

# Staffordshire Prepared

The Newsletter of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum  
Issue 8 - January 2009

Staffordshire  
Civil Contingencies Unit



Supporting Resilience in Staffordshire  
[www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshireprepared.gov.uk)

## All Systems Go for SRF Training Package

A major new training package has been unveiled for the Staffordshire Resilience Forum.

Training coordinator Steve Hill has now finalised a comprehensive programme for 2009 which will include:

- 119 training sessions
- 25 exercises

The programme culminates in November 2009 with Exercise Whitewater, which will exercise the new Staffordshire flood plan (see page 2).



Steve Hill was appointed to the Civil Contingencies Unit in 2008 to develop a training strategy for all Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders.

A major plank of the strategy will be Gold and Silver Command Exercises. Five Gold and Five silver sessions have been arranged at dates spread throughout 2009.

**Steve Hill**

This will be done in partnership with Leicestershire Police who have an established programme, called Vector, based at training facilities in Ashby de la Zouch.

Other important courses planned include Loggist Training. Steve said: "A proper log of who did what, when and why, is vital at a major incident. The role of loggist must be recognised as a specialist position and this training should prove essential across all SRF member organisations."

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, said: "The appointment of Steve Hill to a dedicated training role has allowed us to develop a complete training programme for all SRF members for the first time."

Steve, a former Staffordshire Fire and Rescue officer, can be contacted at [sl.hill@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:sl.hill@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

The full training programme is to be published on the Staffordshire Prepared website to allow organisations to plan ahead.

## Best Feet Forward for Marathon Charity Trek

Officers from the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit are to take part in a marathon trek for charity.

Members of staff are in training to walk sections of the 96 mile Staffordshire Way in May 2009.

The three day endurance test is being organised by CCU officer Steve Berry in partnership with the army's 22<sup>nd</sup> Signal Regiment, based at Beacon Barracks, Stafford.

A large number of organisations from across the county are set to get involved in the event.

Steve said: "The Regiment is extremely grateful to the support given by the local community to its personnel during recent difficult times which have seen half the regiment serve in Afghanistan.

"In recognition of this they have agreed to provide support services and overnight mess arrangements for the charity trek.

"People are being invited to enter teams of five people and can raise funds for a charity of their choice."

Each team member will be asked to raise at least £100 each for charity.

For further information contact Steve Berry by phone on 01785 898609 or email [s.berry@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:s.berry@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

## Winter Pressures Spark Record Demand for NHS Services

Winter pressures led to major demands on SRF health partners in December 2008. West Midlands Ambulance reported record "unprecedented demand" with the number of call outs up 20 per cent on the previous year for Staffordshire between Friday 12 December and Sunday 14 December.

Meanwhile, the University Hospital of North Staffordshire banned children and pensioners from visiting sick relatives in a bid to stem problems caused by the winter vomiting bug, Norovirus. The bug closed six wards at the hospital in mid December. Health officials in South Staffordshire reported a 30 per cent increase in demand for services in early December.

## White Water on the Way

Planning is well under way for Exercise White Water.

The major exercise will thoroughly test the capabilities of Cat 1 and Cat 2 responders to cope with major flooding incidents.

The exercise, set for November 2009, follows the publication of the Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan (SEFP).



Sarah Moore

Sarah Moore, Assistant Civil Contingencies Officer, said: "This live, multi agency exercise will put the new SEFP through its paces and will be the biggest civil contingencies exercise staged in Staffordshire since early 2007.

Planning meetings are being held with key personnel from the military, Environment Agency and CCU."

The SEFP builds on the county's previous flood plan and takes into account lessons learned during the major floods on Summer 2007 in areas such as Gloucestershire and Humberside.

The Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan went out to consultation in October 2008 with a deadline for comments on 19 December 2008.

The final documents will be available on the Staffordshire Prepared website before April 2009.

The plan was reviewed by Civil Contingencies Officers at the London Borough of Richmond during the consultation period.

Sarah Moore said: "Officers in Staffordshire and Richmond agreed to review each others plans – it proved to be a very useful exercise."



Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service take to the water

## SRF Takes to the Skies

A new eye in the sky is helping the work of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum.

The SRF is using a drone to take photographs and video of incidents from above.

The footage can then be used to coordinate how partners respond to problems on the ground

The drone is also being used by Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service during emergencies.

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, said: "The drone belongs to the police but will be available for joint operations. This is a fantastic example of SRF partners working together to provide a better service to the public.

It can be used in many situations, for example, allowing us to quickly get real time video footage of a flooded area."

## Derbyshire Link

Civil Contingencies Officers from Staffordshire and Derbyshire are in talks about how they can best work together.

The two counties share a border and there are close links between East Staffordshire Borough Council and its Derbyshire neighbours.

But the two counties are in different Government Office areas for civil contingencies planning.

Alex Evans of Staffordshire CCU said: "We have held initial talks regarding mutual aid with Derbyshire.

