

# Joint Best Value Review

## Emergency Planning

### A Report by the Joint Review Board

**25 February 2003**

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 In March 2002, as part of the ongoing review of services provided by East Sussex County Council, the Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee commissioned a best value review of emergency planning facilities in the county. Because District and Borough Councils are closely involved in emergency planning and organising the response to major incidents in the county, a Joint Best Value Review Board (the Board) was established comprising 4 elected members from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and 1 elected member from each of Eastbourne District Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council, and Wealden District Council. The Board was supported by an Officer Project Team made up of officers from the ESCC and from the respective Emergency Planning Departments of each District and Borough Council. (Appendix 1 details the membership of the Board and Officer Project Team.)

1.2 The scope of the review was agreed at an early stage along with a decision to exclude from the review business continuity planning. (Appendix 2 details the review scope.)

### Aim

**The aim of the review, in conjunction with the Districts and Boroughs, was to examine all aspects of the emergency planning within East Sussex in order to recommend those measures which would improve efficiency and effectiveness in responding to major incidents.**

## 2 Method and objectives

2.1 In assessing progress against this aim, the Board used the four principles of Best Value;

challenging whether the ESCC Emergency Planning team was achieving its stated outcomes or whether provision of emergency planning across the county could be provided in other ways;

comparing emergency planning arrangements with those of other similar authorities;

consulting with stakeholders and others involved in emergency planning;

competition - considering alternative providers of emergency planning and reviewing whether there were other ways in which emergency planning could be delivered in East Sussex.

2.2 From April to January 2003, the Board took evidence from a wide range of stakeholders in emergency planning across the councils involved in the review. Consultations were organised to ensure that the views of all interested and involved parties were gathered and evaluated. (See Appendix 3 - the method and the objectives.)

2.3 This final report will be presented to the relevant committees of the councils involved in the joint review as far as possible in the same committee cycle.

### **3 The essential challenge: Do we need emergency planning?**

At the outset, the Board considered whether or not emergency planning was actually required.

3.1 The County Council has statutory responsibilities under the Civil Defence (General Local Authority Functions) Regulations 1993. This includes the duty to:

- make, keep under review and revise plans for their area;
- carry out exercises based on such plans;
- arrange for the training of an appropriate number of suitable members of their own staff and of the staff of the council of every district in the county, and of such other persons as they consider necessary, for the purposes of carrying out plans;
- consult with any county council, district council whose area may be affected by the plans;
- consult with the fire authority constituted by that scheme for that combined area.

3.2 The Board decided it could not recommend that the Chief Executive of the County Council ignore the responsibility to ensure that there is the capacity to deliver a managed and effective response to a major incident. Systems and structures must be in place to facilitate communication, co-ordination and mobilisation. Accordingly an analysis of the best way to deliver such as service forms a part of this review. (See section 11 - service delivery options.)

### **4 The fundamental questions**

4.1 The Board decided that it would be appropriate to use the fundamental questions as laid down at the initial meeting of the Chief Executives, officers and emergency planners in March 2002. The questions were:

- o What do stakeholders, the local residents, the business community, the emergency services, the utilities, the voluntary organisations and others expect local authorities to do before any emergency to prevent or mitigate the effects, during an emergency and in the recovery phase?
- o What emergency planning do local authority managers need to do to meet the expectations of stakeholders?
- o What professional emergency planning support is required to enable the local authorities to meet the requirements of stakeholders during the three stages of a major incident?
- o What professional emergency planning support is required to enable service managers to carry out emergency planning work?
- o What are the options for providing the professional emergency planning support and how could it be organised and delivered both on a day-to-day basis and during and after an emergency?

4.2 The fundamental questions allow for an exploration of the three phases of emergency planning and a review of the effectiveness of current arrangements. The three phases of emergency planning are;

- prior to an emergency – preparing for what might occur;

- during an emergency - responding to the incident(s);
- after an emergency – recovery and restoring normality as far as possible.

## 5 Guiding principles

The Board adopted a set of guiding principles about the nature and practice of emergency planning in an ideal situation. These were arrived at when the Board members were satisfied that they had a full understanding of emergency planning. The evidence the joint review had gathered was assessed and evaluated. This was combined with what, in the Board's view, would best serve the interests of the people of East Sussex. The guiding principles then emerged. The Board concluded that:

5.1 **Community leadership** should be at the heart of emergency planning. Although the exact definition of the term remains to be made clear, the spirit of community leadership is understood by the Board to embrace elements of visible presence of councillors and senior officers, strong links with existing community groups, a willingness to allocate resources and advocacy for the area.

5.2 Emergency planning should be based on a **clear aim and measurable objectives**. The aim should be to provide a co-ordinated response to a major incident which:

- mitigates and contains of the effects of a major incident;
- protects the population and the environment;
- preserves essential services;
- restores normality.

There should be links to corporate strategic and community plans and individual service plans and these links should be made clear to all stakeholders involved. Regular monitoring and performance review should be built into the planning cycle.

5.3 To support the effective local response and efficiently managed regional response to major incidents, there has to be **effective partnership working with clearly defined roles and responsibilities**. This could take the form of;

- a memorandum of understanding adopted by the partner councils supported by regular forums for inter agency working;
- resource exchange protocols to facilitate cross-council support; and
- at a practical level, a common format for emergency plans to aid access to information when staff are in stressful situations.

