

Title of Report:	Winter 2009/10 Severe Weather Report and Action Plan
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	02 September 2010
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2027

Purpose of Report: To provide the feedback and suggested action plan following the Severe Weather of Winter 2009/10. This includes the outcome and recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission.

Recommended Action:

- (1) The Debrief Action Plan is noted and supported in its completion
- (2) The recommendations from the OSC and response to them are noted and supported in their completion.
- (3) The proposal and format for the West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is approved.
- (4) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advise of updates relating to their service area.
- (5) Progress is coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
- (6) Progress to be reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis, in particular to raise issues relating to budget issues.

Reason for decision to be taken: In order to allow progression & coordination of the Severe Weather Actions and in order to improve the preparation & response in the future.

Other options considered:

Key background documentation: OSC reports

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Plan Themes:

- CPT7 - Safer and Stronger Communities**
- CPT11 - Protecting Vulnerable People**
- CPT14 - Effective People**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Plan Priorities and Themes by:

Portfolio Member Details	
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Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	5 th August 2010

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Implications

Policy: TBC as the actions are progressed
Financial: TBC as the actions are progressed.
Personnel: TBC as the actions are progressed
Legal/Procurement: TBC as the actions are progressed
Property: None
Risk Management: None
Equalities Impact Assessment: None

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Item is Urgent Key Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the second period of severe winter weather in a 12 month period a full debrief was undertaken by the Civil Contingencies Manager and a review was undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission.
- 1.2 As a result of these reviews action plans and recommendations were produced. This report tables these action plans and provides proposals as to the way forward to capture and progress the points in a combined action plan.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 It is proposed that:
 - (1) A West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is produced which will include an annex containing the Highways and Transport Winter Service Plan.
 - (2) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advise of updates relating to their service area.
 - (3) Progress can be coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
 - (4) Progress is reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis in particular in relation to issues where there is a financial implication.

3. Summary & Recommendations

- 3.1 Due to the extensive impact on the Council and the community that the severe weather had it is important that the action plans are progressed.
- 3.2 In addition there are likely to be financial implications with respect to some of the actions.
- 3.3 It is recommended that:
 - (1) The Debrief Action Plan is endorsed
 - (2) The recommendations from the OSMC and the response to them are noted.
 - (3) The proposal and format for the West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is approved.
 - (4) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advice of updates relating to their service area.
 - (5) Progress is coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
 - (6) Progress to be reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis, in particular to raise issues relating to budget issues.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 During the period 17 December 2009 through to the end of March 2010 the whole of the UK experienced severe winter weather. It has now been recorded that this was the most widespread period of snowfall and cold weather since the winter of 1981/82.
- 1.2 The impact of this severe, extended period of cold weather was extensive including:
- (a) A National salt shortage, this later extended to include the majority of Europe.
 - (b) Transport was badly affected, with many reports of stranded motorists, restricted rail journeys and some flight cancellations.
 - (c) An increase in hospital admissions arising from people falling due to the conditions
 - (d) School & work place closures.
- 1.3 The average snowfall for England and Wales was between 10-20cm. The estimated snowfall in January 2010 for the Tilehurst/West Reading area was 40-45cm, for Hungerford/Lambourn 26-30cm, and for Newbury/Thatcham 15-20cm. The drifting of snow had also been an issue in some areas.
- 1.4 Temperatures across West Berkshire were often below -10°C and daytime temperatures were rarely above freezing.
- 1.5 The impact varied over the winter period. Of particular note was the 21 December 2009 when the first heavy snow fell on frozen roads earlier than forecast resulting in grid lock across the Thames Valley/Hampshire area as employees left work early in a very short period and Christmas Shoppers tried to leave shopping centres. Towards the end of the winter period however there were concerns relating to flooding should there be a rapid thaw. In addition the damage to road surfaces became more apparent as the snow melted.
- 1.6 Some specific impacts on the Council over this time included:
- (1) The number of calls made to the Contact Centre had increased from the usual average of 150 calls a day to around 390. This reached a peak on 14 January 2010 of 900 calls. These calls most often related to gritting, waste collections and pot holes.
 - (2) Increased number of insurance claims against the Council. In the period January to March 2010 the Highways & Transport Service dealt with 221 claims. In the same period in 2009 there were 111 and in 2008, 60.
 - (3) the number of hits on the Council website had increased and reached a peak of 9,000 between 8-10pm on 5 January 2010. There was an

83% satisfaction level recorded on the information provided on the website, which was above the benchmark figure for other local authorities. Positive feedback was also received from partners in relation to the website.

