

Staffordshire Prepared

The Newsletter of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum
Issue 7- October 2008

Staffordshire
Civil Contingencies Unit



Supporting Resilience in Staffordshire
www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk



Staffordshire Civil Contingencies officers took part in a CBRN exercise in Shropshire – see page 3 for full story.

More Councils Urged to Launch “Director On-call”

Councils across Staffordshire are being urged to operate a director on call rota service.

The system would mean that a senior officer was available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year if a serious incident occurred.

A Director On-call service has already been developed at Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council in partnership with the Civil Contingencies Unit.

Now Newcastle Borough Council and Stafford Borough Council have agreed to launch a service.

Ted Manders, Head of Regeneration at Stafford Borough Council, said: “With only 2 Directors (Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive), the council is intending to use its nine Heads of Service on a weekly rota. This spreads the load and gives strength in depth. Training is being scheduled and a new Grab Bag is being made up with the usual kit.”

The CCU organises civil contingencies training for directors and provides support via the unit’s liaison officer at each council.

Chris Hawkrige, Risk Management Officer, at Staffordshire County Council said: “We have nominated 31 senior directors to act as Directors On-call on a rota basis.

“Each is on duty for a period of one week, during which they will be the County Council’s first senior management point of contact, if a “significant incident” arises.

“The On Duty Director On-call will assess the “incident” and, if appropriate, declare it as a “Major Incident”, thereby activating the County Council’s Major Incident Plan.”

SRF Training Package Takes Off



Steve Hill

A co-ordinated training package for all organisations involved with civil contingencies planning in Staffordshire is up and running.

Civil Contingencies Training Officer Steve Hill has put together a range of events for 2009.

Steve’s appointment earlier this year has led to the establishment of a dedicated training role with the Resilience Forum for the first time.

It will allow a co-ordinated training approach to be developed encompassing all Cat 1 and 2 responders.

Steve said: “The full programme will be published on the Staffordshire Prepared website allowing people to plan ahead.

“It is essential that staff are given the correct training and this will allow us to move forward with a programme of exercises and workshops.”

Training and exercises in the pipeline include tabletop exercises involving the Civil Contingencies Unit and Staffordshire County Council to test the Major Incident Plan on 15 December 2008 and 3 March 2009.

Meanwhile, preparations are now underway for a major exercise to test the new Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan in November 2009.

Partnership working pays off following September floods



Staffordshire Resilience Forum partners worked around the clock after flooding hit the county in early September.

Peter Taylor, Principal Civil Contingencies Officer, said: "We were extremely busy throughout the first weekend of September. At one point on Saturday there were 12 flood warnings in place.

"Civil Contingencies Officers co-ordinated a joint response by the emergency services and local councils to ensure people were kept safe.

"Actions included the delivery of sandbags to protect premises and warning visits to homes in Stafford."

The Silkmore Lane area of Stafford was badly affected along with nearby Baswich and the Penkridge area.

Fazeley, near Lichfield, the scene of severe problems in 2007, was again hit by floods although these were successfully kept away from homes by flood defence barriers.



Raising Awareness of CCU Role

Work to raise the profile of the role of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum and the Civil Contingencies Unit is continuing.

CCU officers have given presentations to the Staffordshire Association of Parish Councils and the Kinver Civic Society in recent weeks.



Andy Marshall

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, said: "It is important that we get out into the community to talk about the work we do.

"People are perhaps more aware, and maybe even concerned, about civil contingencies issues than ever before because of widespread flooding, the threat of terrorism and high profile news stories about Avian Flu.

"We have a duty to reassure the public that we are working hard behind the scenes to ensure we have appropriate plans in place if a serious incident occurs.

"I would urge any community groups who want to find out more to get in touch with the CCU."

For further information, or to enquire about hosting a community meeting, email ccu@staffordshirefire.gov.uk or call 01785 898618 / 01785 898619.

New Police number

Staffordshire Police has issued a new telephone number for non-emergency calls from the public.

Anyone who needs to contact the Force should ring **0300 123 4455**.

The number was unveiled on the side of a hot air balloon lifting off from Trentham Gardens at a special launch event.

People should continue to telephone 999 if they are reporting an emergency.

Staffs Officers Attend CBRN Exercise

Civil Contingencies officers from Staffordshire took part in a Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service exercise.

The training event at Nesscliffe was designed to test the emergency services mass decontamination equipment and procedures.

Mel Page of Staffordshire CCU said: "The lessons learnt from this experience will be rolled out from Shropshire to other fire and rescue services as part of the New Dimensions programme."

Mel has also been involved in work to provide an 'Immediate Protection Suit' (see picture below) for use in NHS Acute Trusts.



The testing is being carried-out in partnership with the West Midlands Ambulance Service.