The County Emergency Plan, the Linking Document, and other documents contain much that is required. However a short form document which all councils could endorse is the proposed target.

5.4 Effective local planning requires **risk assessment and related resilience planning** to be co-ordinated. The perceived and analysed risk should be matched by plans which take into account;

- local circumstances;
- the availability of back-up resources; and
- the priorities for return to acceptable levels of community functions as quickly as possible.

This will take into account stand-by power, control and communication systems and the need to have depth of training and sequencing of staffing when a prolonged period of disruption is expected.

5.5 **Resources** should be available to match the objectives of the planning.

5.6 The emergency plans should be supported by **validated training** which is updated regularly and tested by exercises which are practical and hands-on where possible or desk-top. The training should include emergency planning officers, elected members senior officers and other staff providing the emergency response and other partner agencies.

5.7 The **mobilisation** of the response to a major incident should be co-ordinated through the efficient use of effective contact lists together with the rapid deployment local volunteers and other agencies. The need to maintain the core services of each council should be part of this planning.

5.8 Underpinning all of these guiding principles is the absolute need for **effective communication** before, during and after any major incident. The liaison groups must be co-ordinated, well managed and make the agencies involved appreciate the value of their contribution to the planning and the potential response. It is important to use existing systems where possible rather than create new ones and have robust second systems that can provide effective communication should electronic systems fail. Elected members play a key role in communication with local communities and with training can provide the communication front needed to maintain links with the media and the public.

5.9 These three elements, **challenge, questions and principles**, helped to focus the Board's lines of enquiry and consultations. The elements assisted in formulating the Board's view of the most effective and efficient way of delivering emergency planning and aided judgement on how emergency planning could be changed and improved.

5.10 The Board used evidence gathered to assess the success or effectiveness of emergency planning across the councils involved against the five fundamental questions steering the review.

## Answers to the fundamental questions

**6 What do stakeholders, the local residents, the business community, the emergency services, the utilities, the voluntary organisations and others expect local authorities to do before any emergency to prevent or mitigate the effects, during an emergency and in the recovery phase?**

6.1 The Board consulted with a wide range of people and organisations who might be affected by a major incident and whose views could help in formulating the recommendations to improve the service. (See Appendix 4 - consultation.)

6.2 The key responses from members of the public and local residents were:

**Information.** Accurate information should be given out as early as possible in the event of an emergency with regular information updates in forms that are easily accessible to everyone. A wide variety of information-giving methods should be used, including leaflets, loud-hailers, radio broadcasts, the local press, TV news, and the Internet.

**Plans.** Town and Parish Councils and voluntary organisations when consulted emphasised the need for effective plans to be in place and understood by workers. There was recognition that training exercises develop the common understanding that supports effective communication during the pressure of dealing with an incident.

**Business continuity.** The business community expected as much information as possible to be made available, well in advance of any incident, to enable business continuity arrangements to be made. The utilities companies and the Environment Agency recognised the value of the ESCC Linking Document and the need for there to be a recognised command structure especially as the utilities companies covered very wide geographical areas and did not necessarily have targeted local plans.

**Liaison groups.** These liaison meetings, organised by the ESCC Emergency Planning team, were

valued because they created the foundations on which good emergency responses can be built.

**Leadership and mobilisation of resources.** Actual incidents need to be dealt with effectively and the welfare of people affected by the emergency should be effectively and sensitively managed. Particular concerns were expressed for the vulnerable and those who may be outside the usual communication channels through reasons of language or lifestyle.

6.3 From the consultations a list has been produced of public expectations of the service the local councils will provide before, during and after a major incident. See Appendix 5 Parish Expectations

6.4 After any major incident the consensus from the consultations was that:

6.4.1 There should be debriefs, with open and honest appraisal of the responses made. Lessons are learnt when disasters occur but there was uncertainty as to whether the lessons would be lost when key officers/people move to new jobs and roles. Agencies want to be included in de-briefing sessions so that they can take advantage of the knowledge acquired and avoid re-inventing the wheel every time there is an emergency.

6.4.2 All stakeholders require a rapid return to as near normality as possible. Similarly, effective management of the repair and reinstatement of homes, facilities and services to follow.

6.4.3 All emergencies should be dealt with at the lowest local level. The Boroughs and Districts should take the lead in an emergency affecting their local areas whilst the County Council takes a strategic overview and intervenes, after consultation, when and where necessary to fulfil its statutory responsibilities.

6.4.4 In rest centres information should be more organised and the rest centre layout should be straightforward and easy to understand with a quiet area preserved for those who want it. Physical resources should be well managed with enough toilets, phones and suitable mattresses and blankets. For some people the provision of counselling and emotional support is important. One-stop-shops for advice, information and support, set up in partnership with other agencies were regarded as an effective way to meet expectations.

6.4.5 Suitable identification should be worn by people who are not members of the blue light services but are in the community to help or advise on evacuation.

