



REPORT TO: Cabinet

DATE: 24 August 2005

DEPARTMENT: Department of Corporate Policy & Improvement

REPORTING OFFICER: Civil Contingencies and Resilience Officer
(*Roy Firth*)

SUBJECT: **CIVIL CONTINGENCIES CORPORATE STRATEGY**

WARD/S AFFECTED: All

FORWARD PLAN REF:

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the Civil Contingencies Corporate Strategy. The contents of the strategy were considered by Corporate Management Team on the 11 August and recommended for approval by Cabinet.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet considers and approves:

- (i) the Civil Contingencies Corporate Strategy (CCCS);
- (ii) that once approved the document be published on the Council's website;
- (iii) that Members and Officers be briefed on the CCCS.

3.0 RECOMMENDED REASONS FOR DISCUSSION

3.1 The Council needs to produce a Corporate Strategy to establish clear objectives and priorities and to enable it to meet the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act.

4.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND RECOMMENDED FOR REJECTION

4.1 None.

5.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

5.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places upon Category/responders a number of statutory duties and establishes a framework for the delivery of civil protection which is consistent throughout the UK.

5.2 To ensure the Council complies with the requirements of the Act the Council needs to put in place a corporate strategy. This will enable the Council to move forward from our current position to where we need to be in 3 years time in a co-ordinated way with clear objectives and priorities.

5.3 It establishes the link between the Council's vision, its corporate service action objectives, the Council's approach to the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, agreed targets and responsibilities.

5.4 Once agreed the document will form part of the revised incident response scheme and will ensure that all those involved in planning and responding are aware of their responsibilities and what the Council's objectives and priorities are.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 The Civil Contingencies Corporate Strategy is the cornerstone of a well managed co-ordinated approach by the Council and its officers to emergency planning.

6.2 It will provide a basis for a consistent approach in the way in which the Council responds to an event or emergency and how we cooperate with partners and local communities.

Background Papers -

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SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT / POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

		Implications are		
		Positive	Neutral	Negative
A	Economy	✓		
B	Environment	✓		
C	Social Equity			
i)	General		✓	
ii)	Customer Care / People with Disabilities	✓		
iii)	Health Implications	✓		
D	Crime and Disorder Implications		✓	

If all comments lie within the shaded areas, the proposal is sustainable.

HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL



CIVIL CONTINGENCIES CORPORATE STRATEGY

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LEGISLATION AND STATUTORY DUTIES

On the 18 November 2004 the Civil Contingencies Bill received Royal Assent and it is now the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It establishes the framework for a consistent level of civil protection across the United Kingdom and it regulates all responders approach in the way they function in an emergency especially towards partnership working.

It designated all District, Unitary and County Councils as Category 1 Responders and placed a number of statutory duties on them:-

- Assess local risks and use this to inform emergency plans
- Put in place emergency plans
- Put in place Business Continuity Management Arrangements
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- Provide advice and assistance to business and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

DEFINITION OF AN EMERGENCY

The Council for the purpose of this strategy has adopted the Acts definition of an emergency as:

- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place within the United Kingdom;
- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment or a place in the United Kingdom;
- war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.

This definition is concerned with the consequences rather than with the cause or source, therefore an emergency inside or outside of the territorial limits of the UK is covered provided that it has consequences inside the UK.

DETERMINATION OF WHEN AN EMERGENCY HAS OCCURRED

The Council has considered when to determine that an emergency has occurred and agreed that this would be:

- where the emergency would be likely to seriously obstruct its ability to perform its functions; or
- where it would be disagreeable to act to prevent, reduce control or mitigate the emergencies effects or otherwise take actions; or
- would be unable to act without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.

REGIONAL/SUB REGIONAL

Prior to 1 April 2005 emergency planning was undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council with support from District Councils. The County Council received through Civil Defence Grant funding £12k for each of the District Councils and £160k in its own right. The Act changed the way that emergency planning was to be undertaken and made provision for direct funding to all District Councils.

