

## Responding to localised, low-level flooding emergencies

### Memorandum of Understanding between Lincolnshire's Risk Management Authorities

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#### 1. Purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to set out how Lincolnshire County Council and each of the signatory District Authorities will endeavour to work together for the purposes of providing civil protection before, during and after a localised, low-level flooding event which threatens serious damage to human welfare.

Such an event or situation can include: loss of human life; illness or injury; homelessness; damage to property; disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel; disruption of a system of communication; disruption of facilities for transport or disruption of services relating to health.

**As individual organisations, the County Council and the seven District Councils have a responsibility to prepare for civil protection and plan the response to an emergency, whether or not that incident happens to be related to flooding. However, the over-arching principle of this Memorandum of Understanding is to facilitate working in partnership in response to localised flooding in order to maximise the use of limited resources in the interests of public protection. This is especially important in circumstances which are beyond the capacity and capability of an individual organisation to manage alone.**

#### 2. Legislative background

Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) is identified in the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) as a Category 1 responder and has a duty to plan for civil emergencies. This duty is exercised by LCC's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service, which plans LCC's response to major flooding and other emergencies and co-ordinates with other Category 1 and 2 responders through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). Listed below are the Category 1 and 2 responders relevant to Lincolnshire.

Category 1 responders are:

- Local authorities
- Lincolnshire Police, including the British Transport Police
- Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue Service
- East Midlands Ambulance service
- HM Coastguard

- Lincolnshire United Hospital Trust, Lincolnshire Foundation Partnership Trust, NHS England and Public Health England
- The Port of Boston, the Port of Sutton Bridge Health AuthoritiesThe Environment Agency

Category 2 responders are:

<b>Utilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Western Power &amp; Northernpower Grid</li> <li>• Gas distributors</li> <li>• Anglian Water &amp; Severn Trent Water</li> <li>• Telephone service providers (fixed and mobile)</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Network Rail</li> <li>• Train operating companies (passenger and freight)</li> <li>• Highways England</li> <li>• Airport operators</li> <li>• Harbour authorities</li> </ul>
<b>Others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Health and Safety Executive</li> </ul>

### 3. Flooding emergencies

The definition of an emergency, according to the Civil Contingencies Act, is:

- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom;
- an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom; or
- war, or terrorism which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.

For declared multi-agency flood emergencies, LCC works in accordance with County emergency procedures and agreed command and control protocols through the multi-agency Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) and Tactical Co-ordination Group (TCG) co-ordinated by the Local Resilience Forum (LRF). However, whilst current operating procedures for these multi-agency emergency incidents are well established and practiced, it is recognised that there is a requirement for greater clarity on roles, responsibilities and coordination arrangements for the Category 1 and 2 responders providing civil protection before, during and after localised, low-level events. Such events might be described as sub-SCG/TCG, that is, they are not severe or widespread enough to trigger a full LRF response.

### 4. Operational Incident Response Plan

In its role as the Highways and Flood Authority (HFA), LCC has developed an Operational Incident Response Plan (hereafter referred to as a Response Plan), the purpose of which is to establish the arrangements for LCC to respond to unplanned

incidents in the County. The Response Plan is intended to encompass any type of incident, including flooding and other weather-related events.

**The rationale for the Response Plan is the need to have a robust capability for responding to and dealing with highway and flooding related incidents. There are parallels between the Response Plan and the aims of this Memorandum of Understanding.**

To ensure that the LCC incident response capability is efficient and effective, it needs to:

