



Open Report on behalf of Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	26 January 2021
Subject:	East Coast Inundation Plan

Summary:

Following the meeting of the Executive on 6 October 2020, where Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue's (LFR) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) document was presented with the support of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee, it was requested that a piece of 'scrutiny work' on coastal inundation and the management of it was carried out. Details were to include resources from a LFR perspective and how planning and preparations are carried out.

This follows on from the decision by East Lindsey District Council (ELDC) to extend the caravan season into the winter/flood season.

Actions Required:

The Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider LFR's response to East Coast inundation and seek assurance.

1. Background

The Community Risk Profile (CRP) identifies Flooding and severe Weather as one of our highest community risks within the County. Whilst there are a number of reasons for this as explained in the CRP, it is vitally important for LFR to ensure that we take appropriate measures to respond to and mitigate the potential impact of the identified risk.

Response – Flood Assets

All of LFR's fire fighters are trained to operate in still flood waters and have the PPE and equipment to be deployed as and when required. To support this initial response we have a number of enhanced capabilities of specialist teams that can be deployed in still and flowing such as:

- 11 x Boats, both powered and non-powered
- 10 x Rescue rafts

- All operational personnel with flood rescue PPE and equipment to be deployed in flooded areas
- Enhanced rescue PPE and equipment for personnel operating in boats and flowing water

To support the operational crews we also have specialist Flood 'Tactical Advisors' in Service to give advice and guidance on how to respond to significant flooding events. These resources also link in with the National Resilience mutual aid.

As part of the National Resilience mutual aid, LFR supports this by providing availability of some of our specialist boat teams and High Volume Pumps (HVP). We receive a supporting grant from DEFRA periodically to provide the specialist boat team support, however this funding has now been limited and following a review of the DEFRA Concept of Operations that states the standards of training and equipment, we are currently reviewing the amount of specialist teams we are able to provide for National Resilience. This will most likely be significantly reduced.

This will not affect the amount of resources we can provide for our local risk to respond within Lincolnshire, but as we have relied previously on the DEFRA grant funding which is now reduced, we are reviewing the future funding challenge for providing a robust and appropriate response to flooding in Lincolnshire.

Whilst all of our Fire Appliances have a pumping capability and will always be our first response to flooding type incidents, we also have a range of specialist pumps, including four trailer mounted flood pumps that have been purchased in partnership with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) that can be deployed independently as requested. Up until the recent events of the terrible Wainfleet floods in 2019, LFR only had two of these pumps, but a review and additional funding has allowed us to increase our capabilities. The review identified the benefits of these pumps as not only being able to pump large quantities of water for long periods of time, but also requiring a limited number of crew to function, allowing our fully crewed appliances to be used for rescue operations and core functions.

Our High Volume Pump capabilities within the County can also be supported and supplemented by National Resilience assets following a request for additional support, depending on the size and nature of the operations.

LFR also has a number of low level submersible pumps that can be utilised in flooding scenarios. In the event of a widespread east coast inundation, Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) partners' resources would be considered with a multi-agency plan developed, e.g. resources and assets would be pulled together for a collective response.

East Coast Inundation Plan / Review & Development

The East Coast Inundation Plan has been developed, periodically reviewed and updated over a number of years. Due to the significant stretch of coast line and identified risk, the plan identifies key areas of operational procedure for LFR when dealing with a mass inundation on the east coast of Lincolnshire. It should be noted

that the East Coast Inundation Plan has been written on the planning assumption that East Coast caravan sites are closed during winter months, in line with Lincolnshire Resilience Forum's Strategic Coastal Flood Plan and Coastal Mass Evacuation and Shelter Plan. The additional risk posed by extended occupancy of caravan sites has not yet been analysed or taken into account in any of these Plans as the full impact and details are not yet understood. Plans are being reviewed with the support of LRF partners and cognisant of the potential changes.

Details covered in the plan include:

- Phase 1 – Response/Rescues
- Phase 2 – Recovery
- Command and Control
- Multi-Agency Co-ordination
- Areas of Focus – ‘Sectors’ along the length of the section of east coast in Lincolnshire
- Locations identified for Strategic Holding Areas / Forward Command Points

The plan aims to identify all areas to support early recognition of requirements and to effectively and efficiently establish an infrastructure to allow the management of an inundation type incident.

The East Division Divisional Commander is responsible for the maintenance of the Plan and the periodic review and testing.

East Coast planning and exercising for response to flooding along the East Coast is a well-established practice. It is important that LFR continues to develop and review the East Coast Inundation Plan and this is completed through periodic multi agency exercising.

In March 2019 the Service Exercise focused on an inundation event which involved multiple sites being used to test a variety of capabilities. As part of the planning for this exercise, LFR established links with many Caravan sites and exercised at these locations.

After the Wainfleet flooding event a multi-agency debrief was held with all relevant partners and a number of recommendations were identified for LFR. As part of our on-going learning a number of improvements have been made. This has included:

- Closer liaison with partners for training and exercising.
- Awareness to the areas at risk following a mutual risk visit which was conducted by the Environment Agency; participants included representatives from all relevant LRF members.
- Greater understanding throughout LFR Officer Cadre of the logistical requirements when dealing with large and prolonged flooding.

To support these learning outcomes and ensure we develop our response to this type of incident, our Organisational Development team, with the support of the National Resilience Assurance Team (NRAT), facilitated a programme of refresher training for our Officer Cadre throughout November and December 2020. The training provided an up to date overview of the process for requesting and implementing support from National Fire Service Assets, e.g. requesting additional high volume pumps, running a Forward Control Point and organising a Strategic Holding Area.