6.4.6 During an emergency, elected members should be used to support community leadership within their ward, their local knowledge is invaluable. Representatives from the emergency services agreed that elected members should be deployed during emergencies as two-way channels for local communication. Members of Parliament take a view that during an emergency their role is to support the local authority and help in securing national government support in dealing with the incident.

6.5 The Board concluded from these consultations that:

6.5.1 It is important that, during any major incident, public expectations are effectively managed and realistic. Currently the Emergency Planners in East Sussex are seen to be effective in communication and liaison. However, Emergency plans need to take into account the longer term effects of major incidents and ensure that sustainable systems are in place for continued support and co-ordination.

6.5.2 Emergency blue light services will want to withdraw from an incident as soon as the situation is stabilised. However, the emergency response does not end when the blue light services have completed their work. Aftercare is therefore a major aspect of any incident. The impact of a disaster upon a community will vary according to the local context. County, District and Borough councils should be seen to be taking the lead, co-ordinating and drawing in all stakeholders into brainstorming a recovery strategy early on. The aim should be to involve the community fully in its own recovery and to look for positive improvements to come from the experience of dealing with disaster.

## **7 What emergency planning do local authority managers need to do to meet the expectations of stakeholders?**

7.1 An analysis of the points made by the District and Borough Councils in their appendices to the report show common understanding of the work that managers need to do in order to serve their own communities.

7.2 The Board found the following expectations of stakeholders:

7.2.1 Elected members wish to be involved in any support arrangements after an emergency has occurred in their own ward. They have local knowledge and communication networks which are invaluable in helping to meet the needs of the residents of their wards.

7.2.2 The volunteer base is an invaluable resource. Emergency Planners and the Emergency services argue there should be a sufficient volunteer base to allow for resilience and effective delivery of response during any prolonged incident. There should be effective resource sharing protocols and Councils should work to achieve a greater degree of parity and fairness for staff volunteering for duty during an emergency.

7.2.3 All potential risks have been adequately assessed and appropriate levels of information have been made available or distributed. Stakeholders expect that managers will have built liaison with emergency planning officers into their emergency planning arrangements. This would be to ensure that information is accurate, up to date and shared widely.

7.2.4 That training is current and sufficiently well exercised to be robust under pressure. Managers should be liaising with emergency planning officers to take advantage of training and exercise opportunities in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

7.2.5 Rest centres should be well organised and equipped and this should feature in training plans. All information should be available in convenient locations during a major incident. Contact lists should be up-to-date.

7.2.6 That managers have planned for the after effects of a major incident by arranging for audit trails of spending relating to emergency responses and for records of actions taken during the response stages to be kept. These help to meet expectations that fair and appropriate restitution to stakeholders is made after the event so that effective debriefing can take place. Also, the records will ensure that valuable lessons learned during the response are not missed

7.3 As a result of this consultation information the Board concluded that:

7.3.1 The two issues relating to involvement of elected members and volunteers highlights the need for managers to seek to put emergency planning in the mainstream activities of all the councils involved in the review. The Board believes that when emergency planning has a high profile the needs of stakeholders can be constantly kept in mind.

7.3.2 Whilst training for staff is currently a major element in emergency planning, there is a need to ensure that future emergency planning includes training for members in their role before, during and after a major incident. Community leadership should also feature in the training plan.

7.3.3 Managers should plan for effective recruitment, mobilisation, deployment and remuneration of staff volunteers. This will vary from council to council but the planning needs to ensure there is a sufficient volunteer base for a sustained period. Staff managers are to review the job descriptions of staff with contractual emergency response duties.

7.3.4 Planning should include the location and staffing of information points with one-stop shops being considered. In some authorities planning to co-ordinate a response through Parish Councils can help to meet stakeholder expectations at a very local level.

7.3.5 The commitment to emergency planning is patchy across the councils and there is a reluctance to pay the premium before the event. The objective of the County, District and Borough councils and the Parishes should be to make emergency planning a mainstream function and raise its profile.

## **8 What professional emergency planning support is required to enable the local authorities to meet the requirements of stakeholders during the three stages of a major incident**

8.1 The role of professional Emergency Planners is to support District and Borough local authorities so that effective responses can be made at each of the following stages of a major incident:

- planning before the incident
- events happening during the incident
- the aftermath and long term results.

8.2 The stakeholder requirements can be identified as:

8.2.1 An expectation that the ESCC Emergency Planning team identifies reasonably foreseeable hazards that could require a major incident response from the emergency services, local authorities, Health authorities, Environment Agency, Maritime and Coastguard Agency, utilities, voluntary organisations and others.

8.2.2 The risks and hazards associated with specific locations are appropriately assessed and identified.

8.2.3 The provision of high level of training through practical exercises, table-top simulations and seminars to ensure local authorities are up to date with current thinking.

8.2.4 ESCC Emergency Planners being at the forefront of national developments on emergency planning and disseminating the latest information to all the councils and other collaborating agencies. This is particularly relevant in relation to planning for Chemical Biological Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) incidents.

8.2.5 The Chief Executive of the County Council developing and maintaining strategic effective county-wide emergency management arrangements.

8.2.6 During a major incident, the key role of the County Council will be to co-ordinate the activities of Districts and Boroughs and maintain good links with other councils and central government.