- (4) Waste collection was suspended for an extended period
- (5) Community Care Client support was prioritised.

1.7 As a result of this being the second severe winter weather impact within 12 months a review of the response was undertaken and this report details the review and the outcomes.

2. Review Process

2.1 As part of the routine process following any incident that affects the community a debriefing process was undertaken.

2.2 The debrief process normally involves the Emergency Planning Liaison Officers who represent each service. On this occasion the debrief process was extended to include:

- (1) Emergency Planning Liaison Officers
- (2) Additional officers within the Council who had responded to the incident
- (3) External agencies/professional partners
- (4) Town & Parish Councils

2.3 In addition to the routine debrief process a review was being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission (OSMC).

3. Outcomes

3.1 The result of the debrief process was an action plan divided into service/team responsibilities with deadlines for completion against them. Most of the deadlines for completion are no later than November 2010 in order that they are in place ready for the coming winter, where practicable. The action plan is detailed in Appendix A.

3.2 The overarching outcomes however are the actions to review all service Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plans and develop a West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan.

3.3 In addition to the debrief action plan there are the recommendations and actions from the OSMC. These are at Appendix B. Where these cross reference with the debrief actions they have been annotated along with comments relating to the recommendations.

3.4 An amalgamated working action plan has now been developed for use by the officers.

3.5 It should also be noted that despite the list of actions identified to improve the response in the future there were also a large number of positive comments made regarding the response.

4. Potential Limitations

4.1 It should also be noted that there may be limitations on progression of some of the actions due to resources in terms of staff and budgets. This will be brought to the Boards attention as necessary for information and/or decision.

5. Way Forward

5.1 It is proposed that:

- (1) The West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is prepared as set out below:

Section	Subject	Progress
1	Introduction	
2	Activation	
3	Command & Control	
4	Roles & Responsibilities	
5	Warning & Informing	
6	Community & Public Actions	
7	Recovery	
Annex A	Heatwave	COMPLETE for 10/11
Annex B	Drought	DRAFT COMPLETE – out for consultation in July
Annex C	Flooding to include Sandbag Policy	First Draft progressing of revised plan – out for consultation in August
Annex D	Storms including high winds (excluding snow storms)	To be drafted in Sept
Annex E	Severe Winter including extended cold, extreme low temperatures and snow. This will include as an Annex the H&T Winter Service Plan	To be drafted in August

As the individual plans are progressing it is proposed that where there is commonality this will be put in the main sections of the plan rather than the individual Annexes.

6. Resource Implications

6.1 The work in both action plans will be investigated and progressed by each service as it is split in this report. Therefore there is an impact on each service with respect to staff resources.

6.2 There are some actions however that may give rise to substantial costs to the Council to progress them. The outcome as a result may be that the action cannot

be completed. This will be brought to the attention of the Board in the next report unless urgent decisions are required to be made.

7. Summary & Recommendations

7.1 Due to the extensive impact on the Council and the community that the severe weather had it is important that the action plans are progressed as a result it is recommended that:

- (1) The Debrief Action Plan is endorsed
- (2) The recommendations from the OSMC and the response to them are noted.
- (3) The proposal and format for the West Berkshire Severe Weather Plan is approved.
- (4) On a monthly basis the combined action plan is circulated to EPLO's and other officers as necessary to advice of updates relating to their service area.
- (5) Progress is coordinated by the Civil Contingencies Manager.
- (6) Progress to be reported back to Board on a 6 monthly basis, in particular to raise issues relating to budget issues.

Appendices

Appendix A – Debrief Action Plan

Appendix B – OSC Recommendation Action Plan

Consultees

Local Stakeholders:

Officers Consulted: EPLO's, Mark Edwards

Trade Union: N/A