

**Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore,
Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection**

Report to:	Community & Public Safety Scrutiny Committee
Date:	13 April 2016
Subject:	Lincolnshire County Council Co-ordination of Spontaneous Volunteers Policy and Procedure (Civil Emergencies)

Summary:

This report is being shared with the committee for information and awareness on the Lincolnshire County Council 'Co-ordination of Spontaneous Volunteers Policy and Procedure.'

The policy details how Lincolnshire County Council will co-ordinate spontaneous offers of assistance in civil emergencies.

The policy was discussed and signed off at officer level (as an operational policy) at the Corporate Management Board Meeting on the 30th April 2015 by Pete Moore Director of Finance and Public Protection.

Actions Required:

- For the committee to be aware of the County Council's responsibility for the co-ordination of the voluntary sector including spontaneous volunteers in civil emergencies;
- And, to consider and comment on the Spontaneous Volunteers policy and highlight any further actions required.

1. Background

Under the Civil Contingencies Act, local authorities are given the 'lead responder' role of 'co-ordinating the voluntary sector, including spontaneous volunteers, on behalf of all partners'.

Accordingly, Lincolnshire County Council, through the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service, has taken the lead in the co-ordination of the Voluntary Sector in the response and recovery to civil emergencies on behalf of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum. Two key documents determine how this is to be achieved; a memorandum of understanding with the 'organised' voluntary sector

(in place since 2010), and a policy outlining the co-ordination of 'spontaneous' volunteers.

"Spontaneous Volunteers" are individuals who are unaffiliated with existing official response organisations, yet, without extensive pre-planning, are motivated to provide unpaid support to the response and/or recovery to a civil emergency.

Recent incidents have highlighted that spontaneous volunteers can make an important contribution toward community responses to civil emergencies, especially in the recovery phase from major incidents such as flooding, as proven in Lincolnshire during the Boston Storm Surge, 2013.

Lessons learned from the response and recovery of the Boston flooding highlighted that there was a need for a process to co-ordinate spontaneous volunteers in order to ensure their activities could be integrated with, and would complement, the wider response efforts of agencies, community groups and the 'organised' voluntary sector (e.g. British Red Cross). Planning for the involvement of these volunteers in emergency response and recovery is important to ensure that all resources are used effectively.

The Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) recognises the huge benefit that volunteers can have in the response and recovery to civil emergencies if they are integrated and co-ordinated as part of the official response.

The policy has been created to provide guidance on how LCC can effectively co-ordinate voluntary offers of assistance from spontaneous volunteers who do not belong to an organised voluntary organisation. This includes roles, activation and processes for tasking and co-ordination, risk assessment and communication. It also provides detail on volunteer insurance, risk assessment, data protection and safeguarding issues.

2. Conclusion

The policy will only apply to individuals or groups who identify themselves as willing to co-ordinate their own efforts with those of official responders. In doing so, it offers some structure and protection to both volunteers and responders. It is recognized that, for a variety of reasons, some may not wish to work under the co-ordination of official responders and will wish to take 'independent action'. Whereas this should be discouraged (or prevented where hazardous), the policy and its protections, will not apply in those circumstances.

The policy recognises the benefits and capability to work with local individuals who are not members of a voluntary organization but who wish to contribute, safely, and over a limited period only, to the response or recovery phase of an emergency, in turn enhancing capacity and building community resilience.

3. Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	LCC Co-ordination of Spontaneous Volunteers Policy and Procedure

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Laura Edlington, who can be contacted on 01522 582272 or laura.edlington@lincoln.fire-uk.org.

This page is intentionally left blank