8.2.7 Good financial support underpinning pre-emergency preparations so that the Civil Defence Grant and general budget management of funding is sound. In particular, that emergency planning and collaborating with local authorities achieves the best available resource allocation.

8.2.8 Emergency Planners establish and maintain professional links with, and support to, Parish councils and many other agencies. It is the responsibility of local government to lead recovery after a major incident.

8.2.9 Provision of a County Emergency Plan that contains guidelines to be used in developing a recovery strategy following a major incident anywhere in East Sussex.

8.3 The Board in exploring these requirements found that:

8.3.1 There is no legislative requirement to identify hazards. However, it is best practice currently in ESCC. The County Emergency Plan, section 3, approved by the Sussex inter-agency Major Incident Steering Group on 21 May 2002, includes a list of potential hazards and risks.

8.3.2 Within ESCC, hazard sites are grouped into transport related risks, environmental hazards and, a

current high profile area, terrorism. Each of these identified risks has relevant associated response plans contained in the County Emergency Plan and a further document refers on to other specialist response plans. (See Appendix 6 - risk assessment.)

8.3.3 Good, well established, links exist in this County Council between Chief Officers and senior emergency services officers. Communication between neighbouring counties, Districts and Boroughs is maintained, particularly at Chief Officer level. This is a result of the liaison meetings arranged by ESCC Emergency Planners to bring together agencies involved in emergency responses.

8.3.4 The County Emergency Plan is distributed to partner authorities. The draft Strategy for Community-based Emergency Planning has been welcomed as a practical framework for the future development of community-based emergency planning. The approach to target particular risks is welcomed but over-planning should be avoided.

8.3.5 Some of the information relating to planning for chemical and biological incidents has a high security classification and most emergency planning officers hold no security clearance. Emergency planners need to take this up and champion the cause of effective planning on behalf of local authorities. An extension of this is the support provided to local authorities in assessing the strategic drive of central government and ensuring that the correct emphasis is passed on to local authorities and commonly understood.

8.3.6 East Sussex could reflect the national trend by establishing that Civil Contingencies Planning rather than Emergency Planning is an appropriate way to develop the Chief Executive's strategic planning responsibility. This would put the local authorities involved in this review in a strong position to respond to forthcoming legislation. At a national level, it is understood emergency planning is broadening its remit. There is a likelihood that the related elements of resilience – emergency planning, business continuity planning, and risk management will be drawn together.

8.3.7 In respect of improvements to the County Emergency Plan, the experience of flooding across the county during recent years has been used to develop better strategic and operational responses to support communities in recovery from a major incident.

## **9 What professional emergency planning support is required to enable service managers to carry out emergency planning work?**

9.1 From the evidence gathered and consultation process, the Board concludes that, to carry out effective and efficient emergency planning work, ESCC service managers need to;

- have readily available response plans, action procedures, resource sharing protocols and checklists that allow them to mobilise responses efficiently whilst still enabling local councils to deliver essential services;
- embed or mainstream emergency planning in their own services;
- access and share vital information when preparing emergency plans;
- work to plans that are compatible with those of the linked voluntary organisations.

9.2 The Board found that:

9.2.1 The existing paper based County Emergency Plan becomes outdated quickly. Keeping it current is a complex and time-consuming process. The information is valuable as reference material. However, an electronic form would be simpler to update and officers would have more flexible access to specific information.

9.2.2 Local managers are not yet benefiting from e-government initiatives that make emergency planning information available electronically. A multi-agency database of information relating to managing major incidents with appropriately password-protected access would be a key support mechanism for managers.

9.2.3 Not all service managers take part in the training regime. They are unable to cascade training and ideas to their organisations, particularly to their departmental emergency managers and elected members. Therefore, the delivering of Emergency Planning procedures across the local authorities is inconsistent.

9.2.4 Voluntary agencies are not included in any training sessions or debrief sessions. Therefore, local managers are unable to benefit from the voluntary sector experience and miss an opportunity to make the agencies feel included in the emergency planning process.

9.3 The Board concludes that:

9.3.1 A key support that professional Emergency Planners can provide to local managers is to maintain a high profile for emergency planning so that efforts that can be seen to resonate with other agencies and councils. Managers have said that an increased presence from Emergency Planning Officers in Borough and District councils would support this mainstreaming of emergency planning.

## **10 What are the options for providing the professional emergency planning support and how could it be organised and delivered both on a day-to-day basis and during and after an emergency?**

10.1 A benchmarking exercise was carried out involving County and District authorities in Kent and East and West Sussex and a number of authorities identified as “similar” from the Audit Commission/CIPFA family groupings. In total around 60 authorities were circulated.

10.2 Responses were received from 5 county councils and 11 district councils. This analysis has been based on comparison of the district council responses only. The Board received presentations and questioned Emergency Planning Officers from West Sussex, Kent and Cornwall County Councils.

10.3 Authorities provided details about their area, in particular information relevant in terms of emergency planning such as length of coastline, Environment Agency figures relating to flooding risks, COMAH sites, length of road and rail networks, ports and airports. They were asked to score themselves against 26 critical success factors identified by the Home Office in its publication “Standards for Civil Protection”.