It also established a framework for the co-operation of all Category 1 responders which are coterminous with police authority areas. This framework which operates under the umbrella of the Local Resilience forum is managed by the County Council with the Category 1 Responders providing either monitory or other resources to service the forum.

The County Council also offers a full Service Level Agreement for the provision of some aspects of Emergency Planning in return for a fixed percent of the Rate Support Grant settlement.

Harrogate is in the process of agreeing to a memorandum of understanding between North Yorkshire County Council and itself which sets out each others responsibilities and resource provision. To achieve its objectives as outlined in the action (appendix A) it has established an emergency planning unit with a Civil Contingencies/ Resilience Officer and a Civil Contingencies Support Officer.

HARROGATE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S POSITION

CORPORATE STRATEGY

The Council's Corporate Strategy has a vision "To make the Harrogate District a better place to live, work and visit by preserving its heritage enhancing its unique environment, delivering first-class public services and ensuring everyone can share its success.

This strategy contributes towards meeting the requirements of the Council's corporate service action objectives of:

- keeping the District safe
- first-class services
- supporting or growing local economy
- organisational improvement.

APPROACH TO STRATEGY

The Council's approach to the statutory requirements of the Act is to try to reduce or prevent identified risk wherever possible and to inform Business Continuity Plans through risk assessment. This strategy therefore should be read in conjunction with the Council's Corporate Risk Management Strategy.

It will demonstrate the commitment of the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service to anticipation risks and putting in plans to prevent, reduce or respond to an emergency. It will identify key roles and responsibilities of individual Managers and the Council's expectations and accountability of them. It will provide mechanisms by which the plans and responsible officers can be monitored to ensure compliance with Council's policy.

It will set down the Council's aims in dealing with civil contingencies and the community and the need to maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public of the probability of an event. It gives some background information and sets out strategic objectives and aims and the action plan on how we will achieve our goals.

It is the nature of major incidents that they are unpredictable and each will present a unique set of challenges. The Council's strategy is to have developed core processes to deal with the uncertainty and unpredictability of whatever happens and to bring about a rapid return to normal levels of service. It will achieve this through its ability to work on its own or as part of a multi-agency response group across organisational boundaries.

The format and content of this strategy have been agreed by Corporate Management Team and endorsed by Cabinet. It is subject to annual review, updated as appropriate and is available on the Council's Emergency Planning website. Included in this strategy is a Civil Contingency Management Plan (Appendix A) which sets out in detail the roles, responsibilities, structures and how it interconnects with external responders.

OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

This strategy sets out a operational framework for the Council in relation to major incidents and how the Council will prepare for such events.

It sets out in the Management Plan the principles and guidelines that the Council will adopt in developing their ability to handle such incidents. A major incident is defined as “an event whose impact cannot be handled within routine service arrangements and requires implementation of special procedures to respond to it.”

This will be co-ordinated through the Council Emergency Planning Unit in association with the Service Departments and its key partners.

The Council will undertake and publish those areas of risk that it considers to be a major threat to the Council, its services and its residents in the Corporate Risk Register. These risks will then be addressed by Emergency and Business Continuity plans both at a corporate and departmental level. They seek to reduce or remove the threat wherever possible and to have a plan of action in case the threat occurs along with the identification of the key roles and responsibilities.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

For this strategy to be effective the Council needs to identify the key stakeholders who may be affected or involved in an incident or event. Those identified are:-

- Members
 - Executive/Cabinet Members
 - Scrutiny/Regulatory Committee
 - Ward Members

- Residents and Service Users
 - Communities
 - Individuals
 - Vulnerable Persons
 - Visitors (tourist and delegates)
 - Businesses

- Employees
 - Senior Management
 - Trade Unions

- Media – both local and national

- Key Partners including:-
 - Parish Council's
 - Emergency Services - Police, Fire, Ambulance etc
 - Environment Agency
 - Neighbouring Authorities
 - Military Services
 - Voluntary Sector
 - Utility Services
 - Regional Agencies, Regional Resilience Team etc
 - Government Agencies
 - MP's
 - Health Services HPA PCT etc

AIMS AND PRIORITIES

The aim of the Council in relation to its duty under the Civil Contingencies Act is:-

“To build resilience into its services by focusing on managing disruptive challenge, anticipation, prevention, preparation, response and recovery to events and situations that can lead to emergencies”.

