

A Scrutiny Report of the Winter Weather Review Group

A Joint Report of the Regeneration and
Sustainable Communities Scrutiny
Panels

October 2011

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
1 Introduction	11
1.1 Purpose of the Review.....	11
1.2 Witnesses and Contributions	12
1.3 Methodology	12
2 Overview of the Policy Framework	12
2.1 National Level	12
2.2 Local Level.....	14
2.3 What is the Council's role?	15
2.4 The Borough Emergency Plan.....	15
3 Background	17
3.1 Impact of Severely Cold Weather	18
4 Findings	19
4.1 Emergency Planning.....	19
4.2 South Yorkshire Police.....	22
4.3 South Yorkshire Ambulance Service	24
4.4 PCT.....	26
4.5 Adult Social Care	29
4.6 RMBC Corporate Communications.....	33
4.7 Road Network – Clearance of Towns & Villages	35
4.8 Effect of Freezing Temperatures on Heating in Council Properties	41
4.9 Parish Councils & Community Groups.....	44
4.10 Area Assemblies	46
4.11 Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR).....	47
4.12 Elected Members	50
4.13 Recovery from an Emergency Incident	52
5 Examples of Good Practice	53
5.1 National.....	53
5.2 Local	54
6 Conclusions	54
7 Thanks	56
7.1 Elected Members.....	56
7.2 RMBC Officers	56
7.3 Others	56
7.4 Written Evidence.....	56
8 Appendices	57
8.1 Appendix 1 – Cold Weather Plan for England November 2011	57
8.2 Appendix 2 – Section 2 Emergency Plan.....	57
8.3 Appendix 3 – Section 5 Emergency Plan.....	57
8.4 Appendix 4 – Section 8 Emergency Plan.....	58
8.5 Appendix 5 - Recommended Grab Bag Contents.....	58
8.6 Appendix 6 – Keep Warm & Safe Message from Kirklees Council	58

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context & Background

The winter of 2010/11 was one of the harshest experienced across the United Kingdom in over 30 years. The freezing temperatures and significant snowfalls from 30th November 2010 to 15th December 2010 impacted on the entire country. In Rotherham, the road network came to a standstill under the sheer volume of snowfall, the majority of schools were closed and Council & local health services were impacted by the severe weather.

Responding to feedback from the public on a wide range of issues arising, such as widespread boiler failure, demand for residential road clearance and access to information, Elected Members commissioned a review to examine the Council's ability to respond to such extreme conditions. The review was commissioned by the former Performance & Scrutiny Overview Committee.

The review was undertaken jointly by two of our former scrutiny panels; the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel and the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel.

Purpose

Members particularly wanted to look at the robustness of the Council's Emergency Planning process and other business continuity plans in place to tackle the impact of severe weather conditions on essential services. They also looked at how the Council's plans & arrangements linked to those of our partners and local community groups. The review group set out to establish areas of good practice and lessons that could be learnt from the experience, highlighting what worked well, what didn't work so well and the lessons learnt.

Witnesses

The Review Group received a wide range of internal and external evidence. Contributing to the review were senior Council officers, Cabinet Members and Area Assemblies, in addition to Parish Council's, the voluntary sector and partner agencies including South Yorkshire Police and Ambulance Services, the PCT and South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive.

Their help and co-operation with the review is gratefully acknowledged.

Summary of Findings

Resilience

The review found that many officers, councillors, members of the public, emergency services and other partners worked extremely hard during this period to ensure that a minimum level of essential public services were provided across the Borough, in addition to assisting with the critical incident on the A57. Without this effort & determination, the impact on individuals & communities would have been much greater than it was.

The fact that those most in need received a service during this winter period is testament to the dedication and commitment of staff and volunteers from across the council, the ambulance service and other agencies & local communities.

The high level of neighbourliness and community spirit in Rotherham was underestimated. Surprise was expressed by officers giving evidence to the review on the extent to which residents pitched in to support their communities; one of the key conclusions to this review is that community resilience needs to be harnessed by the Council to achieve a more co-ordinated response in similar adverse weather conditions.

The importance of communicating in a timely manner with residents, schools, emergency services, public transport providers and the different levels within local government and partners was a key theme that emerged throughout the evidence gathering process.

Council Borough Emergency Plan

Linked to the above, is the role of the Council's Emergency Planning Team, who is responsible for co-ordinating Rotherham's response to any emergency affecting the town. Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) the Council must be able to ensure that our response integrates with that of all other relevant agencies, such as the emergency services, neighbouring local authorities, the NHS, public utilities and voluntary agencies.

The legislation is set out to ensure emergency preparedness, including Business Continuity, is embedded as part of the Council's integrated emergency management system. This includes normal service delivery and more importantly that the organisation has plans and procedures in place to effectively manage business disruption.

The critical issue arising from this review was the non-activation of the Council's Emergency Plan in December 2010, despite the prolonged duration of the severe weather and its borough wide impact. One of the main benefits of this action is to escalate co-ordination of an incident to a strategic level Control Room operated by the Council and partner agencies. Many witnesses reflected that had this occurred during the adverse weather conditions, coordination between both internal council services and that of the emergency services and other local agencies would have been more effective.

It should also be highlighted that some officers directly involved in the co-ordination of services during this incident would not agree with this finding, claiming that the full activation of the Borough Emergency Plan would have reduced resources elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the review group has recommended that the Council's Borough Emergency Plan is amended on the basis that escalation of the emergency planning arrangements must be designed to support service resilience against disruptive factors that can arise from both internal and external operating pressures. The principles of an integrated Emergency Plan should be able to take place alongside supporting plans (business

continuity) and arrangements through effective and appropriate management steps.

In undertaking the review, Members also found an over reliance on the emergency services to advise whether the Borough Emergency Plan should have been fully activated or not. The Council may activate the plan either by taking advice from the emergency services, and/or by internal observations of a developing situation and it is recommended that this process is also revisited to provide clarity.

A related issue for the Council & their partners is the different interpretation of emergency levels and the terms used to describe these; we have recommended that this issue is resolved by the Council working with all partners to develop a common understanding of emergency planning arrangements. Ideally, all partners would use the same terminology and interpretation, however it is accepted that this may not be possible due to differing organisational and service objectives. Despite this, the review group believe that further work to provide clarification would help improve co-ordination in any future emergency or adverse weather incident.

Adverse Winter Weather 2010/11- Summary of Borough Wide Incidents

Police

- The police service were caught out by the severity of the bad weather and like many other services, found it difficult to get people into work.
- Communication with the Council on the unfolding A57 incident did not take place until 1st December. The incident was managed by drawing on Gold, Silver & Bronze Command as applicable, but this did not result in the formal activation of the Borough Emergency Plan
- South Yorkshire Police operated their own communications room during the period to liaise with partners and co-ordinate resources. These were stretched and primarily focussed on the A57 despite snow related incidents occurring across the Borough.

South Yorkshire Ambulance Service

- The service underwent a massive learning curve as a result of the adverse weather during winter 2009/10. This resulted in a review of emergency preparedness within the service. One outcome was the procurement of 14 4x4 vehicles; 80% of these form an emergency car fleet
- SY Ambulance Service have good links with our Adult Social Care team to co-ordinate support for those able to get home from hospital, although non critical journeys (such as for routine day care admissions) were cancelled
- During this period, all relevant agencies were required at a daily meeting: Strategic Health Authority, GP Network, PCT & Ambulance Service. Vehicles were dispatched to collect personnel to ensure representatives could attend
- The most difficult phase during this period was after the snow fall and clearance was underway. This encouraged people to start venturing out resulting in many falls and associated injuries. Hospitals and GP's were under extreme pressure at this point.

PCT

- The PCT's role during the severe weather was to monitor and ensure communication with local health services. The decision makers regarding service provision are the GP's & hospitals and this continued during the period of severe weather.
- The PCT activated their own Emergency Plans and this worked well where they had direct control. For instance, the District Nurses were under the PCT at this time, and they were allocated local case load that they could walk to and which were based on need and vulnerability of the patient.
- Their key issues related to communications regarding the non-activation of the Borough Emergency Plan, access to residential roads and transporting staff into work so that they could co-ordinate community services
- Resuming normal business & services during the clear up period was challenging.

Adult Social Care Services

- A departmental 'emergency planning team consisting of 5 managers based themselves at the Rothercare headquarters which is located at the housing scheme known as Bakers Field Court
- The decision to do this was an immediate response to the circumstances – it was not a planned preventative action. However, it was thought to be essential in order to co-ordinate critical services
- In addition, a co-ordinated response was provided at the A57 reception centre
- A physical check was made on the most vulnerable customers – staff unable to come to work made welfare phone calls
- NAS supported the PCT whereby they also considered that the weather was severe enough to justify the activation of the Council's Emergency Plan
- Response from commissioned providers differed between organisations depending on location and views taken on the weather conditions. The bigger organisations coped better as more personnel resources were available to draw from.

