

## Appendix A - SEVERE WEATHER SCRUTINY

### DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

Item (a)	Recommendation (b)	Justification (c)
	<b>Communication, information, advice and guidance</b>	
01	<p>The Head of Strategic Support should develop and implement a flood communication strategy to ensure that the right information is delivered to the right people at the right time. It should include elements to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of information to residents and businesses on               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Their roles in protecting their own premises before flooding occurs and examples of permanent and temporary measures that the public can take to protect their property</li> <li>○ The roles and responsibilities of flood risk agencies and the help and advice they can expect from agencies during incidents</li> <li>○ The causes of flooding and level of flood risk</li> <li>○ The responsibilities of riparian owners</li> <li>○ Flood incident health and safety</li> <li>○ The Council’s culvert policy</li> <li>○ The limitations of sandbags as a flood defence measure)</li> <li>○ Health and safety risks associated with surface water, river and sewer flooding.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The communications channels (e.g. emails, face to face, websites, ‘flood bus’, text, social and broadcast media etc) to be used during flooding incidents and how they might be exploited to best effect</li> <li>• The triggers and activation processes for the establishment of communications cells within the Emergency Operations Centre.</li> </ul>	<p>As is common with most emergency incidents, dissatisfaction with communication and transfer of information was the mostly frequently raised aspect of the response.</p> <p>The development of a communications strategy should increase the awareness of the importance of proper, adequate and timely communication with all agencies.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How best to work with other agencies to develop triggers and activation processes for the establishment of communications cells within the multi-agency Tactical Co-ordination Centre</li> <li>• The joining-up of agencies' telephony and internet channels to provide a single point of contact for residents that gives the information and they need, regardless of provider. The joining-up of agencies' telephony and internet channels to provide a single point of contact for residents that gives the information and they need, regardless of provider.</li> </ul>	
02	The Civil Contingencies Manager should seek advice from the DCLG on the insurance implications for car owners breaking road closures (damage to vehicle, recovery from vehicle, recovery of vehicle, damage to households). When obtained, this information should be communicated to residents.	There have been a number of avoidable incidents caused by vehicles being driven through road closures. The loss of insurance cover for this type of incident could provide an incentive to drivers that will benefit the agencies responding to emergency incidents.
03	The Environment Agency should take steps to increase the number of West Berkshire residents signed up to its flood alert system.	The numbers of survey respondents advising that they have signed up to the EA's alert system has dropped. There is a benefit to having more subscribers to this service.
04	The Environment Agency, working with the Council's Civil Contingencies Manager, should develop and deliver a package of training (including through the use of videos) for all agencies and for the public on how, when and where to build effective sandbag defences.	Sandbag filling and barrier building is an identified training gap.  Videos for the public may provide education on the utility of sandbags and therefore reduce expectations.
05	The Civil Contingencies Manager should specify, select, procure and deliver a management system for the Council's Emergency Operations Centre that allows for effective and efficient logging, tracking and dissemination of information relating to emergency incidents.	The current system of incident tracking relies on the use of a spreadsheet. When dealing with large numbers of incidents the system is unwieldy and creates a risk of necessary and appropriate responses not being provided.

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06	The Executive Member for Emergency Planning should ask the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to consider the establishment of a single point of contact for the public when reporting all types of flooding (like those services provided by 101 or 111) from where calls can then be directed to the appropriate agency.	Residents have no clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each of the agencies involved in providing responses to flooding and calls are consequently frequently mis-directed. A system such as that proposed would eliminate the requirement for residents to have any prior knowledge when reporting flooding.
07	The Head of Highways and Transport should explore the opportunities for the use of appropriate technologies, such as mobile phone applications or satellite navigation systems, for the dissemination of real-time road closure alerts. A report on the available options should be returned to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission by June 2015.	Prior knowledge of road closures should allow motorists to select alternative routes, thereby assisting traffic movement and reducing the risk of their requiring assistance or causing avoidable damage through, for example, the creation of bow waves.
08	The Civil Contingencies Manager should ensure that communities are regularly updated on the progress of ongoing flood prevention and alleviation work being undertaken by all agencies in their areas.	Communities do not believe that they are being kept informed of the action being taken in their areas. This builds frustration and an apprehension for future incidents.
<b>Resources and logistics</b>		
09	<p>The Head of Highways and Transport should establish a register of recently retired or other local highways engineers willing to work with and for the Council during extended flood events. Assessment of their suitability to be included, or remain, on the register should be carried out.</p> <p>The Civil Contingencies Manager should closely monitor the effectiveness of the scheme and if, appropriate, consider its extension to other emergency incident competencies.</p>	The capacity of the Highways engineers was severely tested last winter. This action may assist in providing resilience.
10	Parish Councils in known flood-risk areas should purchase pumps and other emergency flood alleviation equipment for use in their own communities. Progress should be measured and monitored.	The ability of communities to help themselves will greatly assist agencies with response responsibilities over wider geographical areas. It

