Nottinghamshire County Council

Elected Members' Emergency Plan

Version 4
June 2017

Produced by: **Emergency Planning Team**

Approved by: **Communities & Place Committee**

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Next version due: **June 2021**

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FOREWORD

It is a sad fact of life that on rare occasions a major incident will occur that disrupts normal life and brings tragedy to the communities affected. It might be an incident of natural causes, such as severe flooding, or a transport or industrial accident, or it might be a terrorist act. Whatever the cause, the County Council is ready to respond quickly and effectively (in collaboration with the uniformed emergency services and others) to provide care and support to victims.

I am reassured to know that the County Council, and our Local Resilience Forum partners, have a suite of well-developed plans for coping with the impacts of emergencies, and that these have been validated through staff training and exercises.   The Elected Members Emergency Plan is an important element of the County Councils preparedness for emergencies. It provides all the information County Councillors need to help us to best support communities that are affected by an emergency.

I am delighted to commend the 'Elected Members Emergency Plan' to you. I encourage you to study the plan carefully and to attend the accompanying training provided by our emergency planning officers. By doing so you will be well placed to make a positive difference before, during and after any major incident occurring.

Thank you for your consideration of this important topic.

Councillor Gordon Wheeler
Vice Chairman of the Communities & Place Committee

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aim

This plan aims to provide Elected Members with a clear overview of how emergency planning, response and recovery are coordinated in Nottinghamshire.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the plan are to outline:

- How emergency planning is managed in Nottinghamshire
- The responsibilities of the County Council under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 including how we work with our partner organisations
- The important role that Elected Members can play before, during, and after an emergency
- The role the community can play before, during and after an emergency

1.3 Scope

The term 'emergency' can be used to cover a wide range of scenarios. As part of their existing arrangements services and teams within the County Council will have arrangements in place to deal with a variety of situations that require responding to something out of the ordinary for their usual day to day practices.

This plan and the guidance it includes is for those examples of emergencies defined in section 2.3, where an incident has had a significant impact on communities within Nottinghamshire and a specific management structure is required within the Authority to manage and coordinate the wider response.

The plan outlines where Elected Members can play an important role in planning for, responding to and recovering from major emergencies.

1.4 Related documents

The emergency planning team in conjunction with various County Council departments, and other organisations such as the emergency services, have produced a range of generic and specific plans and arrangements to respond to those risks outlined in the Community Risk Register. Further details can be found in section three.

Further details on how the County Council plans for and responds to both emergencies and business continuity incidents are outlined in the *County Council Major Emergency Plan* and the *County Council Corporate Business Continuity Plan*. Both plans are available on the NCC intranet.

For a more detailed overview of emergency planning Elected Members may also find the following documents useful (copies available from the emergency planning team):

- Local Resilience Forum Community Risk Register
- Local Resilience Forum Generic Response Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Constitution
- Cabinet Office Responding to Emergencies, The UK Central Government Response - Concept of Operations
- Local Government Association – A councillor's guide to civil emergencies

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1.5 Distribution and version control

The plan will be distributed to all NCC Elected Members.

The following Nottinghamshire County Council (NCC) staff hold copies of this plan:

- The Emergency Planning Team
- Members of the Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board
- Democratic Services Team
- Media Relations Team

The latest version of this document is available on the intranet at:

Emergency plans - Managers' Resource Centre - Intranet

Recipients of this plan should ensure they have the most up-to-date version of this document.

1.6 Preservation of documents

In the event of an emergency it is important that all documentation, both historic and current, is preserved. An official investigation into the cause and circumstances of an incident is possible and evidence may be required by:
- The appropriate enforcement authority (e.g. Health and Safety Executive, Environment Agency, Air Accidents Investigation Branch)
- A judicial inquiry
- A coroner's inquest
- The police
- A civil court hearing compensation claims.

Organisations may be required to provide access to documents, created or received, which are potentially relevant to the emergency.

1.7 Information governance

Nottinghamshire County Council is subject to the following legislation:
- The Data Protection Act 1998
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- The Environmental Information Regulations 2004
- The Equality Act 2010.