The suits would be used for dealing with contaminated people until staff could be deployed in full PRPS (Powered Respirator Protective Suits) to decontaminate them.

Checks Urged on Suppliers Contingency Plans

Resilience Forum members are being advised to check the ability of their suppliers to cope in a crisis.

Organisations such as councils and Primary Care Trusts have established Business Continuity Management (BCM) plans in place.

But Civil Contingencies Officer William Read said: "It is vital that all organisations look at the BCM plans of their contractors.

"For example, if thousands of 'meals on wheels' are supplied by one company, what would happen if its headquarters were flooded or affected by a computer systems failure?"

Letters and a questionnaire are sent to all suppliers working with Staffordshire County Council to assess how they would cope with a major incident.

The Civil Contingencies Unit is urging all local authorities and health trusts to develop a similar approach to ensure vital services to the public are maintained.

Spotlight on Peak District Mountain Rescue

Volunteer rescuers covering the upland areas of the Staffordshire Peak District have come to the aid of casualties and lost walkers in over 100 incidents during the last 10 years.

Seven dedicated teams of men and women regularly give up their own time to work as part of the Peak District Mountain Rescue Organisation (PDMRO).

The PDMRO has 280 members, 20 fully equipped vehicles registered as ambulances and a team of 6 qualified search and rescue dogs.



All team members are trained to a high standard in First Aid with many volunteers holding the Mountain Rescue Casualty Care Certificate which allows them to administer drugs.

Teams are called out by the police as necessary and have a strong working relationship with all of the emergency services.

The PDMRO work with RAF search and rescue helicopters as well as Staffordshire Police's helicopter and the Air Ambulance.

Two teams, based in Buxton and Derby, regularly work in Staffordshire, covering areas such as Cannock Chase as well as the areas of Staffordshire Moorlands district inside the Peak Park.

City Centre Evacuation Plan Tested



Bob Brown

A new plan designed to help evacuate the biggest commercial centre in Staffordshire has been tested for the first time.

The Stoke-on-Trent City Centre Evacuation plan exercise took place at the Civic Centre, Stoke, in late September.

Exercise facilitator Bob Brown of the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit, said: "The purpose of the workshop was to examine the draft plan and expose any shortcomings within it.

"Clearly the evacuation of a major city centre such as Hanley could involve thousands of shoppers and office workers and is a complex exercise."

Officers from the police and fire and rescue services, joined staff from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the city's Primary Care Trust and the City Centre Management Team for the table-top exercise.

They were joined by Andy Marshall, Director of Staffordshire's Civil Contingencies Unit, CCU training officer Steve Hill and Bob Brown.

Bob Brown added: "The participants were asked to consider a scenario in which a suspect vehicle was discovered in the city centre. An order was given to evacuate the area and a 400 metre exclusion zone was established.

"Many useful points were identified which will be considered as the draft plan is reviewed. Plans are now being drawn up to repeat the exercise early in March, 2009."

SRF Website Members' Area Opens For Business

The secure members' area on the Staffordshire Resilience Forum website is now live.

The Members' Area features a wide range of SRF documents containing confidential information.

New plans such as the Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan will be added to the site following approval.

Andy Marshall, Director of Staffordshire's Civil Contingencies Unit; said: "We strive as an organisation to be open where ever possible and to publish information on the public facing website.

But, by the very nature of the job we do, certain information in our planning has to remain confidential and that is why the members' area has been set up."

SRF member organisations will receive password restricted entrance to the site which has been developed by the web team at Staffordshire County Council.

The site can be seen at www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk

Staffing News from the CCU



Bill Almond

Civil Contingencies Officer Bill Almond has left his post for a new Emergency Planning role at South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust.

Bill had been with the CCU since 2001.

Marie Dale who is expecting her second child has now begun maternity leave.

Marie's post will be covered by Assistant Civil Contingencies Officer, Sarah Moore.

Meanwhile, student Alex Evans has begun a 12 month placement at the CCU's offices in Beaconside, Stafford.

Alex, aged 21, from Swansea, is part way through an Emergency and Disaster Management Degree at the University of Coventry.



Marie Dale



Alex Evans

News in Brief

Staffordshire's Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) is contributing to a review of the way Cat 1 and 2 responders work together. The West Midlands wide review is particularly focused on working relationships with utility companies.

A refit of the Civil Contingencies Mobile Control Unit is now complete.

Staffordshire CCU officers are helping to develop a training package to enhance the NHS response to contamination incidents. Work is being carried-out in partnership with the West Midlands Ambulance Service and Heartlands Hospital, Birmingham, and will be rolled out to all acute hospital trusts in the region.

A campaign to recruit retained firefighters has been launched by the Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service. Find out more by visiting the service's website at

www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk.