

Appendix 2

Emergency Planning and its Relevance to Brexit

All Unitary, County, District and Borough Councils are statutory category 1 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Across Sussex these duties are undertaken with extensive partnership working. Essentially, these are the key elements involved in our current emergency planning arrangements:

- At strategic level, there is the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) which takes a Pan-Sussex approach and includes in its membership the Chief Executive officers of Sussex local authorities
- Lewes District Council (along with Eastbourne, Hastings and Wealden) source their operational needs from East Sussex County Council and form the East Sussex partnership (ESREP). Only Rother choose to operate outside this partnership. All partners are represented on the ESREP Board which meets quarterly to decide on strategic direction and operational needs
- As part of the ESREP arrangement we have access to a more joined-up approach in respect of planning and training. We are also part of a mutual aid agreement with neighbouring authorities to enable flexible deployment of the necessary resources in response to major incidents
- All Councils have overarching generic Emergency Response Plans which cover all their legislative responsibilities, and are viewable on Council websites
- Underpinning the overall generic plans are subsidiary plans covering the readiness and deployment of rest centres, set up and function of the emergency control centre, and high level potential risks, for example flood/coast protection plans
- In addition, bespoke emergency event plans are created for specific high risk events in particular areas, such as bonfire night in Lewes
- The Council's role is to work in partnership with other category 1 agencies such as the emergency services, in responding to major incidents
- In most emergency situations, the lead role is taken by the police. Specific Council responsibilities include strategic response at Gold/Silver level, and operational response at bronze level, such things as provision of rest centres, transport, catering, temporary accommodation, support to vulnerable people, road closures, liaison with utilities and other agencies, etc. Depending on the nature of the incident, the Council will have a significant and potentially prolonged role in respect of business continuity and recovery
- In order to provide this response, we have a wide range of staff at all levels trained as Gold, Silver and Bronze operatives. Corporate management team are also trained to perform at Gold levels
- We have a pool of senior officers trained as Incident Liaison Officers who rotate the 24/7 emergency call out function a week at a time

- Training exercises are frequently held both for strategic and operational staff. A recent desktop training exercise, facilitated by specialist trainers, was held in Lewes for senior staff, in respect of testing the revised emergency plan against an emergency scenario
- We also work closely with the emergency services and participate in joint training days and we are members of the Sussex Resilience Forum which is the strategic overview body and is the Pan-Sussex multi agency partnership of statutory responders, led by the Police and set up to work together to prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies and major incidents

It is important to understand the difference between Emergency Response Planning and Event Planning. The primary duty on local authorities to be ready and able to respond to an unforeseen emergency situation when it occurs, usually as a result of a request from the emergency services. Event planning, on the other hand, seeks to address a specific known forthcoming event/situation, identify the key risks and put mitigations in place.

Thus, the emergency planning role in respect of Brexit is to focus on those aspects that are most likely to have a particularly high risk in this area. As a result, the primary focus in terms of specifically focused planning has centred on the potential impact of Brexit on Newhaven Port.

Of course, there are potentially many aspects to Brexit which may cause emergency situations such as food and medicine shortages, stockpiling, public disorder, and the possibility of a snap general election and/or referendum.

Dealing with initial occurrence of an emergency is one thing. However, prolonged deployment of staff can then have a knock-on effect on our ability to continue to deliver core services. Then, depending on the nature of the emergency, there could be a prolonged and expensive recovery of the normal situation in the aftermath.

These are issues shared across the country and, for the most part, it is the duty of local authorities to be ready to respond to any emergency situation that may occur as a result of any of these or other issues and we are as confident as it is possible to be that we are prepared.