

Meeting: Safe Communities Executive Board

Date: 10 September 2009

Report Title: Multi Agency Flood Plan –Briefing Paper

Report of: Amanda Kilbey, Emergency Planning Officer

Purpose

Following the floods of the Summer 2007, DEFRA has required that Multi-Agency Flood Plans are prepared for all areas susceptible to flooding. This paper is to brief the Safer Communities Executive Board on the progress with this work.

Recommendations

To note the report.

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Background

Risks

- There are approximately 5,000 properties at risk from flooding from the River Lee and its tributaries.
- A further unquantified number of properties have some risk of surface water flooding from extreme rainfall.
- Tottenham is to some extent protected from flooding by the River Lee Relief Channel, which was constructed in the 1970s. Whilst this has served the borough well, it should not be considered to be complete protection against flooding.

Structure and content of the plan

The Multi-Agency Flood Plan supports the London Regional Flood Response Framework, which governs how widespread or severe flooding in London will be dealt with.

The Haringey Multi-Agency Flood Plan will set out how emergency services, the Council, NHS and other partners will work together to:

- Communicate warnings about flooding to the public
- Work to reduce the impact of flooding on properties
- Undertake search and rescue and evacuation operations
- Protect public health and rehabilitate the environment
- Work to support affected communities in recovering from the flood

The document is an operational plan, and will require agreement from all key statutory partners. Consultation is ongoing to ensure the plan reflects the actions that can realistically be committed to by all partners. The plan will be a public document, and the intention is that it will reassure the people of Haringey that the partnership is ready for what is a genuine risk.

Key points to note and for discussion:

- There may be only 4 hours from receipts of a Flood Warning message from the Environment Agency to the onset of dangerous flood conditions. Providing warnings to large numbers of people in a way that is timely will be challenging. It is concerning that the numbers of eligible residents who have signed up to the Flood Warnings Direct scheme from the Environment Agency is very low. It is hoped to encourage take up through ongoing partnership work in risk areas.
- The Council maintains a small number of sandbags. The Council will provide these on a best endeavours basis, but it is important to understand that it is unlikely in a severe flood that sandbags will be able to prevent damage to people's homes. Furthermore, it may be more important to use the stock of sandbags to protect strategic assets (power infrastructure for example) rather than people's homes.
- The role of an actively engaged and resilient community in preparing for emergencies should not be underestimated. The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team is interested in gathering views on the best approach to developing a pool of volunteers able to assist in the response to flooding by:
 - a. Door-knocking to communicate flood warnings.
 - b. Helping neighbours to evacuate safely.
 - c. Assisting with sandbagging people's homes.

For feedback, comments and copies of the draft Multi-Agency Flood Plan please contact Amanda Kilbey, Emergency Planning Officer.