Corporate Communications

The work of the communications team is essentially spilt into the following areas:

- Communicating directly with residents
- Communicating with elected members
- Meeting the demands of the media and using this as a channel to reach residents;
- Communication with staff in terms of impact on their work & working arrangements, access to buildings etc

- Key Issues highlighted included:

- Ability to issue information in a timely manner & act on it;

- Rapidly changing environment e.g. school closures, road closures and access issues;
- RBT Contact Centre experienced technical problems

Network Management

- The service priorities related to road clearance across the borough's main routes moving to residential areas as resources would allow.
- After the previous winter in 2009/10, rigorous planning of services, salt supply and a dedicated fleet of custom made vehicles was in place.
- However, difficulties were encountered due to conflicting service demands to keep established networks clear and the hundreds of calls from residents requesting local road clearance.
- The severity of the weather conditions, intensity of snow followed by compacted ice meant all available resources were used with no restriction on activity in respect of the budget. This meant however, the budget was not adequate with 568K spent on vehicles & salt with additional staff costs amounting to 138K.

Effect of Freezing Temperatures on Condensing Boilers

- Through the Decent Homes Programme, RMBC have replaced 17,000 heating systems in rented homes with condensing boilers. Between the end of November and mid December 2010, 2,645 requests were received for repairs to broken down combination boilers
- Regular contingency planning meetings were held every 2-3 days throughout the period to co-ordinate activity with relevant services
- Adult Services and Rotherfed worked well together to identify the most vulnerable, affected households re heating issues;
- 200 electric heaters were provided by partners in addition to 250 heaters being sourced and distributed immediately before Christmas by Neighbourhood Wardens & housing staff.
- Action taken following the incidents in January included:
 - refitting some boilers with larger diameter condensate pipes from 22mm – 32mm
 - boiler warranty claims were pursued, where appropriate, against Decent Homes contractors in respect of failing to fit to specification although the contractors demonstrated that the boilers were fitted to manufacturers' specification in the majority of cases;
 - A very small number of condensate pipes were altered to meet specification
 - The cost of these solutions will be in addition to an otherwise forecasted budget.

Area Assemblies, Parish Councils & Voluntary Organisations

- Government policy drive towards the 'Big Society' where communities actively work to improve their local areas is particularly pertinent during harsh winters. This review sets out the framework for a Community Resilience and recommends that this is developed further with our Area Assembly teams.

- The review found that more emphasis on communications with community groups and residents could have been achieved across the borough. The Council's Area Assemblies and local Parish Councils were an available resource to assist in this extreme weather event. It is a lesson learnt for the future that much more joint work needs to be undertaken in this area.
- During the severe weather during winter 2009/10, Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR) had worked predominantly with Age Concern Rotherham and a few other organisations to help provide services to support elderly and vulnerable people in the Borough.
- The period of snow during this previous winter had highlighted the issues faced when older people were not able to access basic supplies due to a prolonged period of severe weather.
- VAR and Age Concern Rotherham implemented support arrangements that were under development due to the sudden onset of the severe weather in early December 2010.

The report contains a full set of recommendations to be submitted to the Cabinet for their consideration. These can be seen throughout the main body of the report.

Key Recommendations

RMBC Emergency Planning

1. It is recommended that the Council work with partners to develop common agreement and compatibility with regard to the terms used in emergency planning arrangements. This is subject to differing organisational objectives and service requirements. To provide clarity, the Council's Borough Emergency Plan should set out a Glossary of Terms used by all partners in this regard.
2. Linking to the above, it is recommended that consultation is undertaken across all directorates and with partners to revise the Borough Emergency Plan to enable a tiered system intrinsically linking corporate emergency planning arrangements to service business continuity plans.
3. As part of this recommendation, roles & responsibilities are also reviewed with emphasis on clarifying the 'hierarchy' of roles within the plan.

Specifically:

- Borough Emergency Co-ordinator
- Strategic Liaison Officer
- Forward Liaison Officer
- Emergency & Safety Manager

4. The Council and its Partners develop a Severe Weather Plan that is activated in conjunction with emergency planning arrangements. Section 8 of the Plan currently makes reference to severe weather.¹ The Severe Weather Plan should set out a number of key activities to be undertaken as part of our response:
- ✓ An agreed criteria between partners that puts the Borough onto an 'Alert Status', this should reflect the levels set out in the Cold Weather Plan for England;
 - ✓ Once the alert is triggered, a meeting between partners to enable clarity in the event of a developing situation;
 - ✓ A written statement recording a range of anticipated problems that can be used as a briefing further down the ranks of each organisation; this document should be rationale based supporting subsequent decision making;
 - ✓ A range of locations identified as being suitable Control/Command centre's;
 - ✓ A contingency plan for all Forward Liaison Officers to set out roles, possible work locations and communication responsibilities;
 - ✓ In the event of worsening weather, the Network Management Team (Streetpride), work alongside the Emergency Planning Team and report back recommended action to the co-ordinating officer²
 - ✓ An overview of protocol for staff regarding their roles & responsibilities if they cannot get into work or if they attend an alternative location to work; individual service managers would clarify detail as part of business continuity;
 - ✓ A *requirement* to instigate the Recovery Plan proportionately in relation to the incident; this will support communities to return to normal following severe weather;
 - ✓ Essential staff (to be identified by individual services) should be supported to ensure they have the right equipment in the event of severe winter weather. A 'Grab Bag' is one way of achieving this and would contain specific items as seen in the appendices.³ The Council could consider providing the bag itself as a corporate item & consider ways in which it can support staff in the provision of necessary equipment. This may take the form of advice or training for severe weather conditions and should be undertaken in conjunction with the Emergency Planning Team.
5. The proposed Severe Weather Plan should reflect action to be taken in relation to the scale of the identified severity. The Department of Health's Cold Weather Alert Service and the associated Cold Weather Plan for England should be utilised. For example, winter through planning & low level activity at levels 1-2; Business Continuity at levels 2-3; and the Council's Emergency Plan would kick in at levels 3-4.

¹ See Appendix 4

² This should be an officer at a strategic level as identified within the Emergency Plan.

³ See Appendix 5

6. A database is available on the Council's 'Yourself' system detailing all staff, where they live and work base, plus skills available in an emergency situation – however, arrangements to access this information during an emergency or incident needs to be agreed across the Council as part of business continuity arrangements as well as where emergency planning is activated.
7. That Business Continuity Plans are reviewed in light of recent reductions in staff numbers to ensure that a minimum of service delivery is viable.
8. Further sharing of information across geographical boundaries needs to be implemented. This applies to the City Region to identify problem areas based on experience of this snow incident. For instance, Nottinghamshire & Bassetlaw Council's should be invited to participate in this exercise, particularly with regard to road & transport issues.

1 INTRODUCTION

The United Kingdom experienced its worst winter for over 30 years during late November 2010 through to January 2011. Heavy snowfalls, record low temperatures, travel chaos and disruption resulted in the nationwide transport network coming to a near standstill. In Rotherham, as in all neighbouring towns, the Council faced a range of difficult technical, environmental & public health challenges.

This period of prolonged snow & ice severely tested our ability to keep transport routes open impacting on the local economy and the provision of health & wider public services. In many parts of the Borough, residential roads were impassable and major trunk roads at a standstill with the A57 Worksop Road being declared a 'critical incident'. Many householders were affected by freezing pipes, failure of domestic heating appliances and restricted access to local shops & services.

1.1 Purpose of the Review

The impact of such a harsh winter led to criticism and complaints from the general public and in response to this the Performance & Scrutiny Overview Committee commissioned a Scrutiny Review Group to examine the Council's ability to respond to Extreme Winter Weather.

In January 2011, two of our former scrutiny panels received separate reports relating to residential boiler breakdown⁴ and road clearance & gritting;⁵ subsequently, a joint review group was commissioned from our former Regeneration & Sustainable Scrutiny Panels to look at a range of issues that arose during this period. In particular, members wanted to look at the robustness of the Council's Emergency Planning process and other business continuity plans in place to tackle the impact of severe weather conditions on essential services. The review also looked at how our plans & arrangements linked to our partners and local communities. Members set out to establish areas of good practice and lessons that could be learnt from the experience, what worked well, what didn't work so well and what the obstacles were.