The main message is that resilience does not stop at county or regional borders and we need to ensure we can work together for the benefit of residents."

## Flood Mapping Underway

Officers from Staffordshire's Civil Contingencies Unit are working with the Environment Agency to identify which emergency rest centres could be vulnerable to flooding.

Work is taking place to map all Staffordshire rest centres onto EA flood maps to assess levels of risk.

The research is being led by Laura Dawson of the Environment Agency's West Midlands Office.

## Mobile Control Units Join Forces

Command units from Staffordshire's Fire and Rescue Service, Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) literally came together in an exercise at Stafford Fire Station.

The partners exercised the joint setting up their mobile command units so that the best operating procedures were identified for use in the event of a live incident requiring the deployment of the command units.

The exercise also incorporated the physical joining up of awning structures, agreeing the preferred layout of a joint field command centre and an opportunity to view the facilities and features of all three organisations' vehicles. The opportunity was also taken for a short demonstration of the recently acquired drone, a small remote controlled helicopter. (see article on page two).



Setting up the joint control unit

Exercise coordinator Steve Hill from the CCU said: "The day was a fine example of effective joined up working in Staffordshire. On this occasion by Fire, Police and the CCU have added a great deal of value to the way we work together."



Steve Hill



Steve Berry

Steve Berry from the CCU has taken on the joint project to ensure partners set up a high quality Silver level control unit at the scene of a future major incident in Staffordshire.

## COBR Visit by SRF Members

A small party from the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) led by the chair ACC Marcus Beale of Staffordshire Police were invited to tour the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) in London on Wednesday 15 October 2008.



ACC Marcus Beale

The group included representatives from Staffordshire County Council, Stoke on Trent City Council, East Staffs Borough Council, Stafford Borough Council, the Environment Agency, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, the

Government Office for the West Midlands, South Staffs PCT and the Civil Contingencies Unit.

They were greeted by key personnel from the Cabinet Office, the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Military who explained how COBR - sometimes chaired by the Prime Minister - coordinates government activity in a crisis and ensures an effective national response takes place.

Director of Civil Contingencies Andy Marshall said: "The visit provided an excellent opportunity for us to see first hand how COBR works and importantly, how Staffordshire fits into government coordination arrangements in times of an emergency."

## News....News....News....News....News....News....

### No Rest for Trainers

Rest centre training for local authority staff has gathered pace across Staffordshire. The Civil Contingencies Unit is on course to have 250 rest centre staff trained across the county in 2009. Training was recently provided for staff at Lichfield District Council and South Staffordshire District Council. Further sessions are also planned at Newcastle Borough Council and Stoke on Trent City Council.

### Incident Log

Reports of more than 30 incidents were handled by staff at the Civil Contingencies Unit between October and December 2008. These included a call out for the Staffordshire Search and Rescue Team following a missing person alert, assistance to Featherstone Prison due to the loss of water and heating and support for the Fire and Rescue Service during flooding which left more than 200 sheep stranded close to the National Memorial Arboretum on Cannock Chase.

### Media Training

Specialist training on how to work with the media is set to be rolled out for Resilience Forum partners in 2009. It follows extensive work on a new SRF Media Plan by a group led by Ian Fegan, Head of Communications at Staffordshire Police.

## Flu Planning Goes Regional

Talks have been held to discuss progress on pandemic flu planning across the West Midlands.

Staffordshire Civil Contingencies officer Bob Brown represented Staffordshire local authorities at the meeting.

They were joined by representatives of the Cabinet office, the Strategic Health Authority, Health Protection Agency, Primary Care Trusts and local authorities from across the region.

Bob said: "The meeting at the Government Office, in Birmingham, was very constructive with a useful exchange of ideas and plans."

Regular meetings to plan for a possible outbreak of pandemic flu are held in Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.

## Staffordshire Police's BCM Plans Praised

Staff from the Civil Contingencies Unit joined forces with Staffordshire Police as the Force's Business Continuity Management plans were tested.

Exercise Valhalla looked at how the Force would react if its services were threatened by a major emergency.

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, said: "It was an excellent exercise in which the police worked closely with partners including the Environment Agency and CCU.

"Staffordshire Police's BCM plan proved to be extremely robust."

## Staffs Humanitarian Assistance Centre Plan

Sheffield City Council's response to major flooding was highlighted at the launch of the new Staffordshire Humanitarian Assistance Centre Plan in November 2008.

Jo Hallam, from the Sheffield local authority, spoke of how the setting up of a Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HAC) had played a major role in her council's response to flooding in summer 2007.

The new Staffordshire HAC Plan outlines arrangements for opening HACs at locations across the county together with plans for a "virtual HAC" based at Stoke onTrent City Council's telephone call centre.

## New Health Resilience Forum

A new forum to give health bodies a clear voice in the Staffordshire Resilience Forum is about to begin work. Staffordshire's Local Health Resilience Forum (LHRF) will hold its first meeting in January 2009.

The forum is one of four across the West Midlands Strategic Health Authority area.

