Council. This depends on Team Rubicon's availability. The local CVS, Voluntary Support North Surrey can also support in signposting volunteers to the CSDCs.

The network of community resilience groups which has been put in place will also be utilised to assist with staffing (be it directly or by referring people to the CSDCs) and local knowledge.

## **2.4 Initiation and Setting Up**

A decision to set up a CSDC will be made by the IMT in consultation with Neighbourhood Services. Identifying an exact trigger point is difficult, as this would not take into account all the variables that may occur which in turn could lead to a lack of resources.

Information will be gathered via logging sandbag requests from the public, by Customer Services (in hours) and Safer Runnymede (out of hours) to determine when demand outgrows the requests available (see section 1.1 and Appendices A and B). Information will also be gathered from community resilience group leads and partner agencies.

SBC operational staff will initiate the set-up of a CSDC, before handing over to volunteers, with sufficient staff to fulfill the following actions:

- ✓ Deliver and place filling equipment (as detailed in sections 3, 4 and 5)
- ✓ Deliver and put up signage
- ✓ Ensure provisions for locking away the equipment at night are in place
- ✓ Deliver high visibility vests for volunteers
- ✓ Deliver sand and make an assessment of predicted levels of requirement
- ✓ Order more sand if necessary

## **2.5 Health, Safety and Insurance**



The health and safety of Spelthorne staff, community volunteers and the general public is a key priority.

#### **General Public:**

- Children under the age of 16 who present at the CSDCs are required to stay in the vehicle at all times, and under no circumstances will they be permitted to assist in any activity relating to filling or moving sandbags.



**Image 1: Example Signage provided by SBC**

#### **Volunteers:**

- Each volunteer will be given a health and safety briefing by the lead volunteer upon presenting at the centre and prior to engaging in any work (See Appendix C). Formal training prior to an event is not necessary.
- Volunteers are to be rotated among different tasks throughout their shift, to avoid fatigue and/or injury.
- Adequate break-times and refreshments must be provided for. These will be facilitated by the lead volunteer and SBC respectively.

#### **First Aid:**

It is crucial that there is one person who is trained in First Aid at each CDSC at all times, and that a first aid kit is provided. There are several ways in which this can be achieved:

- Voluntary Organisations have many first aid trained volunteers (such as the British Red Cross).
- Community Resilience groups can assist in finding local community members with such qualifications.
- If deployed during a major incident, Team Rubicon will be able to assist in identifying volunteers with relevant skills.
- Voluntary Support North Surrey (VSNS) can be made aware of the requirement for First Aid skills.

**Insurance:**

- Volunteers are covered under SBC's Public Liability Policy and therefore if they are responsible for causing damage or injury in the activity of making up sandbags, any claim that arises will be dealt with under SBC's Public Liability Policy. Personal injury is not covered under the policy.

## **2.6 Operational Communications**

In order to ensure that the CSDCs run efficiently, a nominated volunteer will be in direct contact with Spelthorne Borough Council's Neighbourhood Services, in order to arrange for the delivery of more sand and equipment, as required. Provided that the communications network has not been compromised, the nominated volunteer on site will use a provided phone to enable them to contact SBC Neighbourhood Services, and will in turn be provided with a contact number for SBC. The Depot will then pass the information that is relevant onto the BECC. It may be the case that the communications network is down. If this is the case, radios can be supplied by the Council and utilised.

## **2.7 Public communications**

Public facing information about the CSDCs will be disseminated primarily through the Council's website and Customer Services, who will be provided with a full brief on the nature of the CSDC(s) that are currently active. Community Resilience groups will also be made aware, as well as VSNS. This information will be passed directly on via the Resilience Advisors.

See appendix D for messaging.

## **2.8 Opening hours**

The exact opening hours of the CSDCs will depend on the time of year an incident occurs at, as well as other factors such as number of volunteers who can safely continue to work under flood lights to be organized by SBC, whilst adhering to health and safety guidance. The guideline for opening times will be 07.00- 19.00. SBC retain the right, however, to open or close the CSDCs at whatever time is deemed appropriate. This decision will be made by the IMT and Neighborhood Services.