10.4 During the benchmarking exercise salary and other costs were compared. Key points;

- Significant variance in salary costs ranging from £1,000 in 2001/2 to £33,000 for a Community Safety Officer and a full-time Emergency Planning Officer.
- Five district councils used the services provided by their County Council at no cost to themselves.
- Support service costs varied considerably from £2,000 to £28,500.
- Equipment and maintenance costs were comparatively low ranging from £1,500 to £12,600.
- Total costs varied between zero and £61,720.
- Income varied from zero to £22,000.
- Out of nine district councils which responded to this question, the net cost of emergency planning to the district varied between £8,000 to £51,720 in 2001/2.
- The net cost per head of population varied between £0.21 to £2.14.
- The median figure was £0.26 and the average amount was £0.52.

10.5 Staff remuneration varied from council to council with time off in lieu and normal overtime being the most popular. Two councils offered a flat hourly rate.

10.6 Performance indicators being used in other authorities related to stakeholder satisfaction, net expenditure for the service, staff training sessions held, % compliance with Home Office standards and targets to update or test the emergency plan.

10.7 Benchmarking data for county councils who responded was used to show the relative spending per

head on emergency planning. The chart follows.

## Joint Best Value Review

### Emergency Planning

#### Benchmarking Exercise chart showing relative spend per head on emergency planning

Sample CIPFA Family Authorities	Total Population	Total Service Expenditure all services	Civil Defence Grant 2002	County Contribution to Emergency Planning 2002	Total spend on Emergency Planning	Spend per Head on Emergency Planning	County Contribution per head on Emergency Planning
	,000	£,000	£	£	£	£	£
Cornwall	500.400	421950	189000	178000	367000	0.73	0.38
Gloucestershire	561.900	464457	18900	120000	138900	0.25	0.21
Lincolnshire	640.700	539610	212407	124340	336747	0.53	0.19
West Sussex	772.100	586134	225000	144000	369000	0.48	0.19
Buckinghamshire	476.800	406350	200171	88550	288721	0.61	0.19
Dorset	391.900	313658	175500	66700	242200	0.62	0.17
Devon	704.600	573037	216000	99000	315000	0.45	0.14
Norfolk	806.200	654697	276424	107653	384077	0.48	0.13
<b>East Sussex</b>	<b>497.500</b>	<b>427014</b>	<b>208000</b>	<b>63000</b>	<b>271000</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.13</b>
Kent	1344.000	1235645	339000	129000	468000	0.35	0.10

10.8 The Board identified elements of good practice emerging from the survey. They are:

- Having a public statement which explains the council's objectives and strategy in relation to emergency planning and response.
- Senior staff (key personnel) having emergency management responsibilities contained in their job descriptions.
- All service departments that have a role in emergency arrangements being involved in the Emergency Plan writing process.
- Ensuring continuity of communications systems in an emergency and establishing systems back-up including IT and communications.
- Services involved in training and exercising having clearly stated aims and objectives.
- Representatives of industry, voluntary organisations, utilities and other stakeholders being involved in any strategic planning group.
- Carrying out an annual review of progress with partners at county and in the emergency services.
- Agreeing work programmes between the partners.
- Identifying alternative premises for business continuity in an emergency.

10.9 All of these areas are being addressed in East Sussex by the current emergency planning arrangements. The Board's recommendations provide for strategy and policy developments that serve to reinforce improvements in practice.

**The fuller details of the Benchmarking Survey are available in Appendix 6 - benchmarking.**

## **11 Service delivery options**

The Board considered the evidence gathered and a range of options for service delivery evaluating them against the guiding principles for emergency planning that had been adopted. The results of the consideration are shown in the **service delivery options analysis chart**. A summary of the Board's decision on each option is listed below.

### **11.1 Cease the service**

**This radical action was appropriately discussed and considered against the County Council's wider 'governance' role in the community. Simply abandoning the provision of emergency planning was not considered to be a responsible action of a County Council that has declared a commitment to improving community safety.**

### **\_ 11.2 Outsourcing to a private provider**

**11.2.1 The Board explored the possibility and advantages and disadvantages of outsourcing the emergency planning function to a private provider. Initial discussions and approaches made to large**

facilities management companies raised concerns about the ability and competence of these organisations to carry out the emergency planning function. In some cases the concept had to be explained before any discussion of the provision of a possible service could begin.

11.2.2 Research produced no real evidence that a market for emergency planning existed. Currently, no emergency planning service is outsourced by a local authority to a private provider. Furthermore, the cost involved in consultancy visits to assess need, in specifying a service level, monitoring performance and purchasing twenty-four hour cover revealed that this would not, on current budgetary arrangements, be an economically viable option.

11.3 Externalisation to another public service agency.

The Board considered whether it would be appropriate to transfer the emergency planning function to one of the emergency services. Two alternatives were considered:

#### 11.3.1 The Fire Service

The Fire Service currently provides an immediate response and then seek to withdraw as soon as the incident is under control. This would need to be modified to provide the longer-term support needed during the recovery phase of any major incident. If emergency planning was provided by the Fire Service the service would be managed and delivered by staff experienced and expert in responding to emergencies and instantly ready to mobilise.