Members have taken into account the useful evaluation and recommendations arising from the post incident report for the A57 incident, whilst focus of this review is on the broader impact of the extreme snow conditions across the Borough.

The review group wish to ensure that all Members are informed of the full range of issues arising in relation to severe winter weather and what lessons can be learnt for future with regard to business continuity in similar circumstances.

This report acknowledges how public service providers, businesses and communities worked together to keep Rotherham Borough moving, despite the challenging weather conditions.

⁴ Former Regeneration Scrutiny Panel 12 January 2011 – Item 96

⁵ Former Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel – 27 January 2011 – Item 58

1.2 Witnesses and Contributions

A wide range of witnesses participated in the review; officers from all council directorates and Cabinet Members gave evidence in addition to the Police & Ambulance Services, the PCT, the Voluntary Sector and Parish Council's. Contributions were also received from public transport providers and the National Farmers Union. For a full list of witnesses please see page ????

1.3 Methodology

This report sets out the work undertaken by the Winter Weather Review Group during 2011 and presents its conclusions and recommendations in respect to how RMBC can improve its resilience to winter weather.

The review was chaired by Cllr Alan Gosling and was accompanied by Councillors Jenny Whysall, Sue Ellis & scrutiny panel co-optee Brian Walker.

The review was carried out using the following methods:

- ✓ Initial planning meeting to clarify the key lines of enquiry
- ✓ Evidence gathering Review Group meetings
- ✓ Questionnaires and other requests for information
- ✓ Desktop research
- ✓ Evidence of National & Local Good Practice

The report is structured as follows:

- ✓ Overview of Policy Framework
- ✓ Background & Context Setting
- ✓ Emergency Planning
- ✓ Sector Business Continuity - what went well, learning points
- ✓ Conclusions
- ✓ Thanks

2 OVERVIEW OF THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 National Level

2.1.1 Government

In December 2010, the Secretary of State for Transport sought advice from HM Government's Chief Scientific Advisor on the probability of severe winter weather over the next 20 to 30 years. Briefing documents were subsequently prepared by the Met Office's Chief Scientist in respect of the likelihood of severe winter weather in England and in Scotland over the next few decades.

The briefing note indicates: "Consistent with historical records, climate model projections typically show large fluctuations between consecutive winters. The occurrence of one or two cold winters is therefore not necessarily a good indicator of a further cold winter."

It also advises that gradual warming is predicted by climate models as greenhouse gases increase. However, natural annual variability is expected to dominate the warming signal for at least the next decade or two. The

outlook, therefore, remains variable and difficult to predict over the forthcoming 20 to 30 years.

Work is continuing and improvements are being made to the Met Office's ability to predict future weather patterns more accurately.

2.1.2 Community Resilience

The Community Resilience agenda is being led by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat within the Cabinet Office. They define Community Resilience as “involves communities harnessing local resources and knowledge to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements the local emergency services.”

The Community Resilience programme was established in 2008 to explore ways to support communities in becoming resilient to the range of emergencies which they might face.⁶ This work aims to:

- support existing community initiatives
- disseminate these successful activities in other areas
- raise awareness and understanding of local emergency response capability.

The Government have set up an opportunity for communities to share examples of resilience activities taking place in their local communities and like to hear about these initiatives and share the examples with others. This will raise awareness and understanding amongst other communities, who may seek to adapt these to suit their own local need.

With this in mind, the Government are developing a case study library to enable communities to highlight their own local resilience activities and find out what other communities are doing.⁷

⁶ A number of downloadable resources have been developed to encourage you to take steps to prepare for an emergency and to think about the risks you face. These include:

- Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience
- Preparing for Emergencies – Guide for Communities
- Community Emergency Plan Toolkit

⁷ Further information, a template & guidance plus completed documents can be mailed to: community.resilience@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

2.1.3 Department of Health – Cold Weather Plan⁸

This Plan aims to protect people's health throughout the cold winter months; the cross-Government initiative reminds all local communities and the NHS how best to prepare to keep people healthy and warm in their homes.

The focus is on helping the most vulnerable by:

- making an extra £10 million available to support existing Government schemes for those at risk of fuel poverty – for example grants for insulation or heating improvements provided through the Warm Front scheme run by the Department of Energy and Climate Change
- creating a new £20 million fund – supported by Age UK – for local authorities and charities to address cold housing. Bids will be invited for innovative new ways to help vulnerable older people, people with disabilities or families with young children – reaching those falling through the gaps of existing schemes
- launching a Cold Weather Plan – which will be jointly run with the Met Office and Health Protection Agency – to advise people how to stay healthy thus relieving the pressures on the NHS that winter always brings
- providing information on all aspects of keeping safe and well in winter via the Getting Ready for Winter pages on the DirectGov website

2.1.4 Cold weather alert service

The Cold Weather Plan is supported by a Met Office cold weather alert service commencing 1 November and runs until the end of March.

The alert service has four levels ranging from 'Level 1 winter preparedness – long term planning' to 'Level 4 major incident – exceptional widespread winter weather causing disruptions'. Level 4 is more severe than the 'big freeze' at the end of last year.⁹

Together the plan and alerts aim to prepare, alert and prevent the effects of winter weather on people's health by helping keep people well. Further details of the action needed at each level can be found on the Met Office website.

This review has made reference to the Alert Service in its recommendations.

2.2 Local Level

Emergency Planning

The Council's Emergency Planning Team is responsible for co-ordinating Rotherham's response to any emergency affecting the town.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) the Council's main duties include:

⁸ Cold Weather Plan for England - Issued 1 November 2011

⁹ Definition of each level can be seen at Appendix 1

- ✓ risk assessment
- ✓ emergency planning
- ✓ maintaining public awareness and establishing arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public
- ✓ co-operating with the emergency services and other agencies
- ✓ sharing information with the emergency services and other agencies
- ✓ Business Continuity management - ensuring the Council continues to provide essential services if an incident disrupts the Council's business
- ✓ providing advice and assistance to the commercial sector and voluntary organisations

2.3 What is the Council's role?

In the event of a major emergency, the Council should be able to ensure that our response integrates with that of all other relevant agencies, such as the emergency services, neighbouring local authorities, the NHS, public utilities and voluntary agencies. This is achieved through routine liaison, training and emergency planning exercises.

Rotherham Council has a central operations room based in Bailey House¹⁰ which is suitably equipped to deal with emergency incidents. The room will be staffed by trained officers representing each council directorate and emergency services. The key function here is to control and co-ordinate the entire Council's response through links with smaller Council control rooms.

2.4 The Borough Emergency Plan

The Plan sets out the procedures for undertaking the above responsibilities although these do not supersede the discretion of an officer of the Authority involved in the response to take appropriate action in the circumstances. However, the plan states that such action and the reasons for it must be properly recorded at the time.

2.4.1 How is the Plan Activated?

A Major Incident could arise in two ways¹¹:

- ✓ An unforeseen event could necessitate the 'call-out' of the Emergency Services; they would notify the Authority through the duty Forward Liaison Officer;
- ✓ *Alternatively, an existing situation of which the Authority is already aware could develop over a period of time.*

A number of key roles & responsibilities are identified in the plan at Section 5¹²; with a clear audit process for each role. We have set out the following

¹⁰ This Control Room will be transferred to Riverside House in March 2012.

¹¹ See Section 2 of the Plan – Appendix 2

¹² Section 5 of the Borough Emergency Plan can be seen at Appendix 3

information to support the readers understanding of roles & responsibilities in an emergency situation.¹³

2.4.2 Borough Emergency Co-ordinator (BEC)

- ✓ The BEC is a shared role between the most senior officers within the Council. A weekly rota system is in place to determine who will undertake the duty in any given week. The role is designed to control and co-ordinate the integrated management of the Authority's response to a major incident and will be responsible to the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive for:
 - ✓ Taking the decision to activate the Borough Emergency Plan.
 - ✓ Informing the Chief Executive.
 - ✓ Informing other members of the Authority's Senior Emergency and Safety Management Team of the decision to activate the Borough Emergency Plan and the reasons why;
 - ✓ Initiating the corporate call out procedure;
 - ✓ Initiating the establishment of the Borough Emergency Operations Room in the pre-designated premises.
 - ✓ Considering in consultation with the Chief Executive timing of 'standing down' or 'scaling down' the council's emergency response arrangements

2.4.3 Strategic Liaison Officer (SLO)

The SLO will represent the Authority at the highest level of multi-agency working through the South Yorkshire Strategic Co-ordinating Group (previously known as 'Gold'). This person will be selected from the Strategic Director officer group.