## **2.9 Closing down**

A decision to shut down the CSDC(s) will be made by the Incident Management Team (IMT), in direct consultation with Neighbourhood Services based on the contextual factors at the time. Information on forecasts, potential future warnings etc. will be gathered from colleagues in the Environment Agency by the BECC to inform any situation reports. SBC Neighbourhood Services will take full control of shutting down a CSDC in order to ensure that resources are not damaged or stolen, however volunteers may assist under supervision. SBC will be responsible for removing sand and any leftover items or litter.

## **3. Equipment**

The exact quantity of specific equipment will be decided upon by Neighbourhood Services at the outset of an incident, and this information will be communicated to Depot staff and the IMT/ Borough Emergency Coordination Centre (BECC). This information will depend on several factors, such as the scale of the area effected by flooding and how many CSDCs are going to be operational. The possibility of additional CSDCs opening later in an incident should be kept in mind when allocating resources.

The planning assumption is that there will be three sandhoppers per CSDC, assuming all are open concurrently, in order to be prepared for the reasonable worst case scenario.

Spelthorne Borough Council Depot will hold the following equipment to stock the CSDCs: (subject to approval of MAT report)

Equipment	Notes
<b>Sandhoppers (Fifteen)</b>	To be collected each night and returned to the Depot by SBC staff.
<b>Fencing &amp; padlocks</b>	Remaining sand and equipment to be secured each evening where practical and possible.
<b>Zip Ties (Approx. 10,000)</b>	Easily sourced if required. To be brought to CSDCs to tie sandbags and place signage.
<b>High Visibility Vests  50</b>	50 specific vests, with 'volunteer' written on the back in the Depot will be distributed. It is preferable the distinguishable vests are worn by volunteers, but if needs be they can be generic.
<b>First Aid Kits (Three per site)</b>	It is critical that there is a first aid kit at each centre, as well as somebody qualified in first aid <b>at all times</b> during opening hours.
<b>Shovels</b>	Number distributed will depend on number of volunteers that are present.
<b>Gloves</b>	As required
<b>Traffic cones</b>	As required
<b>Signage</b>	Signs to be placed at each CSDC (see image 1). These contain important health and safety information for the public. The remaining signage will be for general instructions, such as driving directions etc.
<b>Empty sandbags and sand</b>	The community volunteers will remain in

	contact with the allocated SBC contact in order to ensure stocks of sand and bags are replenished when possible.
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#### 4. Council Depot

Spelthorne Borough Council Depot will continue to fill sandbags for strategic purposes, primarily for the protection of infrastructure within the Borough. Members of the public will not be permitted to enter the Depot, in the interests of Health and Safety, and will instead be instructed to obtain sandbags from the community distribution centres. This health and safety element is a key reason for the CSDCs, and therefore should be strictly enforced.

#### 5. 2020 COVID 19

All sites will need to be individually risk assessed to ensure COVID secure arrangements can be put in place to allow sites to operate.

All volunteers and SBC will need to:-

- Wear face coverings
- Have gloves
- Be provided with wipes and hand sanitizer
- To ensure use same piece of equipment used for their shift and wipe down at beginning and end of shift.
- To maintain social distancing

## **5. Sunbury on Thames**

### **5.1 Location**

Sunbury Park Carpark, Green Street  
TW16 6RA

### **5.2 Considerations**

- This carpark is owned by Spelthorne Borough Council.
- It is in the centre of Sunbury on Thames, and therefore consideration should be given to efficient traffic management.

### **5.3 Site layout**

Please see the following page for an indicative site layout schematic. It details of a suggested layout, which may need to be altered depending on the circumstances of an event. This decision will be made by Neighbourhood Services.

Please remember to display the relevant health and safety and traffic signage in prominent location.