For more information on Nottinghamshire County Council's legal responsibilities when responding to an incident, please contact the emergency planning team.

1.8 Contact details

Any queries about this document should be directed to Nottinghamshire County Council's emergency planning team.

Telephone: 01159 773 471
Email: emergency.planning@nottscc.gov.uk

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2. BACKGROUND

2.1 What is the Civil Contingencies Act?

During the early part of the previous decade, the United Kingdom experienced the impacts of a number of large-scale emergencies. The widespread flooding, fuel shortages, the outbreak of foot-and-mouth in 2000, along with the subsequent terrorist attacks in New York on 9/11, demonstrated the need for a more integrated approach to emergency planning.

This led to a Government review of emergency planning in England and Wales. The outcome of this was the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which provided an improved, more consistent, and more resilient, approach to emergency planning. The Act is in two parts:-
- Part One relates to local arrangements;
- Part Two covers emergency powers that can be used by Central Government.

Part One of the Act places statutory duties on those organisations that have responsibilities to respond to major emergencies affecting communities. These include the emergency services (Police, Fire and Ambulance), health agencies, Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and others.

These 'Category One' responders, are subject to six duties:

1. A duty to carry out **risk assessment** and publish all or part of a Community Risk Register
2. A duty to **plan for emergencies**
3. The requirement to have robust **business continuity** arrangements in place to maintain service delivery
4. A duty to have arrangements in place to **warn & inform the public** both before and during emergencies
5. A duty to **co-operate with partner agencies**
6. A duty to **share Information with partner agencies.**

In addition, Local Authorities have a seventh statutory duty:

7. To **promote business continuity** to local businesses and the voluntary sector.

In practical terms, this means advising and guiding the business community and voluntary sector to ensure they have their own robust business continuity arrangements to continue their business during and following emergencies that have an effect on their business.

The Act also defines a secondary group of responders. These 'Category Two responders' are those organisations which, although not 'primary' responders, could potentially have a significant role. For example, utility companies, communication agencies and transport operators. Category Two responders have statutory duties to **co-operate** and to **share information** with Category One responders in the planning and response to major emergencies.

Part Two of the Act gives Central Government Emergency Powers for use in catastrophic emergency situations, for example; they could nominate a Minister to co-ordinate the response to a regional emergency.

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2.2 What other legislation affects emergency planning in Nottinghamshire?

Other specific legislation includes:

Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations, 2015. Requires the County Council to prepare off-site emergency plans for sites identified by the Health and safety Executive and the Environment Agency as storing above the prescribed thresholds of hazardous substances.

Pipeline Safety Regulations 1996. Requires the County Council to prepare an emergency plan for all pipelines identified by the HSER as Major Accident Hazard Pipelines in Nottinghamshire.

Rabies (Control) Order 1974. Imposes a statutory duty on county councils to maintain a contingency plan for a rabies outbreak that could affect part or all of their area.

Local Government Act 1972 – Section 138. Allows local authorities to invoice expenditure to avert or alleviate the effects, or potential effects, of an emergency or disaster which could involve destruction of property or danger to life and where there is reasonable ground for apprehension of such an emergency.

Radiation Emergencies Preparedness and Public Information Regulations 2001. For Nottinghamshire, these regulations require the County Council to have arrangements in place to inform the public promptly in any radiation emergency.

Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 (as amended), Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sports Act 1987 and **Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**. Requires the County Council's to carry out its statutory function to ensure "Safety of Sports Grounds" in Nottinghamshire.

2.3 What is an emergency?

For the purposes of this document, and the Nottinghamshire County Council Major Emergency Plan, a major emergency is any of the following:

- where significant resources are required to respond effectively to an emergency
- where significant disruption to public service is incurred, or
- where a response over and above day-to-day working practices is required.

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2.4 What is a major incident?

A major incident is defined thus:

An event or situation, with a range of serious consequences, which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agencies.

