



Open Report on behalf of Andrew Crookham - Executive Director - Resources

Report to:	Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee
Date:	20 September 2021
Subject:	Emergency Planning, Response and Co-ordination Update

Summary:

The following report summarises the recent work carried out by the Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service with regards to the risk of flooding within the county.

Recommendation:

Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee to note the contents of this report for their information.

1. Background

Review of Multi-Agency Flood Plans

DEFRA, the lead government department responsible for flooding, published new guidance on the format and content of multi-agency flood plans (MAFPs) in September 2020, and as part of their review it was agreed that the Environment Agency would conduct an audit of existing MAFPs against this new guidance. The audit will highlight recommendations for individual LRFs to bring their MAFPs towards a more nationally consistent standard.

In Lincolnshire, the local Environment Agency office has conducted a pre-audit on our existing plans. Given the risk faced by Lincolnshire, the LRF has a separate Strategic Coastal Flood Plan to cover tidal flood risks, and an Inland Flood Response Plan to cover all other forms of flooding. Both have been through the pre-audit process, and work is ongoing to address the recommendations highlighted. This will place the plans in a good position prior to the formal start of the audit on 24th September.

Low Level Flooding Exercise

Learning from some of the smaller scale flooding incidents over the past twelve months has led to a review of the LCC Incident Response Procedures manual, and in particular a

relook at how low level flooding incidents are managed. These are incidents which fall well below the requirement for a full Lincolnshire Resilience Forum (LRF) multi-agency Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) response, and in the past have been dealt with by individual agencies with information shared with the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) post-event for subsequent flood investigation.

Following discussions, it was suggested that there would be benefit from a small group of agencies coming together to discuss flooding incidents at a much lower level. This would both enable a shared early understanding of property flooding that may subsequently escalate to require a multi-agency response, but also enable a level of coordinated response to both maximise the effectiveness of existing resources and discuss additional options to support. It must be stressed that there will always be a limit to what can be provided to support households, and it remains the fact that there is no statutory responsibility on agencies to provide assistance.

It has been agreed that in future a small multi-agency group will form when calls for sandbags and other flooding requests begin to come into agencies, and where their existing capacity to respond is beginning to be stretched. The group will be formed upon request to the on-call Emergency Planning Duty Officers, who will cascade out to LCC Highways, Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue, and the relevant District Council for the area impacted, and bring these agencies together virtually to discuss the issues and seek options where possible.

In order to test whether this process would work in practice, an exercise was held on 25th August that included the above agencies, including an East Lindsey District Council representative where the exercise scenario was set. The initial activation process was followed and proved to be effective, but the exercise highlighted that a change in the early triggers for activation was required to take account of the greater capacity within LCC Highways to respond, and ensure that the group weren't getting involved too early when no coordinated response was required. The process will be amended to ensure that only as resources start to become stretched will the group be activated. As a follow-up, a further exercise is planned for 27th September, with the area to be impacted this time moving to West Lindsey.

FloodEx22

For many years representatives of the Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service have sat on two wider flood groups; one bringing all LRFs along the River Trent to support the development of a Trent Flood Framework, and another bringing all the East Coast LRFs together to create an East Coast Flood Framework. In the past these groups have looked to conduct separate exercises relating to their specific flood risks. However, in 2022 it has been agreed that a single exercise will take place combining both risks. For many of the LRFs participating they will only be impacted by one of the two exercises, but as Lincolnshire has both the Trent and Coast within its boundary, both elements have an impact.

The exercise, entitled FloodEx22, is set to take place over the week of 19th-23rd September 2022, and is seeking participation from all counties from Northumberland to Kent along the coast, and all those along the Trent. It aims to test the freshly reviewed MAFPs as described earlier, as well as the wider joint frameworks developed to ensure a joined up approach to a regional risk between LRFs and Central Government.

Given the risk that flooding, particularly coastal flooding, poses to the communities of Lincolnshire, the LRF is looking to agree that FloodEx22 becomes its key multi-agency exercise of 2022, covering strategic, tactical and operational elements of the response and over a multi-day period. The exercise would enable the following to be tested;

- Exercising the Strategic Coastal Flood Plan for Lincolnshire, covering inundation of the east coast.
- Exercising the Inland Flood Response Plan, focusing particularly on a breach of the River Trent north of Gainsborough.
- Testing the use of drone technology to support remote identification of flooded Properties.
- Testing the Strategic Alliance agreement with neighbouring counties to support evacuees outside of the county.
- Examine evacuation of bariatric patients in advance of a forecast tidal surge.
- Refreshed mapping/GIS capability to enhance visualisation of flood risk.

The LRF has yet to complete this year's major exercise, Silver Siren, which takes place in October. Work by the LRF Flood Group to begin early development of FloodEx22 has already commenced.

2. Conclusion

The Service continue to develop close working partnerships with the Environment Agency and other LRF partners. Initial feedback on our plans has been really positive and we are confident that they are fit for purpose ahead of the upcoming audit.

The Service are also co-ordinating the LRF Pilot Funding project on behalf of our LRF. Project bids have been submitted to MHCLG relating to advanced mapping capabilities, use of drones and LRF engagement amongst others. If successful these projects will further enhance this area of work and reports will be submitted to the group in due course.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Background Papers

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

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