Indicative layout of Sunbury Park CSDC



## **6. Laleham**

### **6.1 Location**

Abbey Drive Parking Areas  
TW18 1SR

### **6.2 Considerations**

- This carpark is owned by Spelthorne Borough Council.

### **6.3 Site layout**

Please see the following page for an indicative site layout schematic. It details of a suggested layout, which may need to be altered depending on the circumstances of an event. This decision will be made by Neighbourhood Services.

Please remember to hang the relevant health and safety and traffic signage in prominent location.



## **7. Shepperton**

### **7.1 Location**

Littleton Lane Recreation Ground  
(TW17 0JS)

### **7.2 Considerations**

- This carpark is owned by Spelthorne Borough Council but in an emergency will need to ensure have access as the pavilion is leased out. .

### **7.3 Site layout**

Please see the following page for an indicative site layout schematic. It details of a suggested layout, which may need to be altered depending on the circumstances of an event. This decision will be made by Neighbourhood Services.

Please remember to hang the relevant health and safety and traffic signage in prominent location.



## **8. Ashford**

### **8.1 Location**

Fordbridge Park Carpark  
(TW15 3SJ)

### **8.2 Considerations**

- This carpark is owned by Spelthorne Borough Council.

### **8.3 Site layout**

Please see the following page for an indicative site layout schematic. It details of a suggested layout, which may need to be altered depending on the circumstances of an event. This decision will be made by Neighbourhood Services.

Please remember to hang the relevant health and safety and traffic signage in prominent location



## **9. Stanwell**

### **9.1 Location**

Long Lane Recreation Ground  
(TW19 7ER)

### **9.2 Considerations**

- This carpark is owned by Spelthorne Borough Council.

### **9.3 Site layout**

Please see the following page for an indicative site layout schematic. It details of a suggested layout, which may need to be altered depending on the circumstances of an event. This decision will be made by Neighbourhood Services.

Please remember to hang the relevant health and safety and traffic signage in prominent location





## APPENDIX A: Summary of Flooding Levels

For the purpose of this plan, the levels of flooding are as follows:

<b>LEVEL 1:</b>  Initial calls, flooding is very localised (1-3 roads close to rivers or affected by groundwater), not sufficient to open a Community Sandbag Distribution Centre.
<b>LEVEL 2:</b>  Flood warning(s) issued, incident has escalated to the stage of requiring the setting up of a Community Sandbag Distribution Centre.
<b>LEVEL 3:</b>  Multiple flood warnings issued, and possibly multiple Community Sandbag Distribution Centres opened.



## Appendix B: Health and Safety Briefing

### Filling, Moving and Placing Sandbags

#### During Flooding

Manually filling, moving and placing sandbags is physically demanding work. It involves repeatedly lifting and carrying heavy loads, and may involve working in awkward positions. This work may lead to back and other injuries.

#### General Safety and Health Advice

- Use gloves to protect hands from sandbags and contaminants in sand and floodwater.
  - Avoid touching your eyes and mouth.
  - Wash your hands and face before eating or drinking.
- Wear work boots
- Use waterproof clothing and footwear if working in rain.
- Use protective clothing if exposed to floodwater.
- Do not enter floodwater.

#### General Lifting Advice

- Do not overfill sandbags - fill bag to 2/3 full.
- Keep load in front of and close to your body.
- Keep the lift between knee and waist height.
- Do not reach out, bend over, or twist when lifting.
- Lift with your legs muscles, not your back.
- Ensure hands are firmly gripping the bags

#### Filling Sandbags Safely

##### Manual Filling

- Using three-person crews works best:
  - *Bagger* - holds open and closes bags.
  - *Shoveler* - shovels sand into sandbags.
  - *Mover* - carries and places sandbags.
- Alternate positions every 20 to 30 minutes.
- Take frequent short rest breaks.

##### Bagging Safety

- Fold the bag opening outward and form collar to grip and keep the bag open more easily.
- Use a bag holder or rest the bag on the ground so that the opening is between knee and knuckle height.
- Fold neck and tie the bag opening closed.

### **Shoveling Safety**

- Bend the knees, not the back, to scoop sand.

