

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 2011
title: EXERCISE WATERGATE
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: CHRIS SHUTTLEWORTH

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Committee of relevant issues which have arisen as a result of 'Exercise Watergate'. Details in Appendix 1. This information updates that provided in the previous report Item 6 of Thursday, 2 June 2011.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
 - Council Ambitions – The following report generally relates to the Council's ambitions to make people's lives healthier and safer.

2 OVERVIEW

- 2.1 Exercise Watergate took place on the 5 July 2011 in Ribble Valley Borough Council offices, Clitheroe. The exercise was designed to test the communications capability of the LRF responders and the effectiveness of the Local Resilience Forum's Telecommunications Sub Group plan. This plan was created to provide the LRF with solutions in the event of severe demands being placed upon responding agency communications systems. Instigating the flood exercise created a significant test of the different communication systems in use and their interoperability.
- 2.2 The exercise was conducted in seven phases, two to six being the practical exercise, the first and last being build up and debrief. The attendance and response to the theoretical incident was good. A number of lessons have been identified. Preventative measures have already been put in place to reduce the impact of a flood by the utility companies, as a direct result of the impact assessment that was conducted to create credibility in the Injects. This alone would be sufficient to justify the resource expenditure, but many more benefits have been realised.
- 2.3 The backdrop to Exercise Watergate was a multi agency communications exercise arranged and devised by Ribble Valley Borough Council to test their response to a severe weather incident, which created severe disruption to normal life. The exercise encompassed all Category 1 and Category 2 responders as designated under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, as well as other agencies; the voluntary sector and response supply companies. The support for this exercise from all parties cannot be over emphasised, over 70 people were in attendance on the day, taking part in the Silver activities and testing Bronze activities away from the main Silver exercise. This was commendable within a background of current financial restraints and reflects the importance afforded to the exercise by the participating agencies.

3 SUMMARY

- 3.1 As a part of the debrief arrangement, all agencies immediately following the exercise took part in a 'Hot Debrief'. These observations have now been developed into the individual agencies internal debrief reports which will go forward to the formal debrief.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Exercise has been widely acclaimed in its design and outcomes as derived by all those who took part. This can be best summarised in the feedback received from Nigel Brown, Head of Resilience Telecommunications 'Cabinet Office' in his comment.

"Chris: I've seen / been part of quite a few Ex's and this one was very well planned and with clear objectives. It certainly received a very strong all-round commitment. I thought the actual day went swimmingly well: lots of action and lots of meaningful involvement. Well done! Ribble Valley punched well above their weight"

Nigel

Dr Nigel P Brown

Lead for Resilient Telecommunications Strategy

- 4.2 Following the final Multi agency meeting which took place on the 6 September, each agency will consider and pursue its individual outcomes for action. Issues of multi agency significance will be forwarded to the general purposes group of the Lancashire Resilience Forum in the 'Exercise Report' for joint action.
- 4.3 Council's attention is drawn to the details in Appendix 1 being the RVBC Key issues and outcomes.
- RVBC Debrief report - Appendix 1 Item 3
also
 - List of agencies taking part, guests and observers - Appendix 2
- 4.4 A copy of the final multi-agency report will be presented to the Council's Corporate Management Team for consideration and to agree and plan appropriate actions.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Chris Shuttleworth 01200 414510.



Exercise Watergate
Held on Tuesday, 5 July 2011

RVBC AGENCY REPORT
Of the internal debrief held on 26 July

Aims of Exercise

The main purpose of the exercise is to test the **'interoperability arrangements'** of individual agencies to communicate within and across the responding agencies in dealing with a major flooding incident.

To examine and test the ability of the Ribble Valley Borough Council's 'District Response Forum' (DRF), together with its partner agencies, to co-ordinate an efficient response to a major flooding incident whilst adapting to the consequential break down of communications.

To familiarise members of the 'DRF' its Category 1&2 agencies with their roles and responsibilities, also the contribution of those partners from the voluntary agencies, in their involvement in dealing with a major incident response.

To identify any shortfalls in the RVBC DRF and their multi agency partners: in the preparation of its plans also the co-ordination of their 'Business Continuity' and 'Resilient telecommunication Arrangements'.

Objectives

To assess:

- The RVBC's DRF decision making process and command structure
- Multi-agency support systems in managing and recovering from major incidents
- The co-ordination and deployment of responder organisations and their resources
- Test and validate RVBC's flood plans along with any associated major incident response arrangements
- The Council's and multi agency partners' resilient telecommunication arrangements
- The impact and any wider consequences of the loss of utilities in the borough

The exercise will consist of a silver table-top arrangement in the council offices and a live bronze component at the scene.