Notes:
a) 'Emergency responder agencies' describes all Category 1 and 2 responders as defined in the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and associated guidance
b) A major incident is beyond the scope of business-as-usual operations, and is likely to involve serious harm, damage, disruption or risk to human life or welfare, essential services, the environment or national security
c) A major incident may involve a single-agency response, although it is more likely to require a multi-agency response, which may be in the form of multi-agency support to a lead responder
d) The severity of consequences associated with a major incident are likely to constrain or complicate the ability of responders to resource and manage the incident, although a major incident is unlikely to affect all responders equally
e) The decision to declare a major incident will always be a judgement made in a specific local and operational context, and there are no precise and universal thresholds or triggers. Where LRFs and responders have explored these criteria in the local context and ahead of time, decision makers will be better informed and more confident in making that judgement.

2.5 What is emergency planning?

Emergency planning is a comprehensive, multi-agency process to identify and assess relevant risks, to plan and prepare, to train and exercise, to mitigate the effects, and respond effectively to incidents when they happen. In the aftermath, the role of emergency planning is to support the recovery of affected communities, and the return to normality, and then to review and revise arrangements for future incidents.

The County Council's *Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board (RSEMB)* brings together key officers from all departments to coordinate emergency planning activity across the Council. During an emergency the RSEMB may convene to coordinate the County Council's emergency response.

2.6 What is business continuity?

Business Continuity is similar to emergency planning, but is focused internally. It is about planning to mitigate the effects of a potential disruption to our own vital public services, so that they can continue to be delivered regardless. Whatever the incident the County Council should strive for 'business as usual' in service delivery.

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2.7 What is community resilience?

Community resilience is about communities and individuals harnessing their local resources and expertise to help themselves in an emergency, in a way that complements the response of the emergency services and other responding agencies.

Through the work of the NCC emergency planning team and the Local Resilience Forum, communities are encouraged to plan for emergencies. It is likely that communities who do so will cope better if disaster does strike as they will be more resilient.

A key way in which we do this is to promote the development of community emergency plans. All major emergencies are dealt with by the emergency services and other category 1 and 2 responders in a combined response. In extreme conditions such as heavy snow and flooding, there is a possibility that responding agencies may not be able to reach the scene immediately. In such circumstances, the initial response may rely entirely on local people. A community emergency plan can help a community prepare for an emergency and minimise its impact should they be affected.

Specific advice, guidance and support has also been provided by the County Council to communities affected by flooding or for during times of severe snow and ice.

2.8 What is the Local Resilience Forum?

The Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is the senior management group for the co-ordination of emergency planning within Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum sits at the apex of this area's local civil protection arrangements. Its overall purpose is to ensure that there is an appropriate level of preparedness to enable an effective multi-agency response to emergencies which may have a significant impact on the communities of this area. The LRF is chaired by the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire Police and the County Council are represented by the Chief Executive.

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3. EMERGENCY PLANNING IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

3.1 Command, Control and Coordination

The terms Gold / Silver / Bronze are used by all emergency responders to describe the Strategic / Tactical / Operational command structure in use during a major emergency to co-ordinate the multi-agency response. The Gold / Silver / Bronze system enables effective decision making. Each agency involved in response is expected to provide an officer with the appropriate decision making powers to attend meetings of these groups.

In Nottinghamshire responding agencies will refer to their single agency command groups or officers as Gold, Silver or Bronze. If a multi-agency group is called together to coordinate the response these groups will be referred to as Strategic, Tactical and Operational.

So, while there may be many individual agency Gold, Silver or Bronze groups established as part of the response there will only ever be one Strategic, Tactical or Operational group.

3.2 How do we manage the County Council's response to an emergency?

The overall deployment of the County Council's resources and response to a major emergency will be managed and co-ordinated by the Council's Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board (RSEMB). This is made up of senior management representatives from each department along with specialist advisors. It is led by the Service Director (South Nottinghamshire & Public Protection) and is supported and facilitated by the Emergency Planning Team.

The RSEMB meets regularly to consider the preparedness of the County Council for emergencies. Additionally, the group will come together during emergencies to co-ordinate the tactical (silver) level response of the County Council, for both emergency planning and business continuity emergencies.

The Group Manager, Emergency Planning and Registration and the Emergency Planning Team provide specialist advice and guidance to the Board.