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		will also provide assurance to local communities that resources will be available for their own immediate concerns.
11	Through the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, the Civil Contingencies Manager should seek the establishment of a Strategic Resilience Resource Store at an appropriate location or locations to hold essential flood alleviation equipment, including personal protective equipment. This should be supported by plans for its ongoing maintenance and resourcing, as well as activation, staffing and de-activation during and after incidents.	Not all the necessary equipment has been available to agencies when or where they have needed it. Pre-placement of essential equipment will allow for a more rapid response.
12	The Civil Contingencies Manager should establish and maintain a register of local providers able to provide assets that might be mobilised in the event of an emergency. The required items might include large goods and 4 x 4 vehicles (including those with snorkels), pumps and personal protective equipment.	Organisations outside of statutory responders have access to resources that may at times be essential but not available to the responding agencies. Prior knowledge of what is available and where it is will allow for a more rapid response.
13	The Head of Highways and Transport should create an adequate stock of 'road closure', 'flood' and 'foul water' signs for deployment during flood incidents.	Insufficient signs were available to be deployed to every location at which they were needed.
<b>Planning and organisation</b>		
14	The Civil Contingencies Manager should revise the West Berkshire Vulnerable People Plan to incorporate a process for sharing and collation of information from and between agencies.	Lists of vulnerable people are held by a number of agencies, none of which provide a match with any other. Access to all data will ensure that the welfare of all known vulnerable people can be maintained.
15	Through the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, the Civil Contingencies Manager should seek the provision of the training necessary to ensure that key Category 1 decision-makers have the confidence to declare a 'major incident' or to request mutual aid when and if necessary.	Escalation of incidents allows for the provision of help and support when it is needed. Reluctance to do so can provide for limited responses and stretched resources.

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16	Through the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, the Civil Contingencies Manager should reinforce that the necessity to activate Business Continuity Plans when dealing with major incidents, particularly when they are of a prolonged duration, is fully understood by senior managers within Category 1 organisations. This should include the requirement to provide representation to Tactical Co-ordination Groups.	Business Continuity Plans allow organisations to balance their response to incidents with their 'business as usual' activities in ways that are both planned and structured. This is especially important for the allocation of manpower to deal incidents.
17	The Civil Contingencies Manager should work with all agencies to ensure that their roles in recovery, as well as response, are fully understood and delivered against.	Some responders were left with a disproportionate burden in dismantling, recovering and striking down the structures, equipment and organisations put in place to deal with incidents.
18	The Civil Contingencies Manager should obtain clarification from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the responsibility for the provision of portaloos during events that involve sewage water flooding.	Uncertainty exists as to the responsibility for the provision of portaloos.
19	The Head of Education should work to achieve 100% adoption of Major Incident Plans within schools.	Not all schools have Major Incident Plans in place. Pre-planning will allow for a more rapid response to incidents.
20	The Civil Contingencies Manager should develop and appropriately resource a plan for the activation of a Tactical Co-ordination Group in the Council offices.	The location of the Tactical Co-ordination Group in the Council offices was very successful. Pre-planning for this eventuality, should it be either necessary or desirable, will allow for a more rapid activation in future.
21	The Head of Highways and Transport, working with the Civil Contingencies Manager, should develop and maintain a local critical infrastructure map.	There is no single, definitive map of key infrastructure locations. An authoritative map will allow vulnerable locations to be identified and protected.
22	The Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service should develop and deliver a multi-agency water and flood safety training programme.	There is limited knowledge of flood safety amongst other agencies and training will reduce