They have been set up to drive civil contingency planning for health bodies across the region and to ensure the health economy has a strong presence within resilience forums.

Priorities for the new Staffordshire LHRF include:

- Information sharing so that lessons can be learned following incidents
- The agreement of common, integrated, plans across Staffordshire health organisations
- Coordination of training programmes for health staff
- Liaison on membership of SRF working groups
- Promotion of partnership working with other Cat 1 responders, such as the emergency services and local authorities.

Health leaders say the new forums are not designed to be part of the resilience forums system but have been set up to compliment the current system and to help give a strong, coordinated view on behalf of the NHS in Staffordshire to the Staffordshire Resilience Forum.

## Exercise Priory

An exercise to test evacuation plans for a Staffordshire town proved successful.

Feedback has been positive following Exercise Priory in Burton upon Trent.

Almost 30 staff from East Staffordshire Borough Council, Trent and Dove Housing, the Civil Contingencies Unit and the police, fire and ambulance services took part in the exercise.

William Read of the CCU, said: "The exercise tested the response to a hypothetical incident whereby the town hall had to be evacuated.

Feedback was very positive and further exercises will be planned for other towns across Staffordshire."

## Mortuary Plans Scrutinised

Emergency Mortuary Arrangements for Staffordshire are to be reviewed during early 2009.

The review of the Staffordshire Prepared Temporary Mortuary Plan will be coordinated by Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Officer Bob Brown.

Bob recently led a delegation to MoD Bicester, in Oxfordshire, to view a demonstration of nationally available equipment.

He said: "We were able to view a demonstration of the equipment stockpiled by KBR, the Government contractors engaged to facilitate the response to a mass casualty incident anywhere in the UK.

On display were the portable temporary mortuary facilities, radiography, body storage and all the support equipment necessary to sustain a mass casualty service to HM Coroners and the police."

Bob was joined on the trip by representatives from the police, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke onTrent City Council.

He followed up the visit by briefing Staffordshire's two Coroners on the latest plans and facilities available.

## Promoting Civil Contingencies Work

A series of meetings and events has been held to raise the profile of the work of the Staffordshire Resilience Forum



Visits have been hosted at the offices of the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU) at Beaconside, Stafford, and officers have attended high profile events around the country.

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, gave a presentation at the Royal United Services Institute, London. He also spoke at the Emergency Services Show, at Stoneleigh, Warwickshire on joined up working with the Government Office West Midlands.

The CCU has hosted visits from organisations including the Essex Resilience Forum and emergency planning officers from Warwickshire and Lincolnshire.

Members of Staffordshire County Council's Partnerships and Performance Scrutiny Panel visited the CCU offices. They were treated to a demonstration of the new remote control drone by Staffordshire Police. A photograph taken from the drone during the event can be seen above.

Mr David Kidney, MP for Stafford, also visited the CCU where he met staff and was given an up date on the Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan.



Visitors from Essex



Andy Marshall

## Staffordshire Resilience Forum at Forefront of BBC Campaign

Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) members played a major role in a BBC initiative to alert the public to civil contingencies issues.

A series of programmes under the "What If?" campaign banner was broadcast on BBC local radio stations throughout the UK from 12 January to 14 January.

In Staffordshire, SRF members worked with BBC Radio Stoke on broadcast items covering flooding and bad weather, fire and chemical incidents and Pandemic and seasonal flu.

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, was interviewed on Monday's (12 January) BBC Radio Stoke breakfast programme to set the scene for the three days of special programming.

Further broadcasts featured the Environment Agency on the emerging Staffordshire Emergency Flood Plan and tips on driving in bad weather from Staffordshire Police.

Experts from both Staffordshire and Cheshire addressed issues surrounding chemical incidents and health officers were interviewed regarding flu.

Andy Marshall said: "This was a fantastic opportunity to raise public awareness of some of the civil contingencies issues facing Staffordshire and the UK in general.

"It is important that we reassure the public that planning constantly takes place to consider the risk of incidents and how they would be dealt with."

## Operation Resilient Macaw

Officers from the Civil Contingencies Unit visited Copthorne Barracks Shrewsbury, to observe a major exercise.

The CCU then used elements of the exercise in training with South Staffordshire District Council and Stafford Borough Council.

Andy Marshall, Director of Civil Contingencies, said: "The exercise used scenarios involving Avian flu, water shortages and a chemical leak. The time spent at Copthorne Barracks was most worthwhile as we were able to use the experiences almost immediately to provide table top exercises for council staff."

## Business Continuity Training

Officers from the Civil Contingencies Unit, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue and the Stoke on Trent Primary Care Trust took part in a Business Continuity Course.

Mel Page of the CCU said the training provided by Acumen had proved very useful.

He was able to pass on the knowledge gained to staff from the Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust at a meeting in early December.

Tim Hyde and Gill Hollinshead represented the fire service at the event where they were joined by Claire Machin of Stoke on Trent PCT.