Partnership Working

Due to the potential size and complex nature of an east coast inundation incident, it is important that LFR work with identified partners to ensure a suitable and appropriate response is managed. A multi-agency response would be co-ordinated by the LRF, as it is highly likely a 'major incident' state of 'Emergency' would be declared.

The periodic review of the plan is supported by the Emergency Planning (EP) team. LFR also liaises with other key partners to ensure any updates or amendments to the plan are made based on up to date information and developments, e.g. Environment Agency.

Following the update received this year from the LRF that ELDC has applied to extend the period of the caravan season, resulting in residents all year round and the possibility of an increase in caravans along the east coast, close liaison with the Environment Agency and EP colleagues has taken place. Due to the impact of Covid-19, this extension has been delayed until next year, so therefore there is not an extension for residents in this current winter period.

Early discussions have highlighted a number of areas in the existing LRF plans in relation to the additional risk that extended occupancy of east coast caravan sites will pose, where further work would be required. Existing LRF planning assumptions, including time and resources required for evacuation, shelter, and rescue activities, are based on the assumption that winter closure of caravan sites continues. Due to the vulnerable nature of caravans and the inability to implement "in situ" evacuation as an option, significant further work will have to be carried out to analyse the additional risk, and update the relevant plans with revised processes and resources needed to account for this risk.

In addition to this, LFR also sits on the Flood Risk and Water Management Group, chaired by the EA. Timely updates are discussed with awareness of the potential impact of amendments to licences, conditions and developing infrastructure along the east coast outlined.

Periodic Review / Exercising of the East Coast Inundation Plan

Although already in the process of reviewing the East Coast Inundation Plan as part of LFR's 2020/21 Service Plan objectives, the recent developments and proposals made by ELDC will add a layer of planning and consideration required by the review process. In light of the recent developments and actions taken by

ELDC, a table top exercise of the East Coast Inundation plan will be taking place in February 2021. The exercise is being facilitated by the Emergency Planning team and LRF partners will be involved.

The exercise shall take place via Teams to ensure all staff can be Covid Compliant.

The participants will however be encouraged to consider how the response to east coast flooding might differ if additional winter-occupancy caravan sites were to be added to the scenario and how many additional resources and assets might be needed to respond effectively.

An important part of the exercise will be to capture the learning and ensure a multi-agency debrief is carried out post exercise. This process will allow any recommendations for improvements to be discussed and agreed as a multi-agency group.

Exercise Aim:

To test LFR's response to an east coast flooding event alongside the concurrent pandemic incident, and by doing so complete the annual exercise of the LFR East Coast Inundation Plan.

Provisional Broad Objectives:

- Provide an overview of the risk, and existing wider multi-agency planning in place.
- Provide an opportunity to review ECI Plan content.
- Review existing planning assumptions and response (evacuation vs rescue requirements) in light of the recent amendments to caravan occupancy proposals by ELDC.
- Test procedures for requesting national assets.
- Highlight interface between rescue and onward care of evacuees.
- Familiarise Commanders with the East Coast Inundation (ECI) Plan.
- Provide an opportunity to test ECI plan content and planning assumptions.
- Consider impact of concurrent Covid-19 emergency.
- Test procedures for requesting national resilience assets.
- Test strategic holding area location and Enhanced Logistic Support (ELS).
- Test Business Continuity (BC) plans.
- Provide an opportunity to review lessons identified at the Wainfleet flooding of 2019.

Relevant Plans to be considered as part of the Exercise:

- LFR East Coast Inundation Plan
- LRF Strategic Coastal Flood Plan for Lincolnshire
- LRF concurrent incidents guidance

Potential Participants:

- LRF
- EA – LRF Flood Cell Chair
- EP&BC – Flood lead
- EP&BC – Mass Evac & Shelter lead
- EP&BC – Training/Exercise lead/Facilitator

LFR:

- Gold Commander
- Duty Officer
- Silver Commander
- Flood Tactical Advisor
- Divisional Commander – East Division
- Others TBC

Nature of Exercise:

To begin with a board overview of the risk and existing plans delivered by LRF colleagues to set the scene, followed by an overview of the ECI Plan.

The exercise will consist of 3-4 discussion sessions, each around a common aspect. These will include:

- Escalation and Activation of the plan.
- Deployment levels based on scenario (number of swift water rescue assets required/available, support infrastructure, location considerations, Forward Control Points (FCPs) / Multi Agency Strategic Holding Area (MASHA) / Tac Holding areas / National Assets).
- Review casualty landing area and interface for survivors with evac/shelter handoff.
- Concurrent emergencies: impact of Covid on response/rescue and evac/shelter.

2. Conclusion

We are keen to ensure that the Executive and the Scrutiny Committee have confidence in not only our planning process but also our response to an East Coast Inundation type event. We hope the details in this report outline the process that is followed and contributing factors to ensure that updates and amendments are based on relevant and pertinent information.

In light of East Lindsey District Council's decision to extend the caravan season into the winter/flood season from next winter season, further work will be required to gain a full understanding of the impacts that winter occupancy of caravan sites will have on existing planning assumptions. Where appropriate, additional processes and resource requirements may need to be put in place before assurance can be given that the additional risk is accounted for.

A multi-agency approach to development is vital to ensuring robust plans are developed and exercised.

The exercise is being planned for the second week of February 2021 and we would welcome councillor attendance to observe and contribute.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

4. 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 Mark Baxter, Chief Fire Officer, who can be contacted on 07799 110463 or by e-mail at Mark.Baxter@lincoln.fire-uk.org

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