Should the incident or emergency require a strategic (gold) level of response this will be led by the Chief Executive and Corporate Leadership Team.

Should the size, scale or nature of the emergency require it, the overall management and co-ordination of NCC's response to a major emergency will be conducted from the County Emergency Centre (CEC) facility. The CEC is located in the basement of County Hall, in West Bridgford. It has IT and control room technology to aid the co-ordination of NCC's response. The centre is available on a 24 hour basis.

Nottinghamshire County Council has a 'Major Emergency Plan' which describes this management structure, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of the key responders within the County Council.

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3.3 What is the role of the emergency planning team?

The Emergency Planning Team coordinates the planning and preparation, training and exercising for emergencies on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council. The team manage minor emergencies, calling out relevant departments, personnel and resources as appropriate.

The team works in close collaboration with all internal departments, plus the emergency services, health organisations, government agencies and other partners, to ensure the response to a major emergency is co-ordinated between all the agencies involved.

The team also provides support and guidance to those communities and community groups who have in place or are wanting to develop their own arrangements for dealing with the impact of an emergency.

The team provides a 24-hour out-of-hours duty officer and is the first point of contact within the County Council for the emergency services whenever they require our support.

The team also undertakes the County Council's statutory function of "Safety of Sports Grounds," as well as coordinating and facilitating the County Council's business continuity arrangements.

3.4 What are the roles of County Council Departments?

All departments have different resources, staff and specialties that may be useful in the response to a major emergency. Each department has a representative on the County Council's Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board, who provides information as to the capabilities of individual departments in preparing for emergencies, and what actions have been taken in response to an emergency.

Each Department also has its own Risk, Safety and Emergency Group (RSEMG) that coordinates emergency planning and business continuity across its department, and feeds into the RSEMB.

3.5 How will Elected Members be kept informed during an emergency?

During an emergency, the Service Director (South Nottinghamshire & Public Protection) will ensure that the Leader, the Vice Chairman of the Communities & Place Committee and relevant local Councillor(s) are kept informed of events.

Where necessary the Chief Executive will discuss significant issues of strategy and policy with the Leader.

The County Council's own intranet, internet and social media sites will be updated as frequently as practicable with information about the emergency. Other methods of keeping Elected Members informed, such as emails, text messages and briefings, will be used as appropriate.

In addition the Emergency Planning Team has provided within the County Emergency Centre a dedicated Elected Member information line. This information line is specifically for the use of Elected Members, and is only operational during an emergency. This telephone number is:

0115 977 3899

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3.6 What emergency plans exist in Nottinghamshire?

The emergency planning team has produced a wide range of generic and specific emergency plans. Generic emergency plans cater for the consequences of emergencies, rather than for a specific hazard or threat. These include:

- NCC Major Emergency Plan
- NCC County Emergency Centre Plan
- NCC Emergency Transport Plan
- NCC Flood Response Plan
- Multi-agency Emergency Accommodation Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Flood Response Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Humanitarian Assistance Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Pandemic Influenza Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Mass Fatalities Plans
- Local Resilience Forum Exotic Animal Disease Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Communicating with the Public in an Emergency Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Recovery Plan

Specific Emergency Plans cater for incidents occurring at specific sites. These include:

- Misterton Petroleum Storage Depot Off-Site Emergency Plan
- Major Accident Hazard Pipelines Plan
- Nottingham Forest Football Club Major Incident Plan
- Mansfield Town Football Club Major Incident Plan
- Nottinghamshire County Cricket Club Major Incident Plan
- Local Resilience Forum Local Flood Response Plans

3.7 Business continuity plans

There are several Nottinghamshire County Council business continuity plans in place detailing corporate contingency arrangements and information.

- NCC Corporate Business Continuity Plan
- NCC Loss of Utilities Plan for County Hall
- NCC Corporate Influenza Pandemic Plan
- NCC Industrial Action Plan
- NCC Fuel Emergency Response Plan

Each department is responsible for developing their own business continuity plans for those services identified as 'critical services' by the departmental RSEMGs.

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3.8 Who are our partner organisations and how do we work with them?

