



Forest Heath

District Council

‘MAJOR INCIDENT AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN’

01 October 2006

Foreword

In light of recent incidents around the world, we have all realised the importance of planning for civil contingencies in the event of a major emergency.

When faced with a disaster, people look to the public sector to take a lead and work to ensure their safety. As such, Forest Heath would have an important role to play both as a leader in the community and as a support for the emergency services.

To meet our responsibilities effectively we recognise the need for good management, thorough training and co-ordinated planning. Council staff will each be playing their part whether as frontline personnel dealing with the incident or behind the scenes maintaining the essential day to day services that we regularly provide.

This document outlines our aims and objectives and includes the operational procedures that we would follow should they be needed.

I hope that you will join me in welcoming this plan so that we will be prepared to work together efficiently and professionally in the event of any emergency that we may face in the future.

David Burnip
Chief Executive

CIVIL PROTECTION **COMMITMENT STATEMENT**

Forest Heath District Council is committed to civil protection, emergency planning and response as directed by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and in the supporting guidance 'Emergency Preparedness' and 'Emergency Response and Recovery'

Emergency planning will allow for each normal function of the local authority to be carried out in an emergency. Emergency plans will be prepared by the persons responsible for the delivery of services in the event of a disaster. It is the responsibility of all heads of service and their staff to be aware of and give full support to the Emergency Planning Response Structure.

Distribution List

The following officers hold and are responsible for hard copies of this plan. Further copies of the plan and supporting documents are held on the Councils intranet.

Addressee	Copy	Home
Chief Executive	1	01
Strategic Director (Resources)	2	02
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Head Of Finance	4	04
Head of Leisure Services	5	05
Head of Environmental Services	6	06
Head of Community Development	7	07
Head of Planning Services	8	08
Head of Human Resources & Corporate Services	9	09
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MAJOR INCIDENT & EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

1. AIM

The aim of the document is to detail Forest Heath District Councils arrangements for responding to a major incident and to nominate lead officers responsibilities for the planning, preparation and delivery of that response through to the restoration of normality.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This is a generic plan and is not hazard or site specific. Activation of the plan will place the Authority in a position where it has both a structure and procedures in place to evaluate the problem, plan and deliver a response.

2.2 This document is strategic in nature and is the lead document for emergency planning within Forest Heath District Council. It is supported by the following reference documents below and should be read in conjunction with them.

It does not address the tactical and operational issues. Guidance on operational matters including emergency operations centre procedures, call centre and rest centre operations, communications, finance etc are dealt with under there respective headings.

2.3 References:

- Major Incident and Emergency Response Plan including all Annexes.
- Suffolk Resilience Community Risk Register.
- Emergency Planning Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between all Suffolk Local Authorities, dated 1 December 2005.
- The Joint Response to Major Emergencies in Suffolk.
- SVOG – Emergency Response Guide for Voluntary Organisations 2006.
- Guidance on the CCA 2004 'Emergency Preparedness' and 'Emergency Response and Recovery'

2.4 This document, with supporting references, will be available to all staff on the intranet; complete sets of documents will be issued, in folders, in accordance with the agreed distribution list. These are controlled documents. Addressees in the distribution list are responsible for amendments to their copy and for recording amendments in the review and amendment record sheet.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 **Definition of a Major Incident: -**

“An event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in the UK, or to the environment of a place in the UK, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the UK.’

‘Serious damage to human welfare is defined as homelessness, damage to property, disruption of the supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel, or disruption of communications systems or transport facilities or of health services.’

3.2 **Background** - The statutory basis for emergency planning is the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This legislation places a legal duty on all local authorities, as category one responders to make plans and respond in support of the emergency services and the community.

3.3 **Local Authority Role** - The western area of Suffolk contains a number of major hazards which can affect the well being of the community and could give rise to a major incident or disaster, however a major incident could occur anywhere and at any time with little or no warning.

Forest Heath accepts the role as a leader in the community, supporting the emergency services, local community and neighbouring local authorities during a major disaster.

3.4 A memorandum of understanding exists for the provision of mutual aid between all local authorities within Suffolk.

The agreed roles of a Local Authority in a disaster are:

- In the immediate aftermath, support the emergency services.
- Continue normal support and care for the local and wider community.
- Use resources to mitigate the effects and co-ordinate the response of other organisations (other than the emergency services).
- Protecting the health and safety of staff and the public.
- Take a leading role to facilitate rehabilitation of the community and restoration of the environment.
- Be prepared to provide mutual aid to neighbouring authorities.
- Evaluate the response and identifying the lessons learnt.