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		the risk to their staff.
23	<p>The Head of Highways and Transport should develop the local flood plan to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflect risk and identify where strategic flood protection and response assets might be located.</li> <li>• Identify private land on to which flood water might be diverted to protect homes or businesses from damage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will aid planning and the setting of priorities for future work.</li> <li>• There is currently no definitive list and the creation of such will allow for a more rapid response in future.</li> </ul>
24	The Civil Contingencies Manager should conduct annually an audit of flooding readiness prior to the onset of winter.	The conduct of a readiness audit will inform decision making, identify gaps in readiness and should provide public reassurance.
25	The Environment Agency should work with land owners and other agencies to develop a plan for the management of locks and weirs in the event of flooding incidents.	No plans are currently in place and the utility of locks and weirs to mitigate fluvial flooding was not exploited.
26	The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum should consider the inclusion of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) as participants in the Tactical Co-ordination Group when necessary.	RSLs, particularly Sovereign, made a valuable contribution to the response to the severe weather and their resources should be appropriately directed.
27	The Civil Contingencies Manager should consider the inclusion of Registered Social Landlords as participants in the Emergency Operations Centre when necessary.	RSLs, particularly Sovereign, made a valuable contribution to the response to the severe weather and their resources should be appropriately directed.
28	The Head of Strategic Support should incorporate the consideration of emergency planning into the parish planning process, particularly for those communities whose areas are likely to benefit from the establishment of a local flood forum.	Local flood forums are not established in all locations that have known flood risks. The parish planning process provides a mechanism for the establishment of these bodies.
29	The Environment Agency should review its dredging policy to ensure that it is fit for all purposes and that dredging is carried in all locations where there would be benefit. A report setting out the findings should be returned to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission by	There is concern, echoed nationally, that waterways are not being appropriately managed and that dredging is not being used as widely as it could be.

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	<b>Community support</b>	
30	The Civil Contingencies Manager should work to establish a Major Incident Support Team (MIST), comprising individuals available to be deployed to affected communities.	Face to face communication is extremely effective and provides a significant degree of reassurance.
31	The Civil Contingencies Manager and the Environment Agency should integrate and co-ordinate the work of their respective flood wardens and flood ambassadors to ensure they achieve the best effect.	Wardens and Ambassadors have similar roles but their use and utility was not fully harnessed.
	<b>Operations</b>	
32	Thames Water, working with Network Rail, should expedite the work to address the flooding of Newbury railway station.	Flooding at the station affects a significant number of people each day and has, as a single incident, a disproportionate effect on residents.
33	The Head of Highways and Transport should examine the possibility of Council or other staff assisting police officers in the enforcement of road closures.	Thames Valley Police had insufficient staff to man all road closures.
34	If preventative measures cannot be applied to known flood prone roads (in order to keep them open) then the Head of Highways and Transport should assess the feasibility of providing permanent gates or barriers, including on fords. A report setting out the findings should be returned to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission by June 2015.	The erection or construction of permanent barriers will alleviate the requirement to man temporary road closures. It should also have the effect of reducing the need to respond to drivers who have become stranded when attempting to negotiate flooded roads.
35	Thames Water should ensure that the waste water network is protected from ground and surface water ingress.	The foul water flooding was caused by ground and surface water entering the Thames Water network, which exceeded its designed capacity.
36	All RSLs should consider the requirement for property level protection in their housing stocks. A report on the feasibility of works should be returned to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission by June 2015.	As major landlords in the district, RSLs have the potential to reduce the flood risk to a significant number of properties.
37	The Head of Highways and Transport should consider providing the Neighbourhood Wardens with the keys to manhole covers for use during	The Wardens reported that the temporary opening of manhole covers would have allowed

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	flooding incidents.	surface water to drain much more quickly when gullies were unable to clear volumes of water for which they were not designed.
39	The Civil Contingencies Manager should investigate the utility of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in the response to flooding and other emergency incidents. A report setting out the findings should be returned to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission by June 2015.	The images of flooded areas provided by police and military overflights greatly aided situational awareness and resultant planning. The use of a locally controlled UAV would reduce the reliance on much sought after – and expensive – assets that are under the control and direction of other agencies.
40	The Head of Highways and Transport should develop and deliver a scheme of works to fit non-return valves on highway sewers that drain into rivers.	This would address reports of swollen rivers back-flooding highways through gullies designed and intended to drain the other way.
<b>Other</b>		
41	The Leader of the Council should commission a strategic review of the implications of climate change on the Council and other agencies. The scope of the review should be sufficiently wide to evaluate the impact of climate change on business as usual activities as well as preparedness for severe weather incidents.	The increasing frequency of severe weather events indicates that climate change is something of which the Council and its partners should be aware and for which they should be appropriately positioned.