The Strategic Liaison Officer is responsible for:

- ✓ Maintaining contact between the Authority, Emergency Services and other partner agencies at a level which can focus on the wider implications of the incident and longer term recovery phase;
- ✓ Keeping the Borough Emergency Co-ordinator/Chief Executive and Borough Emergency Operations Room;
- ✓ Suggesting to the Borough Emergency Co-ordinator/Chief Executive appropriate management strategies so that the response of this Authority harmonises with those of other organisations;
- ✓ Providing advice to the Emergency Services and other organisations regarding this Authority's overall capabilities and resources;
- ✓ Facilitating and expediting this Authority's support for the Emergency Services and other organisations.

¹³ All key personnel are volunteers and would need to leave their day job to be part of the arrangements.

2.4.4 Forward Liaison Officer (FLO)

There are seven FLO's within the Authority¹⁴ who operate on a rota system to provide an on-site operational contact.

The role of the Forward Liaison Officer is to represent this Authority at the scene of any major incident or any incident where the Emergency Services request support from this Authority.

The Forward Liaison Officer is responsible for:

- ✓ Being first point of contact for the Emergency Services
- ✓ Co-ordinating the Council's response at the incident site
- ✓ Keeping the Borough Emergency Operations Room informed;
- ✓ Representing this Authority at on-site meetings.
- ✓ Offering advice and assistance on the council's capabilities to the Emergency Service;
- ✓ Ensuring the provision of appropriate Health and Safety Guidance to RMBC employees at the site, along with the Emergency Services or the Emergency and Safety Team;
- ✓ A 4x4 Land Rover is made available to the FLO to use in the event of an emergency.

3 BACKGROUND

From late November to Boxing Day 2010 the United Kingdom experienced two spells of severe winter weather with very low temperatures and significant snowfalls.

The Met office reported that the first of these spells lasted for two weeks from Thursday 25 November to Thursday 9 December and saw persistent easterly or north-easterly winds bringing bitterly cold air from northern Europe and Siberia, accompanied by snow. Temperatures struggled to rise above freezing during the day and there were very severe frosts at night. Temperatures widely fell below -10 °C on several nights across the UK.

This first spell of snow and freezing temperatures occurred unusually early in the winter, with the snowfalls judged as the most significant and widespread in late November and early December since late November 1965.

The period from 9 to 15 December was milder with a gradual thaw of lying snow. However, a second spell of severe weather began on Thursday 16 December as very cold Arctic air pushed down across the UK from the north. The UK remained bitterly cold until Boxing Day, with day time temperatures again failing to rise above freezing and very severe frosts. While there was little further snowfall, lying snow remained until well into the New Year.

¹⁴ Four FLO's are based within the Emergency & Safety Team & three are selected from other sections of the authority by the Emergency Planning Manager.

This second spell of snow and freezing temperatures has been judged the most significant such spell in December since 1981, although late December 2009 to mid-January 2010 (the previous winter) were also broadly comparable to both these periods¹⁵

In the last 100 years, the UK has experienced only five colder months - January 1940, February 1947, January 1963, February 1963 and February 1986.

3.1 Impact of Severely Cold Weather

As we can see, November & December produced the coldest winter for many years.

While many associate cold weather with hypothermia, deaths directly caused by hypothermia represent only a small proportion.

Severe cold weather can be dangerous for vulnerable groups such as older people and those with serious illnesses. It's important for people to look after their health as the winter months can mean:¹⁶

- an increase in heart attacks and stroke – accounting for 40% of excess winter deaths
- pressure on GPs – GP visits for respiratory illnesses increase by up to 19% for every 1°C drop below 5°C of the mean temperature
- more pressure on the NHS – in 2009/10, the cost of emergency admissions due to falls on snow and ice was estimated at £42million
- it is estimated that over £850 million is spent by the NHS each year as a result of the impact of cold housing on people's health

3.1.1 Association for Public Service Excellence - Economics of winter resilience

Cost estimates are provided with the average cost of severe weather being estimated at £1 billion – half being 'hard' cost to the economy and half 'welfare' costs to the individual. In each case, the main cost arises from lost time and lost journeys – both for vehicular travel and for pedestrians. Against this, the annual cost to English highway authorities of providing a winter service is around £160m.

3.1.2 Rotherham

In Rotherham, the first snow arrived on Friday 26 November through to the start of week commencing 29 November 2010 when there was a further major snow fall of between 300 – 450mm in depth starting at 5.00pm on Tuesday 30 November and continuing through much of the following day.

Attention is always drawn to the road & transport networks because they are affected so immediately in such extreme weather. Increased action in respect of our road networks was generated on the 26th November, over the

¹⁵ Met Office Website – Weather, December 2010

¹⁶ Department of Health – Cold Weather Plan, November 2011

weekend and into the following week. The road conditions were so treacherous and under such a deep blanket of snow, bus operator 'First' suspended all its services on 1st December in Sheffield, Rotherham and Doncaster.

There were also problems at M1 Junctions local to Rotherham between Junctions 29 (Chesterfield) & 34 (Meadowhall). Specific problems were experienced on the A57 Worksop Road at Junction 31 through to the Nottinghamshire boundary.

3.1.3 A57 Worksop Road

The A57 forms part of the major link between the M1 motorway and the A1. During the evening of 29th November and the following day 30th November, numerous vehicles became stranded along the length of this road which quickly became impassable. On the 1st December, the Chief Inspector formally declared a Critical Incident¹⁷ to minimise risk to those persons stranded & the general public, and seek to reopen the road network as quickly as possible.

A debrief¹⁸ of this incident was undertaken on the 6th January 2011 and is used to inform this review of the Local Authorities ability to respond to events at this time.

4 FINDINGS

4.1 Emergency Planning

Key Issues

- A lack of clarity regarding roles & responsibilities during the snow incident;
- Issues around communications & decision making with partners relating to the non- activation of the Council's Emergency Plan.

4.1.1 What went well?

The council's response to the A57 emergency was primarily supported by the use of the FLO who attended the site around midday on the second day of the incident. Once on site, the FLO acted as a conduit for information to & from senior officers, the police and other agencies.

Individual Directorate Business Continuity plans were formally activated by the Communications Unit, Neighbourhoods Adult Social Care & 2010 working with Willmott Dixon & Morrisons Contractors, Rothercare, EDS Green Spaces, Streetpride & the RBT Contact Centre.

¹⁷ A critical incident is not a major incident, and will not give rise to the activation of the Council Emergency Plan.

¹⁸ A57 Debrief – South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue, Civil Protection Group – 27 January 2011
Final Draft – 16/01/12 Page 19

Other adhoc & informal arrangements to assist communities & individuals across the Borough were undertaken by Council officers, members and volunteers; some examples of this are captured within this document.

4.1.2 Learning Points

The critical issue arising from this review was the non-activation of the Council's Emergency Plan in December 2010, despite the prolonged duration of the severe weather and its borough wide impact. One of the main benefits of this action is to escalate co-ordination of an incident to a strategic level Control Room operated by the Council and partner agencies. Many witnesses reflected that had this occurred during the adverse weather conditions, coordination between both internal council services and that of the emergency services and other local agencies would have been more effective.

Escalation plan arrangements must be designed to support the principles of service resilience against disruption from factors influencing both internal and external operating pressures. These will enable the principles of integrated emergency planning to take place alongside supporting plans (business continuity) and arrangements to ensure effective management in the event of an emergency situation.

The review group accept that it may not have been possible for all parties normally attending the Control Room to get to the Control room location (Bailey House), however, other opportunities in terms of location were available such as SY Police HQ at Atlas Court or Maltby Police Station¹⁹ or Bakers Field Court, which was utilised by our Adult Social Care personnel handling their response.

It is however recognised, that during the incident, teleconferencing took place between agencies to address the above; however, this in itself does not replace the full activation of the Council's Emergency Plan and the functions undertaken by an operational Control Room.

The review found too much reliance on the emergency services (SY Police) to indicate whether the Plan should be fully activated or not. If it had been activated, a strategic level and borough wide co-ordination of activities would have taken place. In the event, many service based business continuity plans were activated and undertaken very well in difficult conditions, but these lacked the strategic facility to join them together.

Whilst the police activated elements of their emergency command levels to manage the incident on the A57 (discussed below), these were not applied across the borough where a range of different incidents were unfolding as a result of the severe weather.

