

# Staffordshire Prepared



## The Newsletter of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum

Issue No: 17

Date: April 2011

### Staffordshire County Council and Stoke on Trent City Council work closely with the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit

In a positive new development, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council have taken steps to combine their respective internal Emergency Planning functions with those of the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU).

This arrangement commenced on 1 April 2011 and will look to drive greater economy, efficiency and effectiveness through closer working arrangements. Commenting on the initiative, Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies outlined the significant benefits that will result: *“Stoke and County are our two biggest responders and their support across the entire spectrum of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 is vital to ensuring that we provide as joined-up a service as possible across the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) partnership. This is a tremendous opportunity to promote greater consistency of effort in all we do”*. The team will continue to be based out of the CCU office in Stafford.



### What's In This Issue...

#### Latest News

- Partnership working
- Staffordshire Prepared website updates
- Weather Warnings

#### Plan Updates

- CBRN
- Recovery
- Reservoir

#### Training & Exercises

- Accreditation
- Exercise Planning
- 2011 / 12 Prospectus
- Dates for your Diary

#### Spotlight on

- Newcastle under Lyme

### Information Sharing Forum

The next Information Sharing Forum is planned for 8 July 2011, once again at The Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford, thanks to Stafford Borough Council.

The CCU is currently planning the event and is requesting agenda items from SRF partners, in relation to Civil Contingencies work ongoing in Staffordshire or affecting Staffordshire.

### Civil Contingencies Unit shares skills with Staffordshire University

CCU staff recently delivered a lecture to students at Staffordshire University in return for CCU staff being invited to attend a number of lectures at the University to aid personal development.

The lecture given by the CCU was about resilience nationally, and how it is managed more locally in Staffordshire.

The lectures offered by the University in return covered a range of topics including the 2004 Asian Tsunami and the role of HM Coroner.

### Staffordshire Represented in EU Project

The work of the SRF partnership was featured in the final workshop of an EU-funded project in April. The COIM-Best project ([www.coimbest.eu](http://www.coimbest.eu)) is looking at ways of promoting greater consistency of approach to multi-agency training and exercising across the EU. The one-day workshop, which included responders from Italy, Spain, Romania, Germany, Holland and France, featured an overview of the Staffordshire Strategic Leaders' Guide and the one-to-one coaching events run by the CCU.



## [www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk) Gets a New Look!

The Staffordshire Prepared website, maintained by the CCU, has been given a brand new look and feel.

Following the branding and success of the Preparing for the Unexpected Guide and Poster, the CCU has worked closely with Staffordshire County Council to include these updates as part of the transition to the new Contensis Management System for the website.

The website now includes an alternative home page function which can be used during incidents and a comments section on each page which will be monitored by the CCU.



**The SRF is now on Twitter so for up to date information on resilience in Staffordshire and how you can prepare yourselves for emergencies follow us @StaffsPrepared. This site is maintained by the CCU.**

### Preparing for the unexpected in Staffordshire



### SAM (Strategic Assessment Meeting) – Winter Pressures

Year on year the winter period puts a massive strain on NHS, Emergency Services and Local Authority resources as we strive to respond to the needs of the community we serve come rain, wind or as last winter snow!

In an effort to co-ordinate the response the second SAM for Winter Pressures is being held at University Hospital of North Staffordshire on 5 May 2011, bringing together representatives from across the SRF to share plans and arrangements well in advance of the weather and identify lessons to take forward.

### Spotlight on Civil Contingencies in

NEWCASTLE · UNDER · LYME  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



#### Flooding

Newcastle Borough Council and the CCU recently facilitated a multi-agency exercise to validate the Newcastle Borough Flood Plan (a local Flood Plan). The exercise was attended by organisations including the Environment Agency, Staffordshire County Council, the Health Protection Agency, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and Staffordshire Police. The Plan will now be revised to incorporate lessons identified and then re-circulated to partners.

#### Incidents

Following the fire in the Poundstretcher Store on the High Street in the town centre, the CCU also facilitated a small, multi-agency debrief to identify key issues and lessons to take forward, in order to ensure that procedures within, and between, responders, are effective.