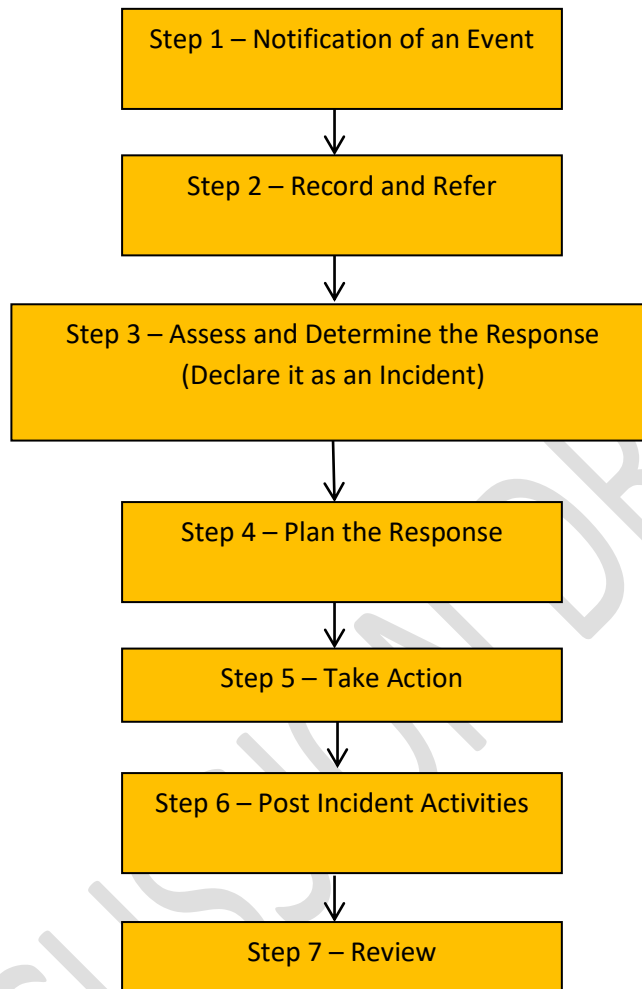
- be a formal procedure and rolled out across the HFA Service and its response partners;
- be tied into the existing generic incident arrangements to which LCC operates, both for the single agency response and for multi-agency response arrangements, i.e. SCG (Strategic), TCG (Tactical), and operational;
- detail how the HFA will need to change and restructure itself:
  - from its “normal day job” structures through to its “incident response” structure as the event evolves;
  - once the incident is resolved, how the HFA will return back to normality and to recovery activities; and
- follow the steps of the generic incident management process.

**The adoption of the elements of the Response Plan applicable to flooding emergencies are commended to the signatories of this MoU as a methodology for ensuring the purpose of this MoU is achieved.**

An overview of LCC's incident management process is attached at Appendix A, and as can be seen it lends itself to utilisation within the scope of this MoU.

## 5. Incident Management

The steps of the generic incident management process are set out below.



Step 1 – Notification of an Event: All Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) when notified by the public will do their utmost to deal with the enquiry rather than keep passing them onto different organisations (Pitt Report recommendation). LCC receives enquiries from the public via its Customer Service Centre or Fix My Street. Sometimes, these enquiries relate to local flooding which is reportedly threatening life and/or property. An example of such a notification is attached at Appendix C. These notifications can be shared with the signatories to give an indication of the extent of an active event and whether this is likely to lead to a demand for additional resource. Such reports can also reduce duplication of effort if it is clear that another organisation has responded to the situation on the ground.

Step 2 – Record and Refer: On becoming aware of an event requiring a response, the signatories should notify the LCC Winter & Emergency Duty Officer (WEDO) in order that a central log can be made and maintained. Such a log will be used to help in the assessment of the severity of an event, for example if more than one District

Council area is affected. If the reporting organisation requires assistance to implement and manage the response on the ground in accordance with its own response plan then support can be requested through the WEDO. It is important to note that the resources available to the WEDO are very limited and in practice the main role of the WEDO during the early stages of an incident will be to receive reports, maintain the log to establish a common operating picture and escalate the event in accordance with Step 3, as follows.

Step 3 – Assess and Determine the Response: Within the terms of this MoU and in consultation with the County Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service, any of the signatories may initiate **Step 3 - Assess and Determine the Response (Declare it as an Incident)**.

The effect of implementing Step 3 will be to utilise the services of the County Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service to coordinate available resources within the affected District Council area(s) in order to provide a proportionate response to a local flooding incident.

Step 4 – Plan the response: The LCC Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service will lead the coordination of requests for support during small scale flooding incidents. This will occur where requests are received within a limited geographical area (i.e. one Lower Tier Local Authority Area,) and for small incidents where significant multi-agency involvement is not required (a Level 1 Incident as defined in the Incident Classification System attached at Appendix D).

Step 5 – Take action: The on-call Emergency Planning Duty Officer will form and lead a small coordination group consisting of LCC Highways Network Resilience Team, a representative from the relevant District or Borough Council, and a lead from Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue. These organisations represent the key responders to small scale local flooding. The role of the group will be to identify and assess requests received from their respective organisations, and then deploy resources from the most appropriate source. These will include sandbags where circumstances allow.

The Emergency Planning Duty Officer will lead the coordination. Their role is to bring the relevant parties together to co-ordinate a response. Responsibility for delivery of, for example, sandbags, remains with the relevant parties. It must be recognised that assets are finite, and in the face of extreme conditions it may not be possible to deliver a viable solution very quickly, although all parties are committed to achieving the best outcomes possible in prevailing conditions and with the available resources.

Where the situation worsens and it is clear that either the geographical area has expanded or the seriousness requires that more agencies are involved, then the group will escalate to Level 2 when other RMA's will be invited by EP&BC to

convene a Severe Weather Cell, these will include the local internal drainage board, Environment Agency and local water company. If an “emergency” is declared then EP&BC will escalate the activation of the LRF as per Level 3 requirements.

Step 6 – Post incident activities: Effectively the recovery phase, post incident activities will be dependent on the severity of the event. It is likely that even a relatively minor event will require recovery actions of some description, the responses to and responsibilities for which are well rehearsed and understood and do not need to be part of this MoU. However, as a result of the increased use of sand bags and other temporary flood defences it is likely that greater coordination will be required between the relevant District Council(s), the Environment Agency and LCC with regard to collection, assessment for contamination and disposal; this will be carried out under the umbrella of the coordination group set up at Step 5.

The coordination group, under the guidance of Emergency Planning, will stand down by mutual agreement at an appropriate time after the event.

Step 7 – Review: It is good practice to review a response plan following an event, and this MoU is no exception. Therefore, immediately following "Step 6 - Post-incident Activities", the opportunity should be taken by the coordination group led by Emergency Planning to carry out a 'hot' review of the MoU and appendices. Furthermore, the MoU must be reviewed and updated as and when required following any relevant changes, such as changes to resources, signatories' internal processes and key contacts; any such changes must be notified to the LCC signatory as soon as practicably possible. Unless it is implemented in the meantime, the MoU will be routinely reviewed every three years, with LCC's flood risk team leading the review.

Furthermore, it must be reviewed and updated as and when required following any relevant changes, such as changes to resources, signatories' internal processes and key contacts.

## 6. Resources

A list of resources which are potentially at the disposal of each signatory is available at Appendix B.

**It is clear that at any one time the resources available to LCC and the relevant District Council(s) will be dependent on a number of factors, including but not limited to:**

- **The amount of time available to prepare and mobilise for the event e.g. timely and accurate weather forecasts, Flood Advisory Service notifications, EA Flood Alerts/Warnings;**
- **Other operational requirements, for example Winter Service (gritting);**
- **Availability of staff during public holidays, weekends, out of hours etc.;**
- **Equipment and materials availability, for example temporary flood defences (sand bags and the like).**

## 7. Communications

Each signatory will communicate with the coordination group set up at Step 5 via its representative on the group.

**Members of the public will be signposted to either LCC's Customer Services Centre for non-urgent reports of flooding or to 999/112 to seek assistance in instances of a threat to life. However, attention is drawn to the First Point of Contact Principles, attached at Appendix E; although this document is currently under review by LCC the principles contained therein are still valid.**

## 8. Ownership of the MoU

LCC is the owner of this MoU, and for the purposes of General Data Protection Regulations is the Data Controller. LCC will be responsible for taking every reasonable step to ensure that personal data is accurate, having regard to the purposes for which it is processed, and any inaccuracies will be erased or rectified without delay. The support of the signatories is required to ensure any personal data is accurate.

**9. Commencement and Termination**

This MoU will come into effect on the date of the last signature.

Any signatory to this MoU may terminate their support with a notice period of three months. The notice period will allow all signatories to review the MoU and consider changes that could accommodate the reasonable requirements of the signatory giving notice to terminate.

**10. Signatures**

..... for Lincolnshire County Council

..... for XXXX District/Borough/City Council

Dated \_\_/\_\_/\_\_

DISCUSSION DRAFT



## **11. List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Incident Escalation

Appendix B: Partner resources

Appendix C: LCC 'Confirm' notifications

Appendix D: Incident Classification System

Appendix E: First Point of Contact Principles

Appendix F: Key partner contacts (sensitive, internal use only)

DISCUSSION DRAFT

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