¹⁹ Maltby Police Station - S66 8ER was utilised by RMBC as a Control Room during the 2007 Floods
Final Draft – 16/01/12

Elected Members felt strongly that the channel of communication provided by a Control Room impacts upon their ability to stay informed of events, action & progress within their constituencies. Although written information was provided to members to update them on the A57 incident, and information could be accessed via the Council Website, members believe that had the control room been operational, they could have fulfilled their community leadership responsibilities more easily;

The Emergency Planning Team themselves had difficulties getting staff into work, with the on duty FLO having to swop with another who was more local to the A57 site and was able to attend. In practice, an Assistant FLO was assigned to work with the FLO on the A57, whilst another Assistant FLO supported Adult Services. These roles worked very well, but the review group reflected that the other FLO's could have been utilised, whether from a home or work location, to aid communications with the BEC.

A practical difficulty experienced by the FLO on the A57 was that phone handset issued did not have the same level of reception or signal as other emergency services and at times this hindered communications;

At the time of taking evidence for this review, we found there was no formal person specification and recruitment process for the temporary position of FLO; we understand that this has now been remedied;

Although parish council's & area assemblies have had training in localised emergency planning procedures, we found that there was a lack of communication between council officers and outlying areas to establish the impact of the weather conditions. It was clear from the review process that some parish wardens were uncertain about whom to contact during this type of incident, given that it was very rare.

During the review, there was much discussion around the location and number of 4x4 vehicles within the Council. Anecdotal evidence suggests that at the time of the incident, not all key staff were aware of the availability of these vehicles. Partners also raised this as an issue and recommendations are made to redress this.

Finally, a related issue for the Council & their partners is the different interpretation of emergency levels and the terms used to describe these; we have recommended that this issue is resolved by working with all partners to develop a common understanding of the terms used in emergency planning arrangements. Ideally, all partners would use the same terminology and interpretation, however it is accepted that this may not be possible due to differing organisational and service objectives. Despite this, the review group believe that further work to provide clarification would help improve co-ordination in any future emergency or adverse weather incident.

4.2 South Yorkshire Police

Key Issues

Internal & External Communications with partners

Clarity around the joint role of partners in an emergency situation

In the weeks after the snow had thawed SY Police undertook an evaluation of their ability to respond as an organisation to such extreme weather. They reported to the review group that they had examined their own systems & structures and concluded that there were no specific issues within these that needed to be changed.

However, on considering this evidence, we acknowledge that whilst human error was a key factor in the communication breakdown, this error must be inherent within organisational systems and therefore further review should take place to address this.

SY Police have in place three levels of emergency response. These are Gold (executive level of all partners), Silver (allocate resources) & Bronze Command (partners on the ground). Each plan is well developed to deal with emergency situations and sets out how resources should be used in relation to people, communications & vehicles.

One of the key issues raised within this review is around terminology and how this relates to an emergency situation. We have therefore clarified this issue with South Yorkshire Police in relation to the declaration of the A57 as a Critical Incident.

The police declare critical incidents almost every week and this status may relate to many situations arising for the service; for example a missing person or an escalating neighbour dispute. The key issue for the police is that this allows them to prioritise resources across the borough.

The formal definition is:

‘Any incident where the effectiveness of the police response is likely to have a significant impact on the confidence of the victim, their family and/or the community’.

Where a critical incident is declared, an internal command structure is put in place as happened for A57 incident. The nature of the incident will determine which elements of the Gold, Silver & Bronze Command levels are required. In relation to the A57, Gold was utilised to negotiate police resources, Silver to allocate those resources and Bronze were the Inspectors and Sergeant on the ground. Partners worked with the police within this structure.

4.2.1 What worked well?

The Critical Incident on the A57 was overseen and co-ordinated by an officer experienced in ‘Gold’ Command’ level emergency response;

Once the police had arrived on site at the A57, their activity was well co-ordinated with the Council and other partners, mountain rescue & community

representatives - this co-ordination took place over a two day period from the South Yorkshire Police Communications Room;

A contingency plan is in place so that if officers are unable to get to their normal place of work, they are required to attend the nearest police station; this is tracked by a requirement to contact the Duty Inspector.

Decisions regarding the prioritisation of 4x4 vehicles are made by the Gold Commander in an emergency situation. This officer will decide where the resources will be most effective; during this period, a number of 4x4 vehicles were assigned to the A57 incident to help officers get to the site and assist with road clearance.

4.2.2 Learning Points

The police themselves were caught out by the severity of the bad weather and like many other services, found it difficult to get people into work. However, officers are aware of plans in place to identify the nearest place of work to be attended in the event of severe weather. It was reflected to the review group that more clarity is required around tasks to be undertaken by officers when in an alternative work place.

Communication with the Council with regards to the A57 incident did not take place until 1st December; however, this communication did not result in the formal activation of the Council's Borough Emergency Plan. Given the discussion around terminology above, it is evident that a clearer definition of emergency levels is required and how these relate to each partner organisation in an emergency situation. The recommendations reflect this point.

Calls from stranded motorists (A57) on the evening of 29th November were logged individually and were not categorised as a developing incident until the next day when police personnel examined the log books. It is acknowledged by South Yorkshire Police that the link to Gold Command took too long.

South Yorkshire Police operated their own communications room during the period to communicate with partners and co-ordinate resources. The review group acknowledge that these resources were stretched and primarily focussed on the A57. However, it is important to record that snow related incidents were taking place all over the Borough, a point which relates to issues around activating the Borough Emergency Plan.

There was confusion around whether the access roads leading to the A57 should be closed and who would make this decision. Ideally, advanced notice is required but the police can close a road in the interest of public health & safety. A complicating factor is that signs and bollards are often ignored by drivers who drive around them. The Council (Winter Co-ordinator) & the police inspector made a decision to use a static Road Traffic Vehicle parked strategically to block the route onto the A57– however, this could not be utilised for the full period as it was considered this resource was better used elsewhere.

There was also some confusion with regard to reports of the bridge collapsing on the A57 which was not the case. The combination of the police helicopter being deployed to establish the situation and the Council's FLO arriving on site to liaise with the police, alleviated initial communication issues and incorrect media reports were then redressed.

The use of satellite navigation by drivers unfamiliar with the area, led to use of alternative routes which were impassable or unsuitable for HGV's. HGV drivers in particular were seeking a way off the motorway, then getting stuck and abandoning their vehicles, which in turn created further blockage on the local roads.

The knock on effect of this was that for a period of time, there appeared to be a number of 'missing persons' who could not be located immediately because they had left their vehicles;

4.3 South Yorkshire Ambulance Service

The Yorkshire Ambulance Service (YAS) is well prepared to respond to service demands that derive from changing weather patterns. Seasonal Plans are to set out to manage staff & operational requirements in extreme hot or cold weather. The service also has in place Event Plans to be activated over bank holiday & at other 'high demand' public events.

As a result of the previous bad winter in December 09 & January 10, the Service has undergone a massive shift in its approach to increasing its 'resilience factor'.

Emergency Preparedness & Business Continuity arrangements are clearly set out to enable the Service to respond to differing levels of demand for service in an emergency.²⁰ The document sets out six levels of resource escalation as follows:

- Level 1 – Normal Business
- Level 2 – Concern
- Level 3 – Moderate Pressure
- Level 4 – Severe Pressure
- Level 5 – Critical
- Level 6 – Potential Service Failure

During the prolonged period of snow, YAS remained on Level 4.

In severe weather, YAS have in place an Adverse Weather Guidance to be utilised in conjunction with the above. This Guidance identifies four levels of alertness, from 'normal business' escalating to severe or prolonged adverse weather.²¹

²⁰ Resource Escalation Action Plan: Business Continuity Arrangements. November 2009
Author: Emergency Preparedness

²¹ Adverse Weather Guidance 20 October 2010 Version 1.3 Author: Emergency Preparedness

The Guidance acknowledges that whilst it is difficult to be prescriptive when identifying weather triggers and the impact they may have on YAS service delivery, it is important that advice from a number of different sources is taken into account. Information from external agencies such as the Meteorological Office and the Environment Agency is taken into account, along with intelligence from ambulance crews and the On Call Team.

4.3.1 What went well?

In both the NHS Hospitals & Ambulance Service, Senior Managers review weather & related information to decide what the right level of alert is for their services. It is a collective decision made by looking at the bigger picture;

Planning for severe winter weather takes place well in advance of the winter period to ensure that plans are in place. These include communications with staff, additional planned staffing resources, support structure for staff re food, hot drinks & drivers in place to collect stranded staff. To achieve this, 4x4's are strategically placed across each designated area; these vehicles were also despatched to collect critically ill patients.

