

- 2.4 The council is represented on the SRF by the Chief Executive; and on the working groups for Community Risk Register and Severe Weather by members of the Civil Contingencies Team.
- 2.5 The Civil Contingencies Team maintain liaison with the Environment Agency and the Met Office, and are signed up to their 'Hazard Warning' system which gives advance notice of severe weather and flood risks.
- 2.6 This information is available 24/7 to the councils' on-call Civil Contingencies Duty Officer, whether by telephone contact, SMS, email or internet. The Duty Officer assesses the threat and can take whatever action deemed appropriate to alert other sections of the council or partners.
- 2.7 At times of 'high risk' other council officers are given access to the early warning system.
- 2.8 During a severe weather event the team maintain liaison with the SRF, GOSE and partners to act as a single point of contact, and to co-ordinate the councils' response through our Major Incident Support Team. The Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service are consulted as appropriate.

3. Warning and Informing

- 3.1 There will always be a period of build up before a severe weather event. There is no such thing as 'spontaneous severe weather', which does allow time for appropriate preparatory measures to be taken.
- 3.2 Severe weather (excluding long term climate change proposals) cannot be prevented, what can be done will mitigate the effects or shorten the duration of disruption.
- 3.3 Weather forecasting is not an exact science, and the warnings and severity of those warnings will vary in the build up to the event. This is particularly evident in the tracking of storm paths, and the close temperature variance that results in snow, sleet or rain.
- 3.4 Our communications should be to alert, not alarm, and be proportionate. We must also remember that the city will not experience the same weather pattern, the low lying city centre and coastal areas will vary from the downs and the dene's.

4. Duration and severity

- 4.1 When planning and preparing for severe weather the duration and severity must be taken into account.
- 4.2 A heavy fall of snow that melts within 24 hours may not warrant large scale resources being deployed to grit and salt, it may be considered a more suitable alternative to live with the short term disruption and let nature take its course.
- 4.3 Conversely, long periods of ice and cold, as recently experienced, will require changes in working practices for best value.

5. Civil Contingencies development plans for severe weather

- 5.1 Following the debrief sessions we have attended and consultations with fellow officers, the Civil Contingencies team would seek to develop the councils Emergency and Business Continuity plans with the following actions:
 - To enhance our internal warning system for severe weather by including more Operational Managers in the Met Office and Environment Agency warning process.
 - To review our existing severe weather plans to ensure they are robust.
 - To bring into the severe weather response some of those plans not previously associated with severe weather (mass fatality plan, additional hospital discharge plan, etc)
 - To ensure the Chief Executive, Directors and Members are alerted at an early stage to threats of severe weather to allow escalation processes to take place.
 - To ensure Operational Managers are briefed well in advance
 - To ensure internal and external communications are established and prepared, and that additional resources are available if required to support the communications.

- To work with City Services to ensure that capacity of the Environment Directorate contact centre at Hollingdean Depot can be increased if required and the opening hours extended, to meet any sudden increase in demand.
- To work with Adult Social Care to ensure that the capacity of the Adult Social Care contact centre at Bartholomew House can be increased if required and the opening hours extended to meet any sudden increase in demand.
- To develop plans to make better use of existing facilities and equipment in areas likely to be cut off by snow or ice.

(n.b. We have identified those areas where access was difficult, the proposal is to establish a 'bridgehead' on the edge of each of those areas, using an existing Community Centre, Church, Sheltered Housing Unit or similar, where relevant staff can be based, supported by 4 wheel drive vehicles, and local volunteers, they would locally deliver the key services within the cut off area.

These 'bridgeheads' would be located on gritting routes and/or bus routes to allow access.

This merely outlines the proposal rather than giving great detail)

- To assist in the review of equipment currently available to the council to respond to severe weather (subject of previous reports to the committee)
- To work with partners and local businesses to ensure their plans include a response to severe weather incidents which include gritting or salting their own property or access routes

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