### **Moving and Placing Sandbags Safely**

#### **Safety Advice for Transporters (Movers)**

- Use General Lifting Advice to move and place bags.
- Carry bag in front of and close to your body.
- Carry bag at waist height using a cradle hold.
- Drag the bag vertically, holding the folded/ closed end.
- Use a brigade line to pass bags to staging areas that are further away. Stagger the line and face each other to avoid twisting and turning.
- Do not throw sandbags - it stresses the back and shoulders.
- Straddle drop point with the bag between your ankles as you place it.

**NO**



**2 people with one shovel can only bag c90 bags an hour.**

**YES**



**2 people 2 Sandhoppers or similar devices can bag c 480 bags an hour.**

## Appendix C: Public Messaging

Base Message for council website and social media	Notes
<p><b>Notice to Residents of (note flooded area):</b></p> <p>Spelthorne Borough Council have opened a Community Sandbag Distribution Centre (CSDC) at (insert locations). We have provided sand, bags and filling equipment at these locations. If you feel that you require sandbags, please arrange to visit these centres <b>to fill and transport your own sandbags</b>. Remember to look in on your vulnerable neighbours to see if they require assistance at this time.</p> <p>Please remember that sandbags are not useful in most situations, especially in the cases of groundwater flooding. We encourage residents to use their time to arrange to evacuate. If you have no support network to call upon to collect sandbags for you (family, friends, community groups), you are classed as highly vulnerable and should not be staying in your home during flooding as it is dangerous. Vulnerable residents are encouraged to make themselves known to authorities so that they can be safely evacuated and receive any welfare support required.</p> <p>If you still feel that you would like sandbags, please note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Centres will be open from (times-Neighbourhood Services to advise in situ). After this time, equipment will be securely stored.</li> <li>- There is a strict limit of 10 sandbags per vehicle per visit.</li> <li>- Under 16s must remain in the vehicle at all times, and under no circumstances should be filling or assisting to fill sandbags.</li> <li>- Persons are advised that they are using this facility at their own risk. SBC accept no liability for injury or vehicular damage.</li> <li>- Please allow plenty of time to carry out your journey to the CSDC. Traffic is likely to be heavy in the area.</li> <li>- Verbal or physical abuse towards volunteers, agency staff or other members of the public</li> </ul>	<p>Communications Team to monitor public comments on social media and responses to the council's website.</p>

will NOT be tolerated and you will be asked to leave the centre with immediate effect.

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**Volunteers:**

**Volunteers are urgently required to assist at the centre(s).**

In particular, we need people who are in good health and able to carry out physically demanding work.

Volunteers with first aid skills are especially welcome.

Volunteers should report to: (This will depend on the situation; Applied Resilience will advise)

**1) Volunteer Support North Surrey** – Staines. Staines Library (First Floor), Friends Walk, Staines TW18 4PG Tel: 01784 465536

**2) Team Rubicon** (location will be decided at the time of an incident).

Please do not go to the CSDCs until you have spoken to our volunteer coordinators, as you will need to be rostered and briefed before you begin.