Nottinghamshire County Council has well established links with the full range of relevant statutory agencies, as well as non-statutory bodies. These include:

- Police, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance Service
- Borough and District Councils
- Health agencies, including Public Health England
- Relevant government agencies and departments such as the Environment Agency
- Voluntary agencies
- Local power, transport and communications companies
- Industry
- Sporting clubs and arenas.

All these agencies contribute to the planning and preparation for emergencies.

The partnership is formalised through the Nottingham & Nottinghamshire 'Local Resilience Forum' (LRF), which is the senior co-ordination group for this area. It meets regularly in normal times to discuss the emergency planning and preparation work that is being undertaken within Nottinghamshire. Then, in the event of a major emergency the group would come together to form the Strategic Co-ordinating Group for the emergency.

Nottinghamshire County Council is represented on this group by the Chief Executive (or deputy), along with the Group Manager, Emergency Planning and Registration in support.

Reporting to the Local Resilience Forum, there are a variety of subgroups for specific activities. Officers of Nottinghamshire County Council participate in the work of all these groups. The groups include:

- Resilience Working Group
- Risk Advisory Group
- Local Authorities Group
- Humanitarian Assistance Group
- Flood Planning and Warning Group
- Critical Infrastructure Group
- Voluntary Agencies Steering Group
- Training Sub Group
- Industrial Hazards Group
- Animal Health Group
- Recovery and Site Clearance Group

3.9 How can Elected Members obtain further information about emergency planning?

Elected Members can obtain further information about Emergency Planning by:

- Contacting the Emergency Planning Team by telephone on 0115 977 3471

- Visiting the Nottinghamshire County Council website www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

- Visiting the Local Resilience Forum website https://www.nottinghamshire.police.uk/site-page/emergency-planning-preparing-nottingham-and-nottinghamshire

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4. THE ROLE OF ELECTED MEMBERS

4.1 Overview of Elected Members' role in emergency planning

The overarching role of Elected Members before, during and after an emergency includes:

- Support for County Council officers of all departments who have an active involvement in emergency planning work
- Providing members of the public with information about emergency planning, through surgeries, word-of-mouth and meetings
- Evaluating the County Council's planning for and response to any emergency
- Supporting the public with advice and assistance during their long-term recovery
- Projecting a positive image of the County Council's role in an emergency.

4.2 What is the role of Elected Members before an emergency?

In the planning and preparation period, prior to an emergency occurring, Elected Members have a number of vital roles. These include ensuring that an effective emergency planning team is in place, and monitoring their activities to ensure that the right plans are in place, that staff are being trained, and that arrangements are being tested through effective simulation exercises. Also, Elected Members provide a vital interface with the communities they serve, and are well placed to pass information to and from local people affected by the hazards for which plans are prepared.

Essentially, the key role of Elected Members before an emergency embraces:
- Being aware of the County Council's responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act.
- Maintaining an awareness of the hazards and risks in their own local area and where necessary passing on local knowledge to the emergency planning team
- Providing advice to members of the public, and directing them to the expertise provided by the emergency planning team or other relevant NCC departments
- Encouraging individuals and communities and to take appropriate steps to ensure their own resilience to emergencies
- Contributing to emergency planning awareness-raising and training events
- Gaining an understanding of the emergency planning arrangements in Nottinghamshire that enables a successful multi-agency response
- Considering reports provided by the emergency planning team

A small number of Elected Members have specific roles in the preparation for emergencies. These are as follows:

The Leader of the County Council

- Overall strategic leadership of the County Council's corporate arrangements for emergency planning and response.

The Chair of the Communities & Place Committee

- Leadership and monitoring of appropriate planning, training and exercising for emergency planning and business continuity
- Support and encouragement of officers engaged in emergency planning and business continuity
- Monitoring the work of the emergency planning team in respect of its Safety of Sports Grounds activities

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4.3 What is the role of Elected Members during an emergency?

