

Staffordshire Prepared

The Newsletter of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum
Issue 4 – February 2008

Staffordshire
Civil Contingencies Unit



Supporting Resilience in Staffordshire
www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk

Staffordshire Flood Plan Starts to Take Shape

Work on Staffordshire's new flood plan is now in full flow following the appointment of a series of Sub Group Chairs.



John Tradewell

The Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan was commissioned by the SRF and is being governed by a project board led by John Tradewell, Director of Law and Governance at Staffordshire County Council. The Project Board set the scope and appointed Marie Dale as Project Manager, with support from Ian Harrison (Fire) as Deputy, Laura Dawson (Environment Agency) and Sarah Moore (CCU).

The Project Manager has set up 10 sub-groups to complete work for the SEFP and they will report on progress and issues to the Project Team at monthly Sub Group Chairs meetings.

Marie Dale, Project Manager for the SEFP said, "All involved face a busy few months ahead. We are planning to launch the first draft of the new plan at the SRF Conference on 19 June."

The list of sub-groups and Chairs include:

Emergency Services – Ian Harrison Fire, Health – to be confirmed
Local Authorities – Chris Hawkrigde County Council; Flood Packs – Sarah Moore CCU; Warning and Informing – Lizzie Thatcher Lichfield DC;
Cat 2 responders – Bob Brown CCU; Initial Notifications – Malcolm Weatherall Met Office; Voluntary Sector – William Read CCU and Area Specific – Sue McCarthy Environment Agency.

Marie Dale added: "We have drawn on experience from across the SRF in putting together the list of Sub-group Chairs and their supporting agencies."



Marie Dale



Ian Harrison



William Read



Bob Brown

Emergency Plans Tested



Staffordshire's emergency plans were tested at an exercise involving a mock fire in a chemical plant.

Exercise Saredon took place at the Four Ashes base of the SI Group-UK in February.

The exercise tested the emergency response and evacuation processes against COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) standards laid down by the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency.

The emergency services were involved, together with voluntary organisations, South Staffordshire District Council and the company.

All parties declared that the exercise was extremely useful and said they were pleased with the response of participants.

Prestigious Conference Planned for Staffs

Preparations are continuing for the Staffordshire Resilience Forum Conference on 19 June, 2008.

A planning group headed by Principal Civil Contingencies Officer, Peter Taylor, has been holding regular meetings and invitations are currently being sent out. A new logo has been prepared for the conference.



The event at the Yarnfield Conference Centre, near Stone, will feature a series of presentations and workshops on themes including flooding, the media and Business Continuity Management.

Risk Register Update

An updated version of the Staffordshire Community Risk Register has been published on the Staffordshire Prepared website.

Risk assessments were reviewed at the start of February, 2008.

A list of the 18 "top tier" risks can be viewed on-line at

www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk.

Calculating the Risks of Pandemic Flu

A new device allowing organisations to calculate the potential impact of a flu pandemic has been launched on the Staffordshire Prepared website.

The Pandemic Influenza Impact Calculator can show service or business managers how many people are likely to be off work at any time during a 15 week episode.

It also gives an indication of the number of people needing to see a doctor, attending hospital and potential number of deaths.

The calculator can be found online at www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk.

Civil Contingencies Officer Bill Almond said: "The calculator is useful but should only be used as a guide. It uses data for the whole population provided by the Department of Health which will include elderly and vulnerable people. If people are working they are less likely to be in a high risk group and this needs to be taken into account when using the calculator as a business tool.

The potential for an outbreak of pandemic flu is seen by experts as a major risk to the UK.

A new national flu pandemic plan was recently drawn-up indicating that infection rates could rise as high as 50 per cent – previous studies had indicated 25 per cent.



The first draft of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum's new Multi Agency Pandemic Flu Action Plan was produced by Bill Almond (pictured) in January, 2008, and has been sent to members of the General Working Group and the Staffordshire Pandemic Flu Committee for comment.

Further information, including posters and leaflets are available from the Department of Health website at www.dh.gov.uk

Training Plan for HAC Staff

A seminar and training exercise is being planned for staff involved in setting up and running Staffordshire's Humanitarian Assistance Centres (HACs).

