

Open Report on behalf of Andy Gutherson, Executive Director – Place

Report to:	Flood Risk and Water Management Scrutiny Committee
Date:	21 February 2022
Subject:	Local flood incident management - Draft MoU between LCC and District Councils

Summary:

A draft Memorandum of Understanding has been prepared during 2021 to better define and clarify the respective roles and responsibilities of local authorities during localised emergency events that fall below the trigger threshold for convening multi-agency emergency structures and procedures. It is also intended to describe and clarify the arrangements that have been put in place and exercised to improve response to unexpected, localised events where limited warning has been available due to weather unpredictability. Members are asked to support officers in completing final revisions to the MoU and securing local authority endorsement.

Actions Required:

The Flood and Water Management Scrutiny Committee is invited to note the processes and procedures outlined in the Draft MoU, to support officers in making any remaining amendments and clarifications to the draft, and in securing local authority endorsement of the resulting finalised version.

1. Background

During 2021 Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) and its partners have put in place new arrangements to help manage the impacts of flooding events which have local impact but may not reach the broader trigger thresholds that cause larger scale and well-rehearsed multi-agency emergency response to be put into operation.

In addition, a means of ensuring greater readiness for unexpected, localised events has been sought, where local impacts have not followed weather patterns expected from national forecasts. These measures were implemented during 2021.

In parallel with this a Memorandum of Understanding has been drafted and shared with District Councils to: -

- Clarify and describe the resources and responsibilities of partner authorities in the event of a localised incident where wider multi-agency arrangements are not triggered,
- Outline processes and procedures in this event, including the enhanced communication and liaison arrangements put in place during 2021,
- Show how these arrangements fit into the broader multi-agency plans that are already well-rehearsed and practiced.

The MoU has been drafted with the aim of incorporating the views and comments of partners, and a number of versions have been circulated to partners for this purpose over 2021, the latest in late November. Comments and proposed amendments to this version have been received from one district council, but it is important that we can fully reflect local arrangements across Lincolnshire, and it is hoped that other Councils will wish to make comment so that the document can be completed and agreed.

In order to test whether the process as described in the MoU would work in practice, two exercises were carried out during 2021.

On 25 August the first test took place, with representatives from the LCC Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service, the LCC Highways Duty Officer, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue and East Lindsey District Council. A series of injects around requests for flooding support were submitted, and the virtual formation of the group was tested. Key learning from this first exercise was the initiation trigger for the group was set too low – it activated when the first request for support was received. It became clear that LCC Highways had the capacity to respond to a higher level of requests before the need to involve partners became appropriate.

Following amendments to the process, a second exercise was held on 27 September. Representation on this occasion involved the LCC Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service, the LCC Highways Duty Officer, Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, as well as on this occasion West Lindsey District Council. This exercise commenced at the point where the capacity of LCC Highways was being stretched. Again, the exercise proved that the virtual set-up of the group could be accomplished, and with the bar being set higher the requirement for active co-ordination was more relevant.

With the lead into winter pressures and move back into a response phase for Covid-19, no further exercises were carried out in 2021, but active efforts are underway to schedule two further exercises for the near future. These will test a wider geographical level of incident (previously only one district was impacted) as well as including more partners (Environment Agency, Police, and Internal Drainage Boards), yet remaining below the level of a declared multi-agency formal response structure. These exercises will provide an opportunity for the remaining District Councils to participate, as well as exercising those Emergency Planning Duty Officers yet to experience the coordination role.

2. Conclusion

Members are asked to note the processes and procedures outlined in the draft MoU, to support officers in making any remaining amendments and clarifications to the draft, and in securing local authority endorsement of the resulting finalised version.

3. Consultation

a) Risks and Impact Analysis

Overall analysis of flood risk countywide is set out in the Joint Lincolnshire Flood Risk and Water Management Strategy, with further analysis of inland flood risk incident impacts in the multi-agency Flood Risk Management Plan.

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Memorandum of Understanding between Lincolnshire's Risk Management Authorities- DRAFT
Appendix B	MoU Appendix A – Incident Escalation
Appendix C	MoU Appendix B – Partner Resources
Appendix D	MoU Appendix C – 'Confirm' Notification
Appendix E	MoU Appendix D – Incident Classification System
Appendix F	MoU Appendix E – First Point of Contact Principles

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 David Hickman, Head of Environment, who can be contacted on 07919 045257 or via email at david.hickman@lincolnshire.gov.uk.

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