11.3.2 The Police

**An alternative would be to use the Police Force to co-ordinate emergency planning as it has the most in common with the existing service in terms of its overall co-ordinating function and long term involvement in any incident.**

**11.3.3 The Board concluded that there was no immediate desire or will on the part of the Fire Service or the Police to carry out the entire emergency planning function. The Fire Service did express interest in managing a co-ordinated emergency response on the basis of its operational experience but recognised the statutory duties and community leadership and liaison role of the councils.**

#### 11.4 Pan Sussex Planning

**The Board examined the advantages and disadvantages of delivering the Emergency Planning Service on a pan-Sussex basis where a single emergency planning unit supports East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council. These plans were discussed with the Chief Executives of the authorities concerned. The disadvantages arising from the geographical spread of the combined counties and the loss of democratic accountability outweighed the advantages.**

#### 11.5 Centralised service

**The Board considered a scenario where all emergency planners would be located at County Hall and managed by the County Emergency Planning Officer with none based in the District and Borough councils. Districts and Boroughs were against this and consultation evidence shows that there are sound operational reasons for Emergency Planning Officers to be located in close proximity to where emergency services and control centres are likely to be placed in an emergency.**



<b>Community Leadership</b>	No co-ordination.	Lack local knowledge in the early stages.	Trust and objectivity could be lost if a single service was in control.	Lines of democratic accountability would not be clear.	Potential for greater local focus.  No strategic overview	Fully co-ordinated but may become to County Council focused.	Better use of Elected Members during incidents. Maintain strategic overview.
<b>Clear Aim and Objectives</b>	Reactive rather than pro-active.	Would be clearly specified and written into the contract.	Could be unconsciously biased to service agency.	Competing demands from a wide geographical area. A single agreed aim is unlikely.	EPOs will understand the ethos of their local authority.	This would be effective at the strategic planning level, co-ordinating responses for the whole county.	Guiding principles provide steer.
<b>Partnership working and clear roles</b>	No focus.	Need to develop local understanding of the context of the planning and the working priorities of each council.	Provide an immediate response and then seek to withdraw as soon as the incident is under control.	Remoteness. The maximum travel distance would be doubled.	Existing partnerships would have to be maintained.  No strategic overview	Flexibility to deploy staff to meet changing circumstances.	Better alignment of EPOs across Districts and Boroughs
<b>Resilience and Risk Analysis</b>	None, leading to increased exposure.	Depends for its effectiveness on local knowledge and understanding.	Technically expert.	Reduction in valuable local knowledge. Better wide area resilience planning.	Clear local focus and understanding of particular risks and circumstances.	Whole county view may miss local peculiarities.	Closer links with local communities and specific risks.
<b>Resources</b>	No co-ordination.	The availability of volunteer staff through an outsourced provider is not likely to be large.	No significant improvement in twenty-four hour service availability. Existing access to a wide range of equipment.	Economies of scale with one EPO representing local government strategic interests.	Duplication of resource. Need to devise a mechanism for apportioning the civil defence grant.	This gives the advantage of a structured team and economy of resource use.	Remain the same.
<b>Validated Training</b>	None.	Could equal standard of current arrangement. However there would need to be a commissioning manager and this may incur additional costs.	Could equal standard of current arrangement.	Running the same training events across a wider area could lead to a more consistent approach to emergency planning across the whole area	Training would have to be co-ordinated to avoid unnecessary duplication.	Effective planning and targeting to areas of need. Cross-fertilisation of ideas between local councils because officers could work with more than one council.	Improved links with Voluntary Sector.

<b>Mobilisation</b>	Haphazard and unplanned.	Would rely on effective networking.	Staff experienced and expert in responding to emergencies and instantly ready to mobilise.	The unit would need to be employed by one authority and the EPOs would naturally know that authority better. It would be more difficult for EPOs to develop an empathy and working relationship with managers as they would be seen as being remote or loyal to the employing authority.	Familiar to staff, respected and trusted by their colleagues and able to provide a service specific to local need.  No strategic overview	Lose sense of partnership and shift to service provision instead of collaboration	Public service ethos is seen as an advantage in the current arrangement where the large and diverse pool of resources, skills and knowledge quickly comes together. Availability of volunteer staff
<b>Communication</b>	No network would be in place	Remoteness from elected members.  Need to build network.	Existing efficient arrangements.	Single point of contact for the emergency services.	Good local communication but wide area network may be weakened.	<b><u>It provide s a single point of contact for all the other emergency service s.</u></b>	<b><u>The effective communication network available for use during an emergency through the existing planning arrangements.</u></b>

<p><b>Conclusion</b></p>	<p>Irresponsible.</p>	<p>No real evidence that a market for emergency planning exists or that a supplier could be found.</p>	<p>Community leadership may be reduced.</p>	<p>The current arrangement achieves many of the advantages of a single unit without most of the disadvantages.</p>	<p><b><u>There will be duplication of resource and training across the councils. This does not represent good value.</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>A centralized service may not be able to meet the need of local councils or be seen to be understanding local interests.</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>On balance the joint review board recommends that the existing hybrid Councils would like a greater presence from Emergency Planning Officers in their own councils.</u></b></p>
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## 12 Summary of findings

Having due regard to the guiding principles at the heart of this review; community leadership, clear aim, partnership, resilience, resources, training, mobilization and communication the Board found that:

12.1 The local authorities' work in emergency planning in East Sussex is well integrated with, and valued by, other agencies involved in handling major incidents. This is seen in joint training and exercising, regular liaison meetings and protocols covering roles and responsibilities in emergencies.