The service underwent a massive learning curve as a result of the Dec 09/Jan 10 winter and procured 14 4x4 vehicles; 80% of these form an emergency car fleet;

SY Ambulance Service had good links with our Adult Social Care team to co-ordinate support for those able to get home from hospital, although non critical journeys (such as for routine day care admissions) were cancelled;

The Service paid for two staff to stay in a local hotel so that they would be able to attend nearest station & support service demands; this worked well and there was no misuse of the system. Three other staff members walked in covering 10, 8 & 5 miles respectively; managers cancelled/deferred annual leave;

During this period, all relevant agencies were required at a daily meeting: Strategic Health Authority, GP Network, PCT & Ambulance Service. Vehicles were dispatched to collect personnel to ensure representatives could attend this meeting;

Two ambulance crews were sent with shovels & grit to clear roads in order to access side roads and cul de sacs; this equipment is kept on the vehicles and is provided by the fleet management section of the service. Tyre covers are also used on the ambulances to enable maximum mobility in severe snow & ice;

Due to the nature of the job, clothing is standard & flexible for all conditions;

4.3.2 Learning Points

The restricted ability of ambulances to gain access to residential and other small roads & cul de sacs, largely due to abandoned & parked vehicles blocking these areas;

Road network issues led to difficulties in getting patients home, leaving the local hospitals unable to discharge them. This in turn meant that hospital beds became blocked, leaving hospitals unable to admit new cases;

Most hospitals have a 'Red, Amber & Green' level of alert. Many local hospitals were on Red due to the demand on the ambulance service to help free up beds;

Barnsley hospital were on a 'Purple' level of alert, meaning that no beds were available for at least 24 hours and could not accept new admissions until patients were transferred home;

Hospitals also had staffing issues with people either on duty for long periods because they couldn't leave the hospital or staff unable to get in from home;

Demand for service was massively increased due to freezing temperatures resulting in calls from patients with breathing difficulties and fracture injuries; Ambulance crews were very tired as had not expected weather to go on for so long creating high demands on the service.

Recommendations

9. We recommend greater joint working between the Council and the Ambulance Service to assess how the Streetpride Network Management Team can work with the service to assist with access for emergency vehicles in similar circumstances.
10. In accordance with the Community Resilience Agenda, Parish Councils should also be involved in any discussions and planning exercises to co-ordinate road clearance for emergency vehicles.

4.4 PCT

The PCT's role during the severe weather was to monitor and ensure communication with local health services. The decision makers regarding service provision are the GP's & hospitals and this continued during the period of severe weather.

Emergency Plans did kick in and worked well in certain area's – the PCT triggered parts of it that were relevant to the circumstances and over which they had direct control.

Key Issues

Communication

Transport

Access to residential roads & parking at destinations

Getting staff into work

Getting people home and co-ordinating community services

Resuming normal business & services during the clear up period

4.4.1 What worked well?

The PCT's Chief Executive initiated a round of phone calls to partners to establish the state of the roads and confirm the activation of social care business continuity plans. He also established GP availability and surgery access, and also contacted local hospitals to determine their accessibility and levels of service.

The PCT have different levels of 'emergency' plan in place according to the situation – i.e. the run of bank holidays during April & May this year. This is a similar approach to the ambulance service. Their Emergency Plan covers a range of staff, each having an identified role to play in any emergency;

On the morning of the 2nd December, the Chief Executive organised a conference call to all partner agencies including the Borough Emergency Coordinator, Adult Services & Community Health Services, such as the District nurses, the NHS and the Mental Health Team;

The PCT's Business Continuity Plans kicked in at the time of the incident; an integral part of this plan is a footprint of where District Nurses live so they can be contacted to take on a local case load which is within walking distance. Cases are prioritised as they cannot visit everybody in these circumstances. (At the time of the snow incident, management of the District Nurses was under the PCT)

The PCT send the Council a list of GP surgeries, plus renal & other vulnerable patients for snow clearance consideration – this information should be included in any multi-agency snow clearance exercise;

An agreement is in place with the Red Cross & Range Rover to loan 4 x 4 vehicles for weather related emergencies. Since the incident, the PCT has also purchased suitable vehicles. A list of sources for additional 4 x 4 vehicles is maintained. Voluntary organisations/individuals were especially helpful and cooperative at this time with staff and their relatives offering the use of 4 x 4 transport;

During 2011, joint arrangements have been made with voluntary organisations & the Council for a snow clearance plan. This means that the Patients Transport Service carries equipment to clear snow. This is targeted at the most vulnerable such as renal unit patients, chemotherapy & radiotherapy patients, all of whom need to go to hospital for critical & live saving treatments;

Residents of sheltered accommodation were unable to go out to collect their prescriptions, however, wardens (if they are able to get them) are able to collect on their behalf or pharmacies can deliver prescriptions – however, these services rely on the chemist being open. Age UK & the Diocese may also collect prescriptions & deliver food if they live close by.

The PCT were able to provide on-going public information relating to health services; NHS Choices, available on both the Council & PCT websites, will give the public information on alternative services. This information is also available on leaflets provided to GP surgeries & NHS walk in centres.

4.4.2 Learning Points

The PCT are a key partner to the Council but not the decision maker when it comes to activating the RMBC Borough Emergency Plan. The PCT fully expected the Council to activate the Plan due to the severity of the weather and the impact it was having on a range of critical services. The PCT strongly indicated to the review that they expected the activation of the Borough Emergency Plan & the co-ordination facilitated by the Control Room. It is their view that this would have resulted in clearer communications between the many partners & personnel focusing largely on their own business continuity plans;

They also expressed a requirement for greater clarity on the process to declare an emergency and how the communication cascade will operate between partners; this will ensure that in the event of a major incident response, all key partners emergency plans will be activated at the appropriate level;

Arrangements in place to open up the PCT building had worked well prior to this incident of extreme weather. However, on the morning of Wednesday 1st December, the building could not be opened because the daily caretaker lives in Leeds and could not travel to Rotherham. Access to the building was gained by mid-morning after an alternative key holder was contacted. Since the incident, additional key holders have been identified within walking distance & directors on call have their contact details.

Communication within the PCT was heavily reliant on one person during this period – this has now changed with key personnel holding lists of staff, their location & contacts numbers. Each has an identified role in an emergency situation. The contact list is refreshed on a regular basis in accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requirement.

Since the snow incident, the PCT have set up a Face Book account allowing access to staff enabling them to communicate with each other and gain information in an emergency planning situation only. All staff signing up to the Face Book Account can add information or discussion pertinent issues relating to the emergency. The Face Book account & the PCT's own website can be accessed from a home base to ensure staff awareness of borough wide issues;

NHS Rotherham & other hospitals (Barnsley, Doncaster, Sheffield), had difficulties transporting staff into work, with a knock on effect on appointments & the treatment of outpatients. Many appointments had to be cancelled, leading to a back log of appointments once the snow had cleared. Rotherham Foundation Trust has now purchased a 4 x 4 vehicle to alleviate transport issues arising in similar circumstances;

The most difficult phase during this period was after the snow fall and clearance was underway. This encouraged people to start venturing out resulting in many falls and associated injuries. Hospitals and GP's were under extreme pressure at this point. The discussion with the PCT emphasised the importance of clearing car parks, pavements & roads as this became a major issue in the aftermath of the weather.

As referred to in the 'What worked well' section, residents had difficulties getting prescriptions from chemists, as in many cases these were closed because chemist staff did not have access or transport. We were informed that it is possible for locum pharmacists to do this work if they are able to get access to chemist premises. Where possible, the PCT will monitor the opening hours provided by pharmacists.

Associated with the above point, is that prescriptions for drugs like Methadone are specifically dispensed by one chemist – in a long period of closure, this would clearly cause difficulties to someone dependant on this type of prescription.

Recommendations

11. Communication links have now been set up via a Face Book Account & internet websites for PCT staff, which is maintained by their Communications Team in the event of an emergency. The Council may wish to consider setting up a similar facility for use in an emergency planning context.
12. The review group recommend to the PCT that they keep a register of locums who may be available to do prescriptions at identified locations in the event of an emergency – further work may need to be undertaken by the GP Consortium & the PCT to identify how pharmacy services could be provided in similar conditions. These arrangements would be integrated in to the Council & the PCT's Emergency Planning systems.
13. The PCT recommend to the Council, that work is undertaken to ensure a joint agency approach on the coordination of 4 x 4 transport required in these conditions. It is proposed that one organisation is able and authorised to offer this service. The placement of these resources should be based upon incidence of vulnerability, need & risk to life.

4.5 Adult Social Care

The Director of Health & Well Being explained that during the first morning of heavy snow, initial thoughts between Adult Services Managers was that home working to continue with service provision would be manageable. By lunchtime on Wednesday 1st Dec a shift in thinking occurred based on observations regarding the weather and the emerging complications in maintaining service provision between the Council, partner agencies and service providers.