**If you would like to spotlight your organisation please contact the CCU.**

## High Integrity Telecommunications System (HITS)

Since the obsolete Emergency Communications Network (ECN) was decommissioned there has been a need to set up a resilient and independent telecommunications system that will still function when the main networks (such as landlines and mobile phones) are unavailable or degraded. HITS is designed to provide this essential service and will allow communication between National, Regional and Local levels of crisis coordination during almost all disruptive events. The Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat on behalf of HM Government manages the project and an element of the Telecommunications Sub Group is managing the installation locally.

HITS is a satellite-based independent communications system that will use the advanced Skynet 5 military network. The hardened Skynet 5 constellation and dedicated HITS bandwidth combine to ensure an “always available” service to a network of 50 sites across the UK, mainly in Police Strategic Command Centres (SCCs) (in Staffordshire known as the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG)) across England and Wales. There will be one HITS site per Police Force Area. In Staffordshire this site is located at Police Headquarters, Weston Road, Stafford. Each HITS site will have a satellite dish installed, along with end user equipment including laptops, digital phones and a printer and is accredited to RESTRICTED which will allow digital transmission of both voice and data. The supplier, Paradigm Secure Communications Ltd has already completed the first stage of installation at Police HQ with the final stage due to commence shortly.

HITS has been designed from the start to interoperate fully with the National Resilience Extranet (NRE). HITS users will need NRE accounts to be able to share information up to RESTRICTED. As hosts of HITS all Police Forces have been offered NRE licences for use over HITS, giving the NRE national coverage.



All responders operating from the SCG will need to have an NRE licence to be able to communicate across HITS in the event of an SCG activation.

**To this end Staffordshire Police are requesting all Category 1 and 2 responders in Staffordshire forward to the CCU confirmation of:**

- **How many NRE licenses the organisation hold;**
- **The name and contact details of the NRE Sponsor for the organisation.**

**Please can you forward this information to [s.berry@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:s.berry@staffordshirefire.gov.uk).**

NATIONAL RESILIENCE EXTRANET



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

## Responders prepare for a CBRN Incident

A new plan that outlines how Staffordshire would respond to an attack involving Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear agents has recently been completed. The process was led by Staffordshire Police with assistance from the CCU, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, West Midlands Ambulance Service, Staffordshire Local Authorities and local health trusts, along with contributions from national agencies such as the Environment Agency and the Health Protection Agency. As well as responding to such an incident the organisations involved would have to oversee the return to normality and so the Staffordshire Recovery Plan has also been updated to provide guidance on how Staffordshire can best approach the difficult task of recovering from such an incident.

There will be a multi-agency exercise, involving the organisations already mentioned as well as representatives from the Military and the voluntary sector, to test both response and recovery on 5 October 2011.

## Changes to Met Office National Severe Weather Warnings

A new look National Severe Weather Warning Service, shaped by feedback received during responder workshops, was launched on 30 March 2011.

Gone are Advisories, Early Warnings, and Flash Warnings. These have been replaced by a more simple system of Alerts and Warnings.

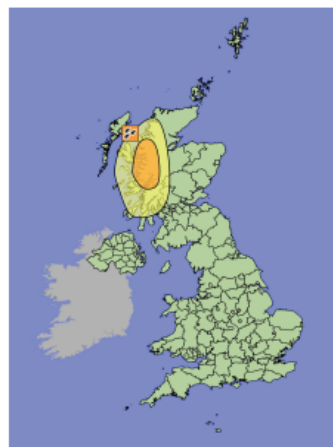
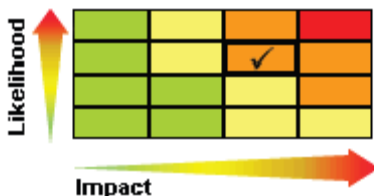
The old system of Early Warnings and Flash Warnings was not impact-focused. Hence, it was not easy for responders to gauge the potential disruption the forecast weather was likely to cause.

The new system focuses on potential impacts based around a system of Alerts and Warnings. Warnings are issued for severe weather expected within 24 hours, whereas if the severe weather is not expected within 24 hours an Alert is issued.

Each Alert or Warning is then assigned a colour state from the matrix below using a combination of likelihood and potential impact. All Alerts and Warnings will appear on the Met Office website and Amber / Red Alerts and Warnings will be sent directly to responders.