12.2 Working arrangements with East Sussex communities, including the business sector, are in place. Forthcoming legislation is likely to require further consideration of the community leadership role of the councils. Working with the community and acting as advocate to the wider world will require councils to define further how they will exercise this role.

12.3 Emergency planning is generally not well linked to all the councils' corporate plans, performance management arrangements, service plans, community strategies or local strategic partnerships.

12.4 The core Emergency Planning team at ESCC is small and the level of volatility of both the Civil Defence Grant, in cash and real inflation adjusted terms, and the contribution made by the County Council, has made forward planning uncertain, leading to some short term contracts and frequent staff turnover. This is not efficient.

12.5 Community based emergency planning takes place, particularly at the parish level. This is a very useful addition to the resources available to all the council and other agencies involved in a major incident, through use of volunteers with local knowledge and resources. However, it places a further strain on the County Council Emergency Planning team in terms of regular training and exercising.

12.6 Councils can only sustain staffing during a prolonged incident when there is depth and strength of trained personnel. Resources, both human and financial must be effectively managed to provide 24 hour shift working with enforced periods of staff recuperation away from operational activity. There are also issues of system resilience, with few council emergency control centres having back up facilities if electricity and phones go down.

12.7 Commitment to emergency planning is patchy across the county. Members and senior managers have not always committed sufficient staff and financial resources to ensure that there is a pool of well trained and equipped personnel to handle major incidents. Commitment to training, although not on the part of the emergency planning team who provide a full annual programme, is inconsistent and therefore a weakness.

12.8 Mobilisation arrangements vary from council to council. In particular there is variation across the county in relation to matters such as payments to staff, managing staff resources in a prolonged incident, maintaining core services and mobilising contractors and volunteers.

12.9 Many stakeholders consulted consider that local authorities' communications with the public before, during and after a major incident does not meet needs. Opportunities afforded by ICT are not being fully utilised, although some improvements are being implemented or are planned. Simplicity and robustness sometimes count for more in an emergency than technical sophistication.

## 13 Strategic recommendations

Ref.	Strategic recommendations	Finding	Target Date

<b>R 1</b>	Establish a 'Memorandum of Understanding' between councils and other partners defining emergency planning roles and responsibilities.	12.1	Completion May 2003
<b>R 2</b>	Ensure community leadership remains at the heart of emergency planning particularly in the light of expected legislation.	12.2	Ongoing
<b>R 3</b>	Make more explicit emergency planning links to local councils' corporate plans; performance management arrangements; community strategies and local strategic partnerships.	12.3	Completion November 2003
<b>R.4</b>	Create a long term (five year?) resourcing strategy to ensure an effective and sustainable staffing and finance structure for the emergency planning team.	12.4	Completion April 2004
<b>R 5</b>	Develop further the working arrangements with the Districts and Borough councils and include any required reconfiguring of resources so that the emergency planning officers are effectively and equitably distributed among the councils to meet their planning needs.	12.4	Begin May 2003

<b>R 6</b>	Develop further sufficient "strength in depth" across all councils. Staff with emergency response duties should be trained and equipped and there should be sufficient resources and back up facilities in emergency control centres.	12.6	Completion  November 2003
<b>R 7</b>	Establish and publicise a training and exercise programme to support community based emergency response particularly at Parish level. This should make full use of volunteers and the local detailed knowledge they hold.	12.7	Completion  July 2003
<b>R 8</b>	Establish a common set of mobilisation arrangements covering staffing, contractors and volunteers, payments to staff, managing staff availability during prolonged emergencies, and maintaining core services.	12.8	Begin  May 2003
<b>R 9</b>	<b>Develop the use of ICT and robust communication systems</b>	12.9	<b>Ongoing</b>

13.1 These strategic recommendations should be taken forward by the County Council through a service improvement plan created in response to the findings of this report. The District and Borough Councils joining in this review have submitted service improvement plans as part of their individual appendices.

13.2 On going monitoring of this report and future improvements in Emergency Planning in East Sussex will be undertaken by the East Sussex Emergency Planning Forum alongside the normal scrutiny and monitoring processes.

### **13.3 Operational recommendations arising from the main findings**

13.4 The Board expects that these operational recommendations would be completed as soon as possible because they could only be effectively tested when a major incident arises. The Board therefore has set a date when it would wish to monitor action taken to implement these recommendations. The operational recommendations should be taken forward by councils individually or collectively as appropriate.

