

# Environment and Sustainability Committee



18<sup>th</sup> January 2022

<b>Title</b>	Adverse Weather Plan and Community Sandbag Distribution Centre Operational Plan Sign Off
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note
<b>Report Author</b>	Ed Walker, Senior Resilience Advisor Sandy Muirhead, Group Head Commissioning and Transformation
<b>Ward(s) Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Exempt</b>	No
<b>Exemption Reason</b>	N/A
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	This item is not in the current list of Corporate Priorities
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Environment and Sustainability Committee is asked to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Note the report and associated Adverse Weather Plan and Community Sandbag Distribution Policy.</li></ul>
<b>Reason for Recommendations</b>	To ensure the Council has up to date plans to respond to adverse weather with clarity on roles and responsibilities.

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 Adverse Weather poses a significant risk in the Borough of Spelthorne. These risks span snow and ice, storms and gales, flooding, heatwaves, and drought.
- 1.2 Therefore, having plans in place to document Spelthorne's arrangements when responding to adverse weather are extremely important to assist in fulfilling Spelthorne's responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.
- 1.3 The Adverse Weather Plan and Community Sandbag Distribution Centre Plan have been reviewed and updated as part of their annual review cycle.

## 2. Options analysis and proposal

- 2.1 The Adverse Weather Plan review has incorporated a range of comments from key plan stakeholders. A comprehensive list of all the comments and how they have been incorporated can be found in the consultation tracking document. Some of the key updates are as follows:
  - (a) Further information has been added to detail the roles of key operational staff
  - (b) The plan has been updated to reflect the improved ability of staff to be able to work from home, as well as the agile working arrangements.

- (c) Clarity has been provided on the logging of sandbag requests.
  - (d) Several parts of the plan have been updated to reflect the new CSDC arrangements.
  - (e) A distinction between in hour and out of hour considerations has been made.
  - (f) The use of MS Teams chat has been incorporated as a means of notifying all staff of adverse weather warnings and arrangements.
- 2.2 The CSDC Plan was also reviewed. The main changes/updates made were as follows:
- (a) The incorporation of the CSDC Council Lead role, in which 5 members of staff have been trained up to manage CSDCs should we set them up during a major flooding incident.
  - (b) A note on the need for early engagement with voluntary organisations when a CSDC may be set up
  - (c) The trigger levels for setting up a CSDC have been adjusted (see 2.3)
  - (d) The vulnerable people triage guidance for customer services has been updated. This will be finalised with agreement on who customer services should send sandbag requests to initially (see 2.4).
- 2.3 With regards to the trigger levels for setting up a CDSC, this was previously the issuing of a warning. However, since it is resource intensive to set up a CSDC, this threshold is not realistic and would likely cause warning fatigue amongst volunteers should they be requested and then not required. The threshold has therefore been lowered to when there are multiple flood warnings issued. Since the Thames rises slowly, we should still have sufficient time to set up a CSDC, although it does pose a risk that a CSDC could come after properties closest the river have already flooded.
- 2.4 In relation to minor flooding, requests regarding the deployment of sandbags will be assessed and distributed as per the Council's sandbag policy. The policy states that sandbags may be delivered to locations which are deemed to be strategic points protecting key infrastructure or have the greatest positive net effect on reducing flood risk to multiple properties. Such assessments will be made by either Group Head Commissioning and Transformation or Group/Deputy Group Head of Neighbourhood Services, or both in consultation.
- 3. Financial implications**
- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications of the reviewed CSDC and Adverse Weather plans being signed off. The Sandbag Policy has already been approved by Cabinet and there are no changes to the CSDC plan which would have any additional financial implications.
- 4. Other considerations**
- 4.1 There are no other considerations for this report.
- 5. Equality and Diversity**
- 5.1 There are no implications of the plan on equality and diversity.

## **6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

- 6.1 Climate change is increasing the likelihood and severity of adverse weather, hence reinforcing the importance of having effective plans to respond to adverse weather incidents.

## **7. Timetable for implementation**

- 7.1 All arrangements outlined in the plan are ready to activate, effective immediately.

### **Background papers:**

1. Adverse Weather Plan v2.
2. CSDC Plan v4.2