To achieve this the Council is committed to providing relevant services and has adopted the following seven principles which anyone who has contact with the service can expect. These are:-

1. INTEGRATED APPROACH

- the service is well planned and is integrated into all service provisions and there is a well planned Integrated Management Response to an event.
- that it is embedded into the management processes and therefore is considered during service delivery, the planning process and the decision making.

2. PROACTIVE

That it is used to try to prevent or to mitigate the consequences of an event.

3. EQUAL AND INCLUSIVE

That it will be used to promote awareness of Business Continuity Management to the Commercial sector and voluntary organisation

4. COOPERATIVE

That it will enable co-operation and information sharing between all Category 1 and 2 responders in performing all their main duties effectively and will provide an overview of key roles responsibilities, structures and plans in place for managing an event

5. ROBUST

That it will build into services some resilience to be able to cope with an event that would otherwise have disrupted the delivery of the service

6. LEGAL

- Its overall objective is to meet the requirements of the Act and to contribute to the Council's vision of making Harrogate District a better

place to live, work and visit.

7. **COST EFFECTIVE**

- Will deliver best value to the residents and visitors.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Corporate Strategy has four strategic priorities.

Key Priority One – Partnership Working

To establish a partnership approach that will enable the resolution of all difficulties that occur during an event with the principal aim of preserving life and property, minimising harmful effects and bringing about a rapid return to normal life.

Key Priority Two – Risk Assessments

We will, with our partners identify the main risks and threats to our community and publish these in the Community Risk Register and the Corporate Risk Register.

Key Priority Three – Planning

Use the identified risks to inform Emergency Planning and Business Continuity and to use this information in the production of appropriate plans.

Key Priority Four – Training

To develop best practice in training and exercising to enable the Council and its partners to respond to an event in an effective efficient and seamless manner.

Strategic Priority One – Partnership Working

“To establish a partnership dedicated to the resolution of all difficulties that occur during an event”.

To achieve this the following objectives have been agreed:-

- We will work with all responders within the District and neighbouring areas to ensure the most effective management to an event.
- We will be a partner in the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum and pursue a policy of co-operation.
- We will co-operate in addressing the main issues.
- We will share information with other responders, local business and the local community.
- We will promote encourage and support the active involvement of the

community in response to an emergency or event.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires all Category 1 and 2 responders to co-operate with each other within the local resilience area which is based upon the police area in our case North Yorkshire. This allows all responders to draw upon each others experience and skills. The principal mechanism to achieve this is the North Yorkshire Local Resilience Forum and the sub-groups which work within it.

It is also a requirement to share information but the release of some information to some audiences will need to be controlled due to its sensitivity.

Strategic Priority Two – Risk Assessments

“To identify the main risks and threats to our community”.

To achieve this the following objectives have been agreed:-

- we will work with our partner in undertaking a multi-agency risk assessment of threats to our community;
- we will publish a Community Risk Register of all identified risks;
- we will seek to reduce or mitigate identified risks;
- we will seek to build resilience into our service provision;
- we will take account of the needs of the vulnerable sections of our community.

Risk assessment is the first step in the emergency planning and business continuity planning processes and it allows the Council to make plans that are sound and proportionate to the risk. It is a statutory requirement that the Council publish their risk assessments to the extent necessary to reduce the impact of an emergency on the community. We must therefore use this to our advantage as a mechanism of raising awareness amongst our local communities.

Strategic Priority Three – Planning

“To produce emergency plans and business continuity plans to be able to respond to an event”.