In overall terms, Elected Members can participate in the County Council's response to an emergency by:

- Providing support and encouragement for the efforts of officers of all departments involved in the response to the emergency
- Attending and being a familiar 'face' of the County Council at locations set up to deal with the emergency
- Participating as a member of any emergency committee which may be established to consider issues such as provision of additional funding to aid relief efforts
- Focus on lifting morale both amongst staff and the affected community
- By prior arrangement with the Emergency Centre Manager, members can periodically attend the County Emergency Centre (Lower Ground Floor, County Hall) to meet staff, acquire information and relay the perspectives and priorities of local people
- Keeping a log of significant actions and events for use in subsequent debriefings and any official inquiries related to the emergency.

Throughout the emergency response, Communities & Place Committee Members and other key Elected Members will receive briefings as appropriate from the Chief Executive, Chair of the RSEMB and the Group Manager, Emergency Planning and Registration.

Experience elsewhere demonstrates that a local authority is never scrutinised more closely, by its various audiences, than it is in its response to a major emergency in its area. Accordingly, the Communities & Place Committee Members and key individual Elected Members have specific key roles in an emergency. These are described below.

The Leader of the County Council

Strategic policy creation and decision making for the County Council's overall response, in collaboration with the Chief Executive

Communities & Place Committee

- The County Council's constitution allows that Chief Officers may incur expenditure to meet any immediate needs created by a sudden emergency. This is subject to the action being reported immediately to the Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Resources (represented by the Service Director of Finance and Procurement), and thereafter to the next meeting of the Communities & Place Committee.

The Vice Chairman of the Communities & Place Committee

- Support and encouragement of officers engaged in emergency response.
- Interface between other Elected Members and emergency managers

The local Elected Member

Elected Members for the areas affected by an emergency can contribute to the response in a number of important ways, as listed below. In all of these roles, it is important that the Elected Member keeps in touch with the County Emergency Centre (if established), and with members of the emergency planning team. This will ensure that everyone is working with up-to-date information on the response and on the concerns of affected communities. The local Elected Member should also establish and maintain contact with the Leader and the Chair of the Communities & Place Committee.

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Community Leader Role

Emergencies, by their nature, tend to be chaotic. In the early stages, there may be a degree of confusion and apparent disarray. This should pass quickly, not least because of the calm assurance of civic leaders such as County Councillors. In times of emergency the community looks to their elected representatives for assurance and leadership. In this role the Elected Member is well placed to pass important safety information and other advice from emergency managers directly into affected communities.

The Community Representative Role

The Elected Members' close links with their local communities enables them to represent the views of affected people and to ensure that these are known to the emergency managers. This role may also lead to local Elected Members being asked to undertake particular roles in the community response, for example by being a Trustee for a Disaster Fund.

A public face of the County Council

The Leader of the Council, Chief Executive, RSEMB members or Group Manager, Emergency Planning and Registration will deal with most enquiries from the media. However, representatives of the news media will also seek out local Elected Members for their perspectives on the emergency response. In general terms, Elected Members need to exercise caution when speaking publicly in this situation, and leave officers to respond on technical points. Please refer to the advice and pre-prepared sound bites included in Section 5 of this Plan.

Elected Members need to be prepared to be interviewed by the media about the County Council's response to an emergency, and provide the political link to the media.

The Civic Dignitary Role

A vital role of the Elected Member is to be the figurehead local dignitary in welcoming visitors to the area of the emergency. This may involve:

- Greeting VIPs such as members of the Royal Family or government ministers
- Receiving delegations of representatives from other areas
- Meeting representatives of the victims of the emergency
- Representing the local community at memorial services and other events.

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4.4 What is the role of Elected Members following an emergency?

Elected Members of the community affected have an important role to play in assisting with the recovery process. As the community representatives they will gather and make known the concerns of their community and feed them into the recovery process. They also have a very important role in disseminating credible information and advice back to the community.

As civic leaders, Elected Members will be involved with many other aspects of community life through such things as school governing bodies, local charities and various community groups. They can be a valuable source of help and specialist advice.