As a result, a decision was made in conjunction with the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods & Adults Services (NAS), to establish a mini control room for all communications to take place. The natural location for this was Bakers Field Court, an Extra Care Housing Scheme which is also the base for Rothercare Direct.

Four key areas to ensure business continuity:

- Home Care – vital services to vulnerable people
- Enablers (Wardens Service) – getting to the elderly
- Residential Care – business continuity
- Social Work response & safeguarding

4.5.1 What went well?

A departmental 'emergency planning team consisting of 5 managers based themselves at the Rothercare headquarters which is located at the housing scheme known as Bakers Field Court. The decision to do this was adhoc and an immediate response to the circumstances – it was not a planned preventative action. However, it was thought to be essential in order to co-ordinate critical services. This team effort commenced 24 hours from 2.30pm on 1st December to a day time supervision of the service over the following weekend;

Bakers Field Court provided an overview and strategic point from which to make critical decisions about care services – and create rotas for the following 2/3 days.

- At Bakers Field Court, 2 people were on duty all night on the 1st night – 24 hours – Tues/Wed.
- On Wed – shut down at 8.30pm – then Thursday – Sunday 8am – 6pm service
- In addition, Members of the Adult Services team were on duty at the A57 incident from 3pm Tuesday onwards on a 24 hour basis.

The Performance & Quality Manager co-ordinated the response & set up a rota to ensure attendance at both Bakers Field Court & the A57 reception centre, for as long as this was needed; he also sourced hot meals & other supplies from local providers for staff on duty;

The following activities took place on the first day:

- A physical check was made on the most vulnerable customers – staff who were unable to come to work were utilised to make welfare phone calls, including calls to customers who were unable to access day centres;
- The team ensured that meals on wheels providers were able to mobilise & alternative arrangements made where provision proved difficult in the circumstances;
- An emergency reception centre was set up at the A57 at the request of the Emergency & Safety Manager.

Rothercare staff had been on shift overnight & dealing with the snow since it started. Some staff stayed on duty to ensure the day time telephone service was maintained. Overnight, the Rothercare staff had contacted Green Spaces as they were aware (informally), that 4x4 vehicles were available. These were required to respond to emergency calls from vulnerable people at home and who needed staff to attend.

In addition, Green Spaces offered to support managers by providing transport to enable journeys to and from home; as the day unfolded, this service was offered to homecare staff continuing to provide day care services. These arrangements were informal and not pre planned and based on the goodwill and ability/resources of Green Spaces staff;

Residential holes continued to operate, with some staff working double shifts and staying overnight to ensure cover was maintained.

An initial exercise undertaken by the emergency management team was to account for all other staff in terms of their whereabouts and skills offered according to service needs; this ensured that staff were deployed effectively, including undertaking home visits to deliver medication and reassurance checks to ensure customers were safe;

The NAS Business Continuity Plan does support the operation of additional tasks in such circumstances and was found to be a useful guiding document;

In some cases, service providers were 'swopped' according to location and accessibility to clients and in relation to access to suitable transport;

All of the home care agencies contracted by the Council were contacted to establish which calls they would be available to provide a service to. Day care services were cancelled & customers along with family members were contacted to ensure they were safe & well. Prioritisation of service/cases was determined using a 'triage' system. This is where the Green Spaces support proved essential, especially in outlying areas.

During the period of heavy snow, many of the service providers were not able to undertake their normal responsibilities; where it was deemed essential to provide cover, council staff provided this service during this period of time;

Medication and medical supply to clients at home continued by implementing a number of business continuity actions:

- District Nurses swopped patches according to location;
- Conference calls with the PCT to support coordination;
- Rothercare/Green spaces prioritised medication deliveries.

Communications: Main source of communication was undertaken via conference call between:

PCT – Chief Executive
Joint Commissioning Team
HNS Rotherham - Chief Executive
RMBC - Emergency Borough Co-ordinator
Community Nurses

Officers at Bakers Field Court relayed information & decisions to service staff via phone & e mail;

Much good will and partnership working took place between Adult Services, Green Spaces (who did shopping for one of the Residential Care Units), and with Streetpride who prioritized routes for snow ploughs and salting.

4.5.2 Learning Points

Borough Emergency Plan

Neighbourhoods & Adult Services supported the views of the PCT whereby they also considered that the weather was severe enough to justify the activation of the Council's Emergency Plan;

➤ Operational

It was suggested that a 'Grab Box' would be useful a central telephone no/mobile phone; all key contacts; staff contacts; sourcing beds & food etc.

➤ Agency Providers

In terms of the response from commissioned providers, this differed between organisations depending on location and views on the weather conditions. Some responded very well, with client swapping taking place to ensure service. The bigger organisations coped better as more personnel resources to draw from;

A big cultural difference was noted between organisations that we contract with – some not so committed to public sector services at this time. Not all were determined to continue to provide a service;

➤ Transport

An Intermediate Care Service is run by RMBC and had to be maintained for patients being discharged from hospital. However, hospital staff had their own problems getting to work and providing a service, in addition to the ambulance service being able to access residential areas.

A combination of factors resulted in bed blocking due to transport and care issues – this is also discussed in the South Yorkshire Ambulance Section. However, efforts were made to keep some locations clear in order to transport patients home; for instance, Streetpride prioritised the Intermediate Care residential unit at Netherfield Court & were able to clear access to it within a few hours. This enabled patients to be discharged from hospital;

The availability of 4x4 vehicles was unknown by NAS during the extreme weather; officers interviewed were open about the fact that transport availability had not been planned or thought out for such an extreme event;

Adult Services reimbursed Green Spaces for resources used – at no time during this period did the potential cost of operations influence decisions to provide a service to vulnerable clients.

➤ Communication

At the A57 incident, a record of 'lost' people was made so that they could be repatriated to their vehicles & relatives contacted. The local community set up the reception centre for the A57 on Monday – but Adult Services were not contacted by the Parish, Church or Community - we need to know why not so that we could have responded to unfolding circumstances;

➤ Staffing Resources

The role of Business Continuity in respect of HR & Payroll was uncertain during this period. They are a source of valuable information re council staff resources and needed to be contactable & operational during this time. In this situation, day care staff and social workers need to be contacted to determine rotas and priorities. Many of these people were stuck at home – but could have been utilised in their immediate vicinity as oppose to their normal place of work.

Recommendations

14. Managers indicated that they preferred RMBC to provide a direct service in such extreme circumstances so that the Council could ensure that care services were co-ordinated. The review group support an agreement whereby the Council co-ordinate agency staff in a repeat situation.

15. Vulnerable locations need to be identified for clearance as recommended by the PCT & NHS Rotherham. This should also apply to identify locations where an emergency control room could be established.

16. The review supports Adult Services requirement that a rota is in place for the use of available 4x4 vehicles to pick up and transport staff to locations where they are needed; this information to be included in the Emergency Plan and all Business Continuity Plans with each directorate making contribution to the cost of using these vehicles. This recommendation is also supported by the PCT.

17. The review group identified a need to hire 4x4 vehicles to ensure the transportation of essential staff to specific locations. This has already been implemented via the Enabling Care Service which leases vehicles throughout the year. In the winter months, regular vehicles are replaced with 4x4's - staff have been trained to drive these vehicles in snow.

4.6 RMBC Corporate Communications

The work of the communications team is essentially spilt into the following areas:

Communicating directly with residents

Communicating with elected members

Meeting the demands of the media and using this as a channel to reach residents;

Communication with staff in terms of impact on their work & working arrangements, access to buildings etc

Key Issues

Ability to issue information in a timely manner & act on it;
Rapidly changing environment e.g. school closures, road closures and access issues;
RBT Contact Centre experienced technical problems

4.6.1 What worked well?

Adopting an “emergency planning” type approach by using their own pre planned Business Continuity Plan;

Early identification of the need to maintain business continuity plans. The team took note of the weather warnings and made decisions based on common sense and observations of the changing weather conditions;

Where staff could not get into the office, the ability to access the Council’s IT systems worked very well. The website Content Management System supported this.

The team’s ability and willingness to operate, where required, on call availability at weekends, working whatever hours were necessary to undertake the job, at no additional cost to the council (i.e. no overtime was paid);

Clear identification of roles & responsibilities allowing individuals to concentrate on specific audiences; at one stage, hourly updates were issued to media;

A dedicated website email address or Facebook Account for managers to use to update staff;

Creation of Adverse Weather Page (AWP) on the Council Website – this was updated every hour and included links to BBC Travel, the Met Office and the Environment Agency;

An Adverse Weather banner was placed on all website pages directing people to this page – the website statistics show that people used the AWP with less use of the search engine therefore enabling speedy access and a rise in the number of people successfully using these pages;

Working with partners and other local authorities – sharing channels where appropriate, making sure messages were consistent and piggybacking other emails going out e.g. Town Centre Team were also issuing information;

Correcting inaccuracies e.g. erroneous media reports that the tunnel under the A57 had collapsed causing the pile up of vehicles.