A risk matrix will be available along with comments from the Chief Forecaster explaining uncertainties etc. Weather icons will also appear on the warning map so it is clear to the user which type of severe weather is expected, as shown in the example below.

### Example of the impact table and a new warning



The **Staffordshire Recovery Plan** has been revised and is now available to SRF partners on the members' area of the Staffordshire Prepared website. Although it has not yet been formally signed off by the SRF, it has been through the SRF Operations Group, and can be accessed and used as necessary. Once the plan has been formally signed off, it will be circulated to the wider resilience partnership.

The next stage will be training and awareness-raising for SRF partners, and there will be opportunities later in the year to exercise the Plan, including the CBRN exercise in October, and a new RAVEN exercise focussing on Recovery, starting in December. For more information about RAVEN Recovery, please see the Training and Exercise section of the Staffordshire Prepared [website](#).

## Staffordshire Generic Offsite Reservoir Plan Update

Completion of the Reservoir Plan has been delayed slightly, while the CCU carries out research into the readiness of reservoir owners to respond to an incident in Staffordshire.

Planning assumptions for the Plan, provided by DEFRA state that reservoir owners will have an alarm in place for rising water levels, and have emergency onsite plans for responding to a reservoir incident.

The CCU has sent questionnaires out to the owners of the 45 reservoirs in Staffordshire, to ascertain their levels of preparedness, and the Plan will then be written to reflect the results.

## Training and Exercises – Updates for All Responders...

April 2011 sees the commencement of the new training and exercise year, set against the challenges of both financial and staffing cut backs across many of our stakeholders and partners. The CCU continues to offer training courses and exercises, designed to better prepare our stakeholders to deal with any potential major or catastrophic events, by providing increased levels of resilience at both individual and organisational level.

Some 963 delegates from the SRF partnership attended training courses or exercises held by the CCU during 2010.

There is a strong emphasis on training and this year will continue to see the provision of the popular Loggist, Forward Control Officer, Rest Centre, Basic Map Reading and Satellite Telephone courses, available throughout the coming year, along with the numerous other courses offered.

The familiar series of multi-agency exercises, Exercise RAVEN, continues to be our beacon and this year will also see the addition of a Recovery based scenario and two exercises have been scheduled to take place later in 2011.

The main development with regards to training and exercises is the accreditation of all training courses and exercises currently run by the CCU. The CCU are now members of CPD Service, the same company who the Emergency Planning College are members of. More details can be found on the Staffordshire Prepared website and also [www.cpduk.co.uk](http://www.cpduk.co.uk).



By visiting the Staffordshire Prepared website and selecting the [Training and Exercise](#) section you can view the latest version of the CCU Prospectus which provides additional details for all training courses and exercises, including planned dates, venues and suggested audiences.

[Download your copy of the Training and Exercise Prospectus here.](#)

As ever there are a number of training courses and exercises planned for the upcoming months and can also be planned for your individual organisations. Visit [www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk) for more information.



## Dates for your Diary

Places are still available on the forthcoming courses and you can book your place on the Staffordshire Prepared website.

17 May 11	Pre Exercise Raven Awareness Training
25 May 11	Map Reading Made Easy
25 May 11	Loggist Training
7 June 11	Forward Control Officer
15 June 11	Satellite Telephone Training
30 June 11	Exercise Raven – Tactical
7 July 11	Loggist Training
14 July 11	Rest Centre Training

## Exercise Amber Light 2

The CCU and University Hospital of North Staffordshire (UHNS) took part in a no notice exercise on 29 March 2011. The Exercise, codenamed Exercise Amber Light 2, involved the deployment of the CCU's Mobile Control Unit (MCU) to support UHNS's Major Incident Control Room in Stoke-on-Trent. CCU staff were put through their paces to test a range of communications equipment fitted to the MCU.



Principal Civil Contingencies Officer Peter Taylor said, "This was an excellent opportunity to set up and run numerous communications tests from the site immediately adjacent to UHNS's emergency control facility. Having tested the full range of equipment, the exercise proved to be extremely worthwhile as we were able to learn a lot about how the CCU would deploy to support UHNS in the event of a real emergency."