Elected Members have a role as:

- The focus for community concerns
- Identifying problems and vulnerabilities of their community that may require priority attention and feeding them back to the relevant recovery group
- The knowledge bank of local personalities and resources
- Encouragement and support to recovery teams working within their community
- Enhancing local community liaison
- Visiting people affected to be a listening ear and to give them reassurance
- Consulting with the community on rebuilds or modernisation
- Assisting with the media in getting messages to the community (following established policy guidelines)
- Assisting with VIP visits
- Liaising with other elected representatives (MPs/MEPs/other LA's representatives, etc.)
- Assisting (and possibly chairing) debrief sessions with the community

Through their normal duties as committee members, Elected Members give the Authority strategic direction and decide policy. They will scrutinise decisions of officers and other committees and suggest improvements. They will ultimately authorise actions affecting the local authority's functions, so they will need to be kept well informed with accurate and up to date information to enable them to make credible and well informed judgements.

4.5 What arrangements are there for the safety of Elected Members?

The scene of an emergency can of course be a dangerous place. For safety, Elected Members should observe the following precautions:

- The emergency services will establish cordons (as soon as they are able to) around any dangerous areas; normally by means of high-visibility tape. These cordons must not be crossed under any circumstances
- Maintain continuous surveillance for possible dangers seeking advice as necessary from the emergency services personnel or from the County Emergency Centre or emergency planning / health and safety staff
- Do not approach the scene of an emergency without the advice and support of the emergency services and County Council emergency managers
- Ensure that the County Emergency Centre is aware of your movements, and is able to contact you with safety information
- Consider seeking advice on debriefing and emotional support services.

5. MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 Media

Normally, during emergencies, the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, or another senior manager will be the key spokesperson for enquiries from the media on behalf of the Council.

Individual Councillors may be approached by the media directly. They should be aware that the media may be looking for access to information that is not available to them from other sources. Councillors should be cautious about commenting on the incident itself and how it is being handled.

Essentially, Elected Members should re-direct to specialist officers any questions they receive that are technical in nature. However, it may be of considerable benefit to affected communities if councillors give messages of reassurance, sympathy and support, and to highlight their own role as described in this Plan.

5.2 Social Media

Social media is used by an increasingly significant proportion of the world's population to communicate, to share information, images and footage, to comment on news stories, issues and incidents, to create news and to lobby for change. Journalists regularly monitor such comments placed on Twitter and Facebook, using such platforms as sources for news and information which they, in turn, report on.

Public, private and voluntary sector bodies in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire are also making increasing use of such platforms as a means by which they can engage in two way communications with the public.

Sites like Facebook and Twitter can be accessed via mobile phone applications, remotely and at the touch of a button and therefore, in the context of an emergency or major incident, they offer huge opportunities to relay real time information directly to the public without fear that that information may be delayed in its transmission or altered and its meaning lost by placing it solely in the hands of the mainstream media.

For Elected Members the principles of communicating using social media during an emergency are the same as when dealing with mainstream media. County Councillors should signpost enquiries to the County Council's use of social media channels.

5.3 Additional support and guidance

For any further advice and guidance on dealing with the media you can contact Media Relations on:

0115 977 2438

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Appendix 1 - Emergency contacts

For emergencies out of office hours please use the telephone numbers below:

Major emergencies

A major emergency is one which:

- Requires significant resources in order for NCC to respond effectively
- Causes significant disruption to public services, or
- Requires a response over and above day-to-day working practices.

For the NCC emergency planning duty officer contact **0115 9773674** or call **0115 977 3899** if notified that the County Emergency Centre (CEC) has been opened **(both non-public numbers)**

The *numbers below are for use by the general public* and advertised on the County Council website

Social care emergencies

Between 5.30pm - 8am Monday to Thursdays, 4.30pm Friday to 8.30am Monday, or Bank Holidays please phone our Emergency Duty Team on **0300 456 4546**.

If a person is in immediate danger call **999**.

Social Care emergencies could include:

- you suspect a child is being abused
- you suspect a vulnerable adult is being abused
- you come across someone who seems to be having a mental health crisis
- your home care worker has not arrived and you need help to get into bed.

Highways emergencies

Between 8pm - 8am Monday to Friday, weekends and Bank Holidays please phone FirstCall on **01253 502776**.

Highways Emergencies could include:

- streetlight with exposed wires
- tree fallen in the road.

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