3.5 **Staff** - To ensure the necessary level of response is achieved, Forest Heath inline with other local authorities has adopted a minimum level of response, which has been agreed county wide, and forms part of the memorandum of understanding between all Suffolk local authorities.

3.6 Forest Heath may deploy its staff as necessary dependant upon the nature, scale and duration of any emergency.

3.7 **County Emergency Planning Response Structure**

The county multi-agency emergency planning and response organisation is Suffolk Resilience. Arrangements for responding to major emergencies within Suffolk include:

- Joint Response Arrangements (inc. command & control).
- Role of Suffolk Resilience.
- Partner agency roles and responsibilities.
- Joint Response Plans.

3.8 Suffolk Resilience provides strategic guidance and support in the multi agency planning and response to a major incident. Forest Heath District Council supports Suffolk Local Resilience Forum through its own emergency planning and response organisation, in conjunction with the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit.

3.9 The Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit (JEPU) provides a 24/7 duty emergency planning officer, able to support districts/boroughs in relation to emergency planning advice and response. Contact with this officer is made via Suffolk Fire and Rescue Service Control.

During an emergency, a district emergency planning officer will (where available) attend the local authority emergency operations centre in support of the CEO of that authority.

3.10 Community Risk register – CRR

The Suffolk Community Risk Register fulfils the legal obligation under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. This document outlines the risks which have been identified within Suffolk, places an assessment on each risk and shows the most probable impact and likelihood on the community. The risk rating is shown in a matrix that allocates, in accordance with government guidelines.

The register identifies the risks within Suffolk which require plans to mitigate the consequences. The St Edmundsbury Major Incident and Emergency Response Plan outlines the detail response by St Edmundsbury in support of these plans.

4. **EMERGENCY PLANNING & RESPONSE STRUCTURE**

- 4.1 During a major incident or emergency each department will be responsible for carrying out its normal tasks within the existing management structure. However, to assist in coordinating the response to an emergency the following additional actions may be called for:
- The establishment of an **Emergency Management Group** to decide on the strategy for dealing with the problems facing the Council. And to inform the leader of the council, Chair of the Emergency Planning Working Group and such other members as appropriate, subject to the size and scale of the emergency.
 - The opening and staffing of an **Emergency Operations Centre**, to act as a focal point for the Councils response and to coordinate incoming enquiries and requests for assistance from partner organisations.
 - The formation of an **Operations Group** (Officers Emergency Response Working Group) of senior representatives from services with a major role in the incident.
 - The deployment of **Liaison Officers** to represent the Council at the scene, or at any Emergency Services Control Point.
 - The creation of a **Departmental Control Point** as a focal point for enquiries and requests relating to the departments function.
 - The establishment of a **Local Authority Forward Control Point** to coordinate the response at or near the scene of an incident.

- The provision of **Rest Centres** as part of the statutory duty to house the homeless.
- The establishment of a **Telephone Call Centre** to respond to enquiries from the public.
- The enhancement of the **Public Relations & Media Team** to respond to increased media enquiries.
- Liaison with the **Leader of the Council and chair of the Emergency Planning Working Group.**
- The organisation of any **Public Appeals Funds** and the **Recovery of Costs.**
- Preparation for the **Public Inquiry.**
- Implementation of the **Out of Hours Callout Scheme.**
- Enhancement of **Communications.**
- The coordination of **Volunteers and Voluntary Organisations.**

The staff requirements to support the response to a major incident are included in the relevant operation procedures in the attached annexes.

4.2 Health and safety

St Edmundsbury Borough Council recognises its responsibility to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and to conduct its undertaking in such a way as to prevent the public and others not employed by the Council from being exposed to risks to their health and safety.

St Edmundsbury Borough Council acknowledges that an effective health and safety policy contributes to a better business performance by reducing injuries and ill-health, protecting the environment and reducing unnecessary losses and liabilities. The Council will take all steps within its power to meet these aims, whilst engaged in emergency planning response or training.

5 PLAN ACTIVATION

5.1 Activation of the Major Incident and Emergency Response Plan is on the authority of the Chief Executive or in the absence of the Chief Executive any of the councils Corporate Directors. In the absence of any of these officers the plan may be activated by a Head of Service or the Emergency Planning Officer.

5.2 The plan may be activated in response to a declared major incident by any of our partner organisations or when the scale of the incident, either actual or perceived, requires the implementation of our emergency procedures.

5.3 Any officers activating this plan shall have regard to the procedures set out in this and supporting documentation and in particular section 8 Command & Control.

5.4 Out of Hours Notification – Major Incident.

Notification of a major incident ‘out of hours’ is direct contact by the emergency services to those officers indicated in paragraph 5.1. Partner organisations are provided with contact numbers for emergency use.

5.5 Out of Hours Call Out – Staff Response

The Council currently has a very limited staff callout capability. Out of hours contact will be initiated by nominated officers with responsibility for the functional areas under the plan.

5.6 Out of Hours Standby

In the event that the emergency procedures do not need to be activated immediately but may need to be activated in the future, staff may be contacted and placed on standby. Staff placed on standby will be considered to be on duty.

5.7 **Training & Exercises**

All staff will receive awareness training during their induction into the authority, specialist training will be provided for specific emergency response roles.

Forest Heath supports all emergency response exercises where possible and in particular those organised by Suffolk Resilience Forum. In addition the Council will undertake regular training exercises in respect to all elements of this plan in accordance with the annual training programme.

6. **RESPONSIBILITIES - General**

6.1 **Directors / Heads of Service** - are responsible for:

- Activation of the Major Incident and Emergency Response Plan.
- Business continuity of their service during the incident.
- Releasing of staff with emergency response appointments.
- Provision of their service at the scene of an emergency, if required.
- Establishment of a Departmental/Service Control Point, if required.
- Mutual aid to departments or sections more heavily committed to the emergency than their own.
- Maintain contact details of all their staff for out of hour's contact and or callout.

6.2 All managers are to be prepared to undertake their normal service duties in abnormal circumstances.

6.3 **Restoration / Recovery Phase – Gold Lead**

Following the conclusion of the emergency phase of an incident, there may be a period of recovery and restoration. This is the period during which the local authority (in whose area the incident has occurred), would take the lead co-ordination role from the police. During this phase the chief executive or nominated officer would become the local authority gold commander (lead officer).

6.4 The local authority gold commander would be responsible for the co-ordination of all agencies involved with the restoration phase. The lead co-ordinating officer would be responsible for ensuring that all organisations and agencies are adequately represented at these meetings. These representatives must be able to make strategic decisions for their respective organisations, and allocate resources accordingly. The dates times and venues for meetings would be decided at each meeting, notes from previous meetings would be circulated prior to the next meeting.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES – Specific

7.1 Lead officers.

Lead officers are nominated for key areas of the emergency planning, preparation and response. The role of the lead officer is to ensure that their part of the emergency response plan is delivered when required, staff are nominated and trained and relevant equipment and resources are available in accordance with this plan and the references above.

Lead officers are:

- **Emergency Management Group** - Chief Executive.
- **Emergency Operations Centre** – Policy Officer.
- **Emergency Response Officers Group** (Officers) – Head of Environmental Services.
- **Liaison Officers** – Health and Safety Officer.
- **Rest Centres** - Head of Community Development.
- **Telephone Call Centre** – Head of Community Development.
- **Public Relations & Media Response** – Communications Advisor.
- **Emergency Planning Working Group** (Elected Members) – Emergency Planning Officer.
- **Public Appeals & Costs Recovery** – Strategic Director–Resources.
- **Public Inquiry** - Legal and Corporate Services Manager.
- **Out of Hours Callout Register** - Head of Human Resources and Corporate Services
- **Information Technology** – IT Manager
- **Volunteers and Voluntary Organisations** - Head of Leisure Services.

7.2 Chief Executive – Key responsibilities:

- Ensure the organisation is fit for purpose.
- In an emergency, lead the Emergency Management Group.
- Provide, at director level, a focal point for emergency planning and response.
- Preparation & effective response of Forest Heath District Council to a major incident or emergency.

7.3 Emergency Planning Officer – Key responsibilities:

- Author of Major Incident & Emergency Response Plan.
- Coordinator of FHDC Emergency Operating Procedures.
- Advice on training, exercises & response preparation.

- Advice to Directors and Heads of Service as required.
- Liaison with all partner organisations.
- Advice on best practice.
- When available attend the EOC of the effected local authority for advice.

8. COMMAND & CONTROL

8.1 **Implementation and Operation of Emergency Procedures** – The Chief Executive or the next appropriate senior officer in accordance with paragraph 5.1, will (until relieved) be responsible for:

- Deciding if and when to implement the emergency procedures.
- The extent of the Councils response.
- Ensuring that senior officers, Leader of the Council and Chair of EPWG are notified.
- Requirements for mutual aid & assistance to/from partner organisations.
- Termination of emergency response, resumption of normal procedures.

8.2 **Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)** – In the event of this plan being implemented an operations room is to be established. The EOC acts as the focal point for the council's response and provides a single point of contact for all departments involved in the incident and external partner organisations. The nominated EOC is:

Members Room, FHDC offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall.

8.3 **Gold Command** - Strategic is normally located at Suffolk Constabulary, Force HQ, Martlesham Heath. That may change if the location is considered inappropriate. The local authority representative at Gold Command must be a senior officer able to commit the finances and resources of the authority to an incident, and will be either the Chief executive or one of the Strategic Directors.

Silver Command – Operational, normally located adjacent to the incident where priorities are determined, resources allocated, plans are put into action and the overall response is coordinated. This can be any officer allocated to the incident as the local authority liaison.

Bronze Command – Functional these are officers of the council who have been designated as having a specific role at the incident i.e. Environmental Health Officers.

8.4 **Elected Members** – As circumstances allow officers will advise the leader and EPWG of the situation. Emergency Meetings will be convened as appropriate.

9. SUPPORT & ADMINISTRATION

9.1 **Finance** – Costs incurred during an emergency may be recoverable either through the Belwin Scheme or from the party responsible for the incident. The accurate recording

& tracking of any costs incurred is vital to the recovery of monies. The Strategic Director – Resources (or nominated officer) is to track costs incurred and take action to recover costs post incident.

- 9.2 **Post Incident Debrief** – A post incident debrief is essential to emergency planning process. The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for arranging the post incident debrief. Post incident reports are to be widely disseminated so that lessons learnt may be shared and the plan and procedures can be amended accordingly.
- 9.3 **Military Aid** – The request for military aid is made through the Chief Constable of Police via the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit. The decision to request Military Aid rests with the Emergency Management Group or the Chief Executive. In the absence of the Chief Executive the decision may be made by one of the Strategic Directors.
- 9.4 **Information Technology** – The following systems exist to support the emergency response:
- Access Overload (ACCOLC) – Mobile Phone
 - Government Telephone Preference Scheme – Landline
 - Airwave Telephone Communications
 - Radio Amateur Network (RAYNET) – Volunteer amateur radio network.

The I.T. Manager is responsible for the maintenance of all emergency communications. Contact details for external partner organisations are held within the EOC.

- 9.5 **Rest Centres** – The provision of rest centres is part of the councils housing function in respect homeless people.
- 9.6 **External Assistance** – A ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ (MOU) exists between all the local authorities in Suffolk. The MOU sets out the arrangements for mutual aid, should it be required.
- 9.7 **Coordination of Volunteers** – The coordination of the voluntary agencies and other volunteers is the responsibility of the local authority. Details of voluntary organisations in Suffolk are contained in the SVOG directory, a copy of which is held within the EOC. A lead Officer will be appointed and responsible for the arrangements for coordinating and recording volunteers and voluntary organisations acting on behalf of the Council.
- 9.8 **Post Incident Inquiry** – Following a major incident it is highly likely that an inquiry will be held. The Legal and Corporate Services Manager is to coordinate the preparation for any inquiry.
- 9.9 **Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)** – This will act as the centre for all information for Forest Heath response to any emergency situation, and should not be

closed down until the incident is completed, or it can be dealt with by the council as part of its normal daily workload. The EOC should remain functional whilst Forest Heath personnel are deployed to the incident.

- 9.10 **Liaison** – Liaison officers form the link between the incident and the Emergency Operations centre (EOC), they should keep the EOC fully briefed on the progress, and ensure that all requests for Forest Heath response should be routed through the EOC.
- 9.11 **Media** - Any incident involving major emergencies will generate interest from the media, Forest Heath has a media response strategy for press releases and arrangements for dealing with the press.
- 9.12 **Call Centre** – Currently Forest Heath is unable to operate a call centre in response to an emergency. Forest Heath will utilise the St Edmundsbury BC call centre, which will be set up and staffed by St Edmundsbury to deal with the general enquiries from the local population as a focal point, thus allowing the EOC to operate unhindered.

10. PLAN REVIEW AND VALIDATION

- 10.1 **Plan Review:** Forest Heath will review the Major Incident and emergency response plan on an annual basis, or as necessary due to changes in legislation or as a result of any key learning outcomes from other incidents or exercises.
- 10.2 Key officers identified under the Emergency Response Officers Group, will, in conjunction with the emergency planning officer be responsible for reviewing elements of the plan under their control.
- 10.3 **Plan validation:** Plans will be validated through training or exercising in accordance with the Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit exercise and training programme, and the requirements of the Forest Heath training and exercising policy.

David Bird
Emergency Planning Officer
Suffolk Joint Emergency Planning Unit – West Suffolk

Authenticated:

D Burnip

Chief Executive, Forest Heath District Council