**Images:**

- 1) Use map of relevant location(s)
- 2) Image below



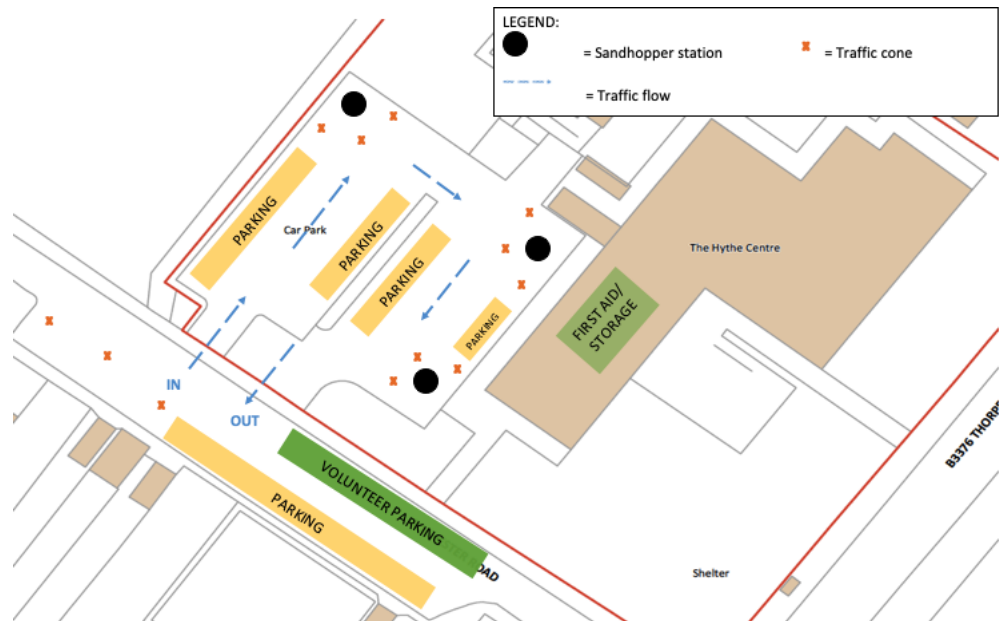
## **SANDBAG DISTRIBUTION CENTRE**

**10 sandbags per vehicle maximum**

Persons and vehicles using this facility do so at their own risk.

Verbal or physical aggression towards volunteers, staff or residents will **NOT** be tolerated.

**Sample map of indicative layout (this is the Hythe Centre in Runnymede)**



## Appendix D: Distribution List

Distribution		
Name	Title	Copies
Sandy Muirhead		1
Jackie Taylor		1
Cathy Munro		1
Mark Rachwal		1
Stuart Mann		1
Tracey Wilmott-French		1
Roy Tilbury		1
Martyn Forward		1
Applied Resilience		1

## **Appendix E SBC COVID-19 considerations for a sandbag distribution centre**

### **Social distance**

- Ensure that the centre is operated as a strict, one-way, drive through system.
- Residents must drive to the collection point, have the pre-filled sandbag loaded into their vehicle by the volunteers with minimal contact.
- Residents may only leave their vehicles to provide access to a boot/ back seat for loading and must wear a face covering if leaving their vehicle.
- Where the site allows, having multiple lanes to multiple collections points will limit the period of time residents spend at the centre.
- Volunteers and residents must not congregate in the centre and Council staff should stagger break times as far as possible to limit congregation in the welfare area.

### **Volunteers/ operatives**

- Volunteers and staff should work in pairs within strict bubbles.
- The centre lead (Council staff) must take a register of volunteers' names and contact numbers in case details are required for Test and Trace.
- Staff overseeing the centre must ensure that no Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, self-isolating or symptomatic volunteers are accepted to support the centre. The same restrictions apply to staff. The centre lead must ask all staff and volunteers to disclose any health concerns falling in the categories above.
- If any volunteers or staff develop symptoms, they are required to inform the site supervisor (this may be by telephone if safer and faster) leave the site, self-isolate and get a test.

### **Equipment/ sanitation**

- Where possible, do not share shovels and other equipment during shifts. Allocate each volunteer their equipment for the shift and Council staff should ensure that equipment is either cleaned thoroughly at the end of a shift or left in a designated area for cleaning prior to centre closure.
- Carry out an enhanced clean at the end of the shift, particularly of the welfare facilities – ensure that an early request is made for enhanced cleaning via the emergency planning lead when a centre is set up.

### **PPE**

- Sanitiser, gloves and masks must be made available for all volunteers and staff at the centres. These should be stored in the welfare centre once a centre is activated and will provide sufficient coverage for at least one change of gloves and mask per shift.

### **Key internal contacts**

- Operational questions – Jackie Taylor or Cathy Munro
- Tactical/ emergency planning – Sandy Muirhead
- Health & Safety – Stuart Mann
- Communications with community groups – Tracy Reynolds