The county's HAC plan is now complete and is being distributed to SRF members.

HACs were used to help people in South Yorkshire affected by severe flooding in summer 2007.

Now there are plans to invite council staff from Sheffield or Rotherham to share their experiences at a half day seminar and exercise in Staffordshire.

Templates to help guide staff in the setting up and operation of a HAC are to be prepared and further training will involve staff actually setting up a dummy HAC.

Seven HAC sites have been chosen across Staffordshire and an agreement has been reached to use Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Call Centre to operate a "Virtual HAC."

Presentation on Business Continuity Management

Civil Contingencies staff have met business leaders in Stafford to raise awareness of the need to plan for emergencies.

The CCU says all organisations in the county should develop a Business Continuity Management plan to help them bounce back if disaster strikes.

Around 20 people attended a presentation at Stafford Borough Council's Riverside offices where the CCU were invited to give a presentation as part of the council's consultation meeting with non domestic rate payers.



Marie Dale

Civil Contingencies Officer Marie Dale said: "The session was very useful. Feedback was positive and we hope to hold further discussions in the future."

Town Centre Evacuation Plans

The town centre evacuation plan for Burton will be formally launched in the spring. The plan is ready to go live following the success of a multi agency exercise involving nearly 50 players.

The participants had to respond to two scenarios and react to briefings from officers of Staffordshire Police, the Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment Agency.

A leaflet to accompany the launch has been produced by East Staffordshire Borough Council.

It gives advice on what to do in an emergency together with contact information for the Council and Police. Further information on the Burton plan is available on the council's website at www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk.

Work will now go ahead on completing the evacuation plans for Lichfield and Cannock and a start is due to be made on a plan for Tamworth.

There is already a plan in place for Stafford and major progress has been made on the scheme for Stoke-on-Trent city centre.

RAYNET County Controller Retires



Professor Martin Harrison

When Martin Harrison took a boyhood interest in amateur radio he could not have imagined where it would lead.

But years later, as controller of Staffordshire's Raynet service, the retired Keele University Professor has helped to trace a missing travelling circus in Mexico and

worked hard to help keep the people of Staffordshire safe during emergencies including floods, heavy snow and train crashes.

Professor Harrison retired as RAYNET County Controller at the end of 2007 after more than 25 years in the post. He came to Staffordshire in 1966 as head of the politics department at Keele University where he also served as Deputy Vice Chancellor.

His interest in emergency communications developed during the hot summer of 1976 when radio amateurs rallied to help the emergency services cope with a series of fires on Cannock Chase.

At the time, the police and fire services shared a single radio channel and their obvious need for extra communications led Professor Harrison to help.

Radio amateurs had originally set up a RAYNET service in Staffordshire to provide help in the event of a nuclear war. A network was devised linking all the district council head offices with the county council headquarters in Stafford.

During Professor Harrison's years as a member much of RAYNET's activities centred on helping at major outdoor community events such as marathons, sponsored walks and horse endurance trials.

But RAYNET also provided vital help to Staffordshire's emergency services during major incidents and in 1985 was able to help following an earthquake in Mexico areas.

All communications were lost across Mexico and RAYNET responded to a request from the police who had been approached by a distressed young Mexican girl at a school in Staffordshire.

Professor Harrison said: "By working with our Mexican colleagues we were able to obtain reassurance within hours that her parents were safe. We then continued to work in conjunction with the Foreign Office and other RAYNET groups to trace people including members of a travelling circus and occupants of a yacht in Acapulco bay.

"It was immensely rewarding to be able to inform people that their friends or family were safe."

What is Raynet?

The Radio Amateur Emergency Network (RAYNET) is a national voluntary communications service provided for the community by licensed radio operators.

It was formed in 1953 following severe flooding on the East Coast.

The organisation has around 2,000 members and provides assistance at hundreds of events each year. Members have access to a wide range of radio bands and equipment, giving a unique communication service.

RAYNET is regarded as a professional support organisation by both the statutory and voluntary emergency services.

Keeping Contacts Up To Date

Staffordshire's CCU is appealing for help from Resilience Forum members in keeping contacts up to date.