Lots of positive feedback of the use of Twitter as a communication tool;

The development of an electronic reporting system for schools to use in adverse weather; this was recommended by the Scrutiny Review of School Closures after the severe weather in 09/10 and was very well used by schools in 10/11.

4.6.2 Learning Points

Do we include service updates on the Adverse Weather Page, or on the usual service pages? Some confusion here with internal information being in short supply especially during the evenings and weekends. Schools were the exception to this.

Importance of keeping caretakers informed if staff were leaving early and buildings needed to be secured;

The Council did not gain credit due for its work during the A57 emergency – the kit issued to staff needs to have the council logo placed prominently on it so that staff can easily be identified;

Working arrangements & interaction with the 2010 Communications Team (required as a result of failing condenser boilers) did not work well.

Recommendations

18. It is recommended that service managers review how they send their service updates through to the Communications Team so that the Council website can be more dynamic and informative.

19. A list of phone numbers for building caretakers should be drawn up so that a group text can be sent informing them that staff may be looking to leave their buildings en mass, potentially leading building closure and security requirements. In return, staff should have clear communication & reporting mechanisms if they can't access a building. Additional key holders need to be nominated.

20. RMBC officers (especially the FLO) attending an incident must be more visible to other agencies, community groups & members of the public. A review of how to achieve this should be undertaken.

4.6.3 RBT Contact Centre

During the course of the severe weather, the Contact Centre was overwhelmed with calls from members of the public reporting snow & ice issues. The Centre would normally receive 10,000 calls in an average month, but in December, received 40,000, resulting in the system crashing.

RBT staff worked around the clock to get the phone system up & running and opening hours were extended up to 10.00pm over the Christmas period.

4.7 Road Network – Clearance of Towns & Villages

The arrival of the immense snow falls coincided with the commencement of winter standby arrangements in mid-November 2010. From the afternoon of Tuesday 30 November 2010 all of the available resources within the Streetpride Network Management Team were employed on salting and snow clearance and continued to be so throughout both that week and the following week commencing 6 December.

It is the Council's policy to concentrate the action of the salt spreaders on the main routes as they are essential for the operation of public transport, which help to maintain an alternative means of travel for residents and members of the public.

Key Issues

Staff Rota's
Established network priorities V requests for road clearance
Ensuring adequate materials
Vehicle Fleet
Working with Farmers

4.7.1 What worked well?

➤ Planning

Following the heavy snowfall over the previous winter 09/10 Streetpride were better prepared for repeat weather in November & December 2010;

Salt supplies were at their maximum with 6.5k tons available. A review had taken place in 09/10 to look at salt supply after problems had occurred at that time;

A fully dedicated fleet of custom made vehicles was in place instead of adaptable vehicles which may present more mechanical issues. A new driver rota is in place to cover a 2 shift system that can offer continual operations 24/7.

Road Networks are prioritised for clearance – starting with main trunk roads. GPS (Global Navigation System) Tracking is now in place recording what drivers are doing and ensuring that this meets the network priorities as agreed;

➤ Staff

The dedication of staff and drivers was acknowledged during the review, particularly those who walked to work locations to fulfil essential duties; staff efforts to get into work were good – with Green Spaces assisting with 4 x 4's to make sure key people were in place;

30 teams undertook hand clearance and salting and in refilling the salt bins distributed across the borough. An extensive list of priority sites was previously identified and snow clearance and salting was concentrated principally at sites where there are known to be more vulnerable users; schools, doctors surgeries, care centres and residential areas with high numbers of elderly residents. A number of teams were also employed in the early clearance of pedestrian routes in Rotherham town centre and other local shopping centres.

Neighbourhood Caretakers & Green Spaces pitched in to provide transportation and communications re priority areas for clearance; i.e. sheltered accommodation;

➤ Waste Collection

A process is in place to support waste collection whereby teams become multi-functional to support existing waste team. The Grounds Maintenance Team worked well as bin/waste collection as this service is now in house and could be redeployed to assist. Basic training for a variety of roles – such as health & safety – is in place to allow for this flexibility;

➤ Transport

EDS had information relating to availability of 4 x 4 vehicles – however this conflicts with other evidence taken during the review process which suggests that other directorates and partners did not have access to that information;

Streetpride worked with Adult Social Care to action requests to transport vulnerable adults home from hospital, however, there was no direct contact or co-ordination with the ambulance service which may have helped to relieve pressure points;

➤ Communications

Elected Members and members of the public were able to fill some of the gaps in local information regarding road clearance & network priorities.

4.7.2 Learning Points

➤ Budget

All available resources were used with no restriction on activity in respect of the budget; however, due to the severity of the event the budget was not adequate with 568K spent on vehicles & salt. No budget was allocated for additional staff costs which amounted to an additional 138K;

➤ Staff

An initial difficulty was encountered with some staff teams misunderstanding that if they couldn't undertake their usual responsibilities, then they would be expected to cover alternative appropriate duties;

➤ Severity of Weather Conditions

With the intensity of the snow fall, it was extremely difficult to keep even major roads clear. It takes 4 hours to treat all of our precautionary routes and this resulted in roads recovering in snow between treatments especially as other traffic was light. Salt also becomes less effective below -8°C²² and these extremely low temperatures were experienced regularly during this period. However, the greater challenge faced by Streetpride was the compaction of ice across the road network. This made it difficult to clear

many roads and JCBs were brought in to assist. This proved to be a slow process.

➤ Communications

Initial conflicting messages were experienced with regard to the A57 Worksop Road. The extent of the problem here was not communicated due to the police delay in attending the site. The Council were informed of the extent of the problems on the A57 when the police arrived on site on the afternoon of Thursday 2nd December;

Information re access to sheltered accommodation was not immediately available; in the event, Members rang in to assist with information which filled the gaps. These were then added to the list of priorities which included doctors' surgeries & schools;

Due to the volume of calls received, the availability of staff plus many repeat calls overburdened the system and slowed our ability to respond to members of the public and other community groups requesting clearance and information. Gritters were deployed to residential areas as soon as they had dealt with the primary routes;

The review group were informed that no direct contact was maintained with local bus companies; they were sending out their own operatives to check bus routes before continuing or recommencing services. It is unclear why a lack of communication occurred, other than each party relying on the other to make contact.

However, as an update to the original review process, we have been informed that communications are now in place and staff are working to resolve difficulties faced by local transport providers.

➤ Other factors impacting on service provision

Conflicting priorities in terms of road design v clearance in bad weather caused some difficulties: the existence of road humps meant that snow ploughs had to lift their blades when travelling over them to prevent damage to the blades. Also block paving on newer estates caused access problems as this becomes very slippery for vehicles to use;

Teams were refilling our 320 salt bins at regular intervals but throughout the period we had numerous reports of them being emptied almost immediately by people who were taking the salt away to sell or for personal use. Where the Council had details of the vehicles involved in these incidents, they were reported to the police;

4.7.3 Working with Farmers

As part of this review, we contacted the National Farmers Union as well as collecting views from parishes around their experience of working with farmers.

Since the severe snow incident, the Council has undertaken negotiations with local farmers a number have agreed to work with the Council and provide a standby arrangement in the event of severe weather.

However, the NFU highlighted the following issues that may impact on farmer availability:

- Different rates apply for different fuel types e.g. white diesel for gritting is double the cost of red diesel;
- Insurance – public liability insurance is too high.
- Availability of grit – farmers cleared roads but then did not have access to grit to keep them clear.
- At the time of the 2010/11 winter, there were no set rates currently agreed to pay farmers for road clearance,
- There may be a shortage in the availability of farmers able & willing to assist in these circumstances.

Red Diesel

A further issue raised was around the legality of using red diesel in vehicles undertaking snow clearance and gritting work²³.

At the commencement of this review, the use of red diesel was restricted to certain activities relating to agriculture; however, in October 2011, HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) conducted a review which considered whether there was scope for the extension of rebated (red) diesel entitlement to vehicles undertaking certain community/charity activities. One aspect of community work considered was the use of tractors to perform road gritting activities.

The review recommended an extension to the current gritting rules to allow tractors to undertake such activity. Consequently, early in 2012, HMRC will begin the formal process of consulting stakeholders to determine whether legislation should be