Exercise injects, designed to achieve the above objectives will be introduced at the tabletop which will impact on the bronze scenario driving the need for ever more challenging solutions to interoperability.

Further inputs will be provided by guest agencies in attendance, identifying individual agency problems which demanding a team approach to devise collective solutions.

1. Introduction

On Tuesday, 5 July 2011, Ribble Valley Borough Council hosted 'Exercise Watergate' – a Multi Agency exercise designed to test communications resilience amongst agencies responding to a flooding scenario.

The overall intention of Exercise Watergate was to test 'Interoperability arrangements of individual agencies to communicate within and across the responding agencies in dealing with a major flooding incident.'

RVBC supported and took part in the exercise as members of the Exercise Management Team and as participants in the exercise.

2. Scene Setting

To enable the objectives to be delivered, a scenario was developed indicating that severe flooding would occur in the Clitheroe area late on the afternoon of 5 July 2011. To prepare for and respond to this incident, a Multi Agency meeting (including RVBC & RVH staff) was convened at Ribble Valley Borough Council offices at 9am on Tuesday, 5 July 2011.

Following an initial briefing, the participants were advised that the weather situation had deteriorated to such an extent that flooding was now occurring/imminent and that they were to operate at a multi agency (tactical) silver level in response to the situation. This generated 'free play' and communications traffic within the multi agency group and with other exercise participants.

In addition to assist in delivering the Council's aims and objectives for the exercise, a number of injects were generated by exercise management to generate communication traffic between the various participants. As the exercise progressed, 'normal' lines of communication were disrupted to the extent that only limited communication was available by mobile telephones and the police had to introduce IBIS (Interim Bronze Interoperability Solution).

The purpose of the debrief will be to identify:

3. Key Issues to be Identified and Actions which need to be taken

Action Points

- As part of a survey of resilient systems in the RVBC offices this must include a review of the resilient phone service regarding the current Ribble Valley contract.
- RV Homes have no resilience in place re power / comms and need to investigate.
- Review the best way forward for RVBC to address the problem of providing temporary power supplies to all RVBC buildings and council services.
- Review the best way forward for RVBC to address the problem of providing resilient working telecommunications systems for critical services in RVBC buildings – note that telecoms are reliant upon power supplies this to includes the UPS in the telephone suite separate supply.

- Investigate the provision of changeover switch (650 amp) to maintain essential supplies.
- Review the EARL radio operational and operating facilities bring together VHF Hi and Lo bands also provide training, radio and laptop usage.
- The provision of an offsite system re telecoms/recorded announcement to be investigated.
- Training and exercising needs to be carried out on a more regular basis and documented in the Council's Emergency Plan.
- Review message handling system during a major incident (note this is more than the Initial Response Form).
- Provide report to CMT to include the outcomes and action points.
- RV Homes – flood protection to Bayley Fold could possibly be built in to the maintenance plan.
- Desktop exercises need to be planned as annually event to test response recovery systems. This to be tasked to the District response forum.
- An exercise needs to be planned around the roles and responsibilities of those in the control room.

This report and the accompanying minutes of the meeting to be presented to the Multi agency debrief on 6 September 2011; also the Health & Housing Committee on Thursday, 22 September.

Chris Shuttleworth

APPENDIX 2

Silver Multi-agency exercise designed to test our ability to co-ordinate an efficient response to a major flooding incident: - List of participating agencies.

Dr Nigel Brown - Head of Resilience - Cabinet Office
Paul Jarvis - Head of Business Radio - Ofcom
Police Superintendant Peter Dwyer - Chairman GP 'Lancashire Resilience Forum'
Paul Richardson Deputy Chief Fire Officer - Lancs Fire & Rescue Service

In addition all the major agencies are taking part:-

Ribble Valley Borough Council
Ribble Valley Homes
Lancashire Police Civil Contingencies
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
Lancashire Ambulance Service
Lancashire County Highways
Lancashire County Emergency Planning
Meteorological Office
Environment Agency
Electricity North West Ltd
ARL Communications Ltd
Geodesign Barriers Ltd
JTA Flood Ltd
United Utilities plc
42nd Brigade MOD
Speedyhire plc
Mountain Rescue
Radio Amateur Emergency Network

Also acting in a consultative and supporting role are major network and telecommunication industry supply service and distribution organisations.

The activities at the Bronze scene (Area of the flooding incident) will include a demonstration/exhibition of Civil Contingencies resilience equipment including Fire & Rescue service's high volume pumps, Flood defence barriers, contamination containment systems, Fast water rescue techniques, the Ambulance service's Hazardous area rescue team also specialist communications command and control systems.

Chris Shuttleworth