Andy Marshall

Good communication links will be vital in the event of a major emergency and the CCU needs to keep its data base of contact information up to date at all times.

Forum members are being asked to carry out a weekly review of personnel and to send any changes to the CCU.

Director Andy Marshall said: "We must be vigilant in keeping contacts as up to date as possible. And from a personal point of view, letting us know that someone has been replaced will avoid people getting an unnecessary wake up call in the dead of night perhaps several months after they have retired or moved on to a new job."

Appeal to Media Managers

Meanwhile, Ian Fegan, chair of the communication joint agency project group, is calling on all Heads of Communication to provide him with their out of hours contact numbers.

Ian can be contacted at Staffordshire Police headquarters on 08453 302010

New Resilient Telecoms Group

A new working group is being set up to tackle telecommunication issues.

Civil Contingencies Officer Steve Berry said the group would advise on the best use of and resilience of telecoms equipment.

"We are putting together a working group of the technical people behind communications across all services to ensure we have the best possible resilient communication plan in place," he said.

"This will involve contacts in all operation rooms for the emergency services, health bodies and local authorities."

New satellite phones have recently been purchased by resilience forum members following a £3,000 grant from the Civil Contingencies Secretariat.

Steve Berry can be contacted by e mail at s.berry@staffordshirefire.gov.uk.

Giving Shelter to People in Need

Emergencies can often lead to people being evacuated from their homes. Problems can occur at any time and in any weather leaving people vulnerable and exposed.



Carol Gibbs

It is important that services are available to help people who may be cold, injured or distressed.

Staff from councils across Staffordshire are on call to set up rest centres when problems occur.

Carol Gibbs, a neighbourhood manager at Stoke-on-Trent City Council, is responsible for setting up rest centres in the city.

She said: "The challenges faced can vary enormously. The two most recent centres set up in the city followed a suspicious death at the Salvation Army accommodation in Stoke and a gas explosion in Longton.

"The incident at the Salvation Army lasted over two days and we had to put up 50 people overnight at the Stoke Recreation Centre.

"In contrast, the Longton incident was over quite quickly and we only had to deal with 10 people."

A rest centre manager is responsible for providing all necessities including food, clothing and washing facilities.

The city council also has beds and bedding in storage for use at rest centres.

Carol added: "A number of the people evacuated from the Salvation Army needed medication but they were unable to get access to their rooms during the police investigation.

"Our staff had to arrange to collect new medication from GPs to give to the residents."

Temporary Mortuaries Contract Signed

A contract has been signed to provide Staffordshire with temporary mortuary facilities.

The three year agreement with Kenyon International involves the provision of large temporary marquee style buildings.

The contract is designed to cater for a major incident such as a plane or train crash with mass fatalities.

Work to identify suitable sites for the temporary buildings has been carried out by the Civil Contingencies Unit.

Kenyon has signed similar agreements with around 40 areas across the UK.

Plan to Aid Stranded Drivers

A new scheme is planned to help motorists who run into trouble on major roads.

The Highways Agency (HA) wants to introduce a support service for users of motorways and strategic highways.

The plans were discussed at a seminar in late January at the Fire and Rescue Headquarters, Pirehill.

Roads classified as strategic highways in Staffordshire are the A500, the section of the A50 between Stoke-on-Trent and Uttoxeter, the A5 and the A38.

The Highways Agency plan will be supported by the British Red Cross and the RSPCA.

Discussions led by the HA will now be held with SRF members to find the best way of making the Highways Agency's plans work effectively in Staffordshire.

Rest Centre Training

Training for potential rest centre staff is ongoing at councils across Staffordshire.

Around 100 people have so far been trained at councils including South Staffordshire District Council, Tamworth Borough Council, Stafford Borough Council and Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

Training sessions are run by Civil Contingencies Officers. Council staff should contact the CCU officer assigned to work with their authority for further information.

Career Opportunities

Are you interested in a career in Civil Contingencies? The Staffordshire Prepared website has information available for anyone considering a career as a Civil Contingencies Officer and invites potential applicants to contact them. For further information please log on to the website at www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk.