



## **Functions:**

- To function under emergency legislation and to deal with such matters concerning the County Council's emergency planning functions as may be referred to them by the Council.
- To reconvene when called upon either before, during or after a significant incident or emergency whereby the County Council may be required to respond beyond its normal day to day capabilities

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting of the County Emergency Committee held on 26 January 2016, as circulated, were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

## **3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor H.G.H. Sanderson declared a personal interest in agenda item No. 4(2) as the document had been produced by the Local Government Association. Councillor Sanderson left the meeting for this item.

## **4. REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER**

### **(1) Winter 2015/16 Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank**

Members received a presentation on the Winter 2015/16 Storms Desmond, Eva and Frank. (Copy attached to the signed minutes.)

Members were updated on the following:-

- Physical Effects in Northumberland
- Work was continuing on the re-located Hexham Community Fire Station and it was hoped that it would be handed over in late December 2016. A visit to the new facility could be arranged for members in due course.
- Financial Effects in Northumberland
- Resilience Grants - there had been an excellent uptake of Resilience Grants in Northumberland (final figure was 62% of eligible homes & businesses).
- Bellwin Scheme - £500,000 had already been agreed but further information had been requested by DCLG on the remainder of the claim.
- Business Continuity - Council services must be maintained even in an emergency and there was a need to improve evacuation plans for all at risk buildings including Depots and Fire Stations, and to review business continuity plans to help recover more quickly.

- There were a number of HR issues to resolve, such as staff acting as volunteers and required rest periods.
- Communications - It was important to consider how information was shared with other agencies and the public.
- Rest Centres - more staff and training was required to enable rest centres to be adequately staffed.
- Response - it had been decided by the agencies involved not to declare a 'Major Incident' and the rationale for the decision clearly noted.
- Recovery and Restoration - Northumbria LRF has resolved to use 'Resilience Direct' to facilitate responses required to Government
- It was common for there to be many offers of support from individuals and organisations but these needed to be closely coordinated with local support groups to avoid confusion.
- Civil Contingencies - the Operations Room at West Hartford had been used very successfully during the recent 'Tall Ships' event. Efforts were being made to refine the way in which work was carried out.
- Fire and Rescue Service Improvements - all operational staff had been surveyed and a full review carried out with the following improvements being identified:-
  - Personal issue of personal protective clothing and equipment
  - Additional, appropriate portable water pumps
  - Improved staff welfare, self sufficiency, relief arrangements
  - Increased resilience capacity e.g. Water Incident Managers/First Responders
  - National Flood Resilience Review - this document considered possible future scenarios and climate change along with key local infrastructure which may be at risk.

The following comments were made:-

- Following a landslip and resulting road closure at Redesmouth near Bellingham, there had been an incident when an ambulance had not been aware of the road closure. It was reported that it may have been an 'out of area' ambulance crew who were not aware of the local information. It was agreed to raise this issue with ambulance HQ.
- The Environment Agency had carried out many temporary repairs immediately after the storms and these had now all been made permanent.
- In relation to a query about liaison with Northumbria Water when storms were predicted, it was reported that Kielder Reservoir had been discharging water to reduce levels prior to the storm but as the surrounding land was already saturated its capacity was quickly taken up again.
- A small number of properties near Newminster, Morpeth had been cut off due to flooding in January 2016. No satisfactory answer had been received from the Environment Agency. It was agreed that Station Manager Darren Nelson would be asked to visit and assess this area.

**(2) Local Government Association guidance document ‘A Councillor’s Guide to Civil Emergencies’**

Members were asked to consider the ‘Councillor’s Guide to Civil Emergencies’ and its distribution to all Members. (Copy attached to the signed minutes)

Members welcomed the document and felt that it should be shared with other Councillors and appropriate officers. It may be appropriate to re-send it at the time of any future incident. It should also be made available to newly elected Councillors.

**RESOLVED** that the document be sent to all Councillors with a note from the Emergency Committee that the Council’s own arrangements were under review and welcoming any comments.

The meeting was adjourned.

**CHAIR** \_\_\_\_\_.

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_.