To achieve this the following objectives have been agreed:-

- we will ensure the most effective management response of resources to a major event;
- we will maintain a dedicated team of staff who will co-ordinate the activities of the Council’s response to an event;

- we will prepare and maintain plans to address identified risks and for our critical services;
- we will provide the resources required to pursue the aims of specific and generic plans;
- we will ensure effective communications with local residents about major emergencies/events using all major media and communication systems and methods;
- we will make special arrangements within the planning process for the vulnerable sections of our community;
- we will consult during the planning process with stakeholders the local business community members of the public, ethnic groups, the supply chain volunteers and other responders.

Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management is at the heart of civil protection. The Act requires that Category 1 responders maintains plans for preventing, reducing controlling or mitigating the effects of an emergency. To be able to deliver the requirements of both the Civil Contingencies Act and our strategy this is a key component and we should ensure that they are reviewed on a regular basis. This will enable us to respond to an event or emergency whilst at the same time maintaining our critical services especially to the vulnerable.

Strategic Priority Four – Training

“To develop best practice in the training of staff and the exercising of the plans to enable the Council and its partners to respond”.

To achieve this the following objectives have been agreed.

- we will support and participate in multi-agency training and exercises;
- we will ensure all our staff are fully trained to be able to deal with an event or emergency;
- we will assist local communities in training and exercising their plans as far as it is practicable with the resources available;
- we will include in our plans details of exercises and training undertaken and incorporate any reasons learned from these events.

It is important to ensure that relevant staff, volunteers and their responders are confident and competent concerning our plans and the response we make. It is particularly important that staff receive appropriate training prior to exercising. They should be familiar with:

the content of the plan
their role in implementing the plans

the skills and knowledge required in a crisis.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Management Plan sets out the organisation and operational arrangements for the delivery of the strategy and this is set out in Appendix A. It establishes the individual responsibility for delivering the key elements of the plan and is embedded into normal operational plans.

MEMBERS ROLE

The Elected Members clearly have a role in emergency planning, both in ensuring the Policy and Procedures are in place to deal with emergencies and during an emergency.

The members role is set out in Appendix B and establishes the link between members, officers and the community.

ACTION PLAN

The action plan for the implementation of the Civil Contingencies Corporate Strategy is set out in Appendix C.

This will be monitored by the Executive Director and the Corporate Management Team. The Civil Contingencies/Resilience Officer will be responsible for the implementation and co-ordination of the corporate action with Directors and Heads of Service taking responsibility for their services.

KEY TARGETS

It is crucial that the objectives and aims are translated into measurable targets however this is difficult with civil contingencies as it is often a reactive service.

The Civil Contingencies Management Strategy should deliver these agreed targets.

1. To complete risk assessments by December 2006.
2. To publish a community risk register by December 2006.
3. To produce emergency and business continuity plans to meet identified risks by December 2006.
4. To raise awareness within local communities and assist them in producing a community plan. To have contacted all Parish Councils by December 2005 and arranged a programme of work to be completed by March 2008.
5. To raise awareness of the need for Business Continuity Management in the local business community through local consultation by July 2006.

6. To effectively work with our partners to improve community awareness and preparedness for a major event and will be part of our performance indicators as set out in Appendix D.
7. To consult with relevant members of the public, supply chain stakeholders and local business community and to seek their views on specific issues through a variety of mechanisms such as survey, questionnaire and working groups.
8. To share information with local responders and publish information on our website.
9. To keep our customers informed in the event of an emergency through the local media, our website and via local communities.

The Audit Commission undertook an initial assessment of where the Council is in relation to its arrangements for implementing the requirements of the Act through a self assessment checklist and the actions will be followed up in the Autumn with a further review. This will provide an indication of our performance and our directions of travel as to complying with the Civil Contingencies Act.

The Council will monitor its performance against these targets as a means of measuring its priorities and aims and will publish the results on its website.