Ref.	Operational recommendation	Finding	Target Date
<b>R 10</b>	Use a wide variety of information giving methods including leaflets, loud-hailers, radio broadcasts, the local press, TV news and information on the internet.	6.2	February 2004
<b>R 11</b>	Ensure the needs of vulnerable people and people who may be outside the usual communication channels through reasons of language or lifestyle are met.	7.3.4	September 2003
<b>R 12</b>	After any major incident conduct debriefs, with open and honest appraisal of the responses made and include all relevant stakeholders.	9.2.4	As required
<b>R 13</b>	Deal with emergencies at the lowest local level with assistance and support being available if required. The Boroughs and Districts should take the lead in an emergency affecting their local areas.	6.4.3	September 2003
<b>R 14</b>	In rest centres information should be well organised and the rest centre layout should be straightforward and easy to understand with a quiet area preserved for those who wanted it. Physical resources should be well managed with enough toilets, phones and suitable mattresses and blankets.	6.4.4	February 2004

<b>R 15</b>	The feasibility of arranging 'one-stop-shops' for advice, information and support, set up in partnership with other agencies as an effective way to meet expectations should be explored.	6.4.4	September 2003
<b>R 16</b>	Suitable identification should be worn by people who are not members of the blue light services but are in the community to help or advise on evacuation.	6.4.5	September 2003

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Operational recommendation</b>	<b>Finding</b>	<b>Target Date</b>
<b>R 17</b>	The community should be involved fully in its own recovery and should look for positive improvements to come from the disaster.	6.5.2	February 2004
<b>R 18</b>	<b><u>Planning will include training for members in their role before, during and after a major incident and community leadership should feature in the training plan.</u></b>	7.3.2	September 2003
<b>R 19</b>	Audit trails of spending relating to emergency responses to be maintained and for records of actions taken during the response stages to be kept.	7.2.6	June 2003

<b>R 20</b>	Emergency planning should broaden its remit, drawing together the related elements of resilience – emergency planning, business continuity planning and risk management.	8.3.6	September 2003
<b>R 21</b>	Establish an electronic version of the County Emergency Plan that can be mounted on the internet and accessed by managers, councillors, chief executives, partner agencies and the public at appropriately password protected levels.	9.2.1	September 2003
<b>R 22</b>	Establish a multi-agency database of information relating to managing major incidents.	9.2.2	September 2003

### **13.5 Efficiency savings**

The Board is confident that efficiency savings will arise from better working practices arising from the recommendations in the review. The increased level of emergency planning across the joint councils taking part in the review will produce substantial savings across the county when next joint mobilisation is used in response to a major incident. There could also be savings to life and limb which cannot be accurately quantified. The morale of residents of the county could be increased as a result to quicker, more efficient emergency response action.

The review originally set out to achieve at least 2% efficiency savings for East Sussex County Council. However, 2% of the county budget for emergency planning is only £800 and this reflects the limited funds made available for the Emergency Planning Service. Obviously, the savings made as a result of the improved response to a major incident will far exceed this sum.

## **13.6 Costing recommendations**

Strategic recommendations 1-8 do not require any additional funds and will be achieved through better working and through increased effectiveness of planning and mobilisation arrangements.

Strategic recommendation 9 concerns ITC and it is expected that any Internet or electronic emergency planning developments will take place over existing computer systems and networks or be incorporated into the design of any new ITC developments. The latter are purchased corporately. The Board recommends that ITC equipment should not be purchased exclusively for the use of emergency planning.

The operational recommendations may involve some additional expenditure to create greater resilience in some emergency response centres and additional training exercises. These are covered in the individual councils' appendices. Otherwise, the recommendations are expected to be absorbed in improved working practices and

no additional costs will be incurred.

## **14 Overview of Emergency Planning in East Sussex**

**Two diagrams are used.**

**One shows the process through which a co-ordinated response to a major incident is achieved.**

The second shows the network of contacts and agencies and how they relate together.

# **An example of a co-ordinated response to a major incident**

## **Local Authority Emergency Planning Network**

### **15 Local Reviews by Councils supporting the joint review**

15.1 Each of the District and Borough councils has fully supported the joint best value review and has submitted an appendix relating to emergency planning in its area.

15.2 The contributions conformed to a common format and covered:

- A brief description of the District / Borough and any local factors which affect exposure to risk of emergency incidents.
- How the District / Borough Council organised itself for the Best Value Review in terms of member and officer involvement reporting back from the Board and liaison with staff and local stakeholders.
- An outline of any work done at the local level to complement the joint work done at the county level such as consultations or focus groups
- Local issues for the District / Borough Council in the delivery of emergency planning
- An assessment of options to address identified issues.
- A service Improvement Plan with proposed actions, priorities, targets, resources, responsibilities and outcomes.

See appendices for individual Borough and District council reports:

Appendix 9 - Eastbourne Borough Council

Appendix 10 - Hastings Borough Council

Appendix 11 - Lewes District Council

Appendix 12 - Rother District Council

Appendix 13 - Wealden District Council

## **16 Appendices**

Additional information to support the findings of the review:

Appendix 1 - The members of the joint review board

Appendix 2 - The original scope of the review

Appendix 3 - The method and the objectives

Appendix 4 - The programme of consultations

Appendix 5 – The expectations of the parishes

Appendix 6 – The results of benchmarking and comparison exercises

Appendix 7 – Risk Assessment and specialist response plans

Appendix 8 – Operational recommendations in addition to the main strategic recommendations

Reports from the District and Borough Councils supporting the joint review:

Appendix 9 - Eastbourne Borough Council

Appendix 10 - Hastings Borough Council

Appendix 11 - Lewes District Council

Appendix 12 - Rother District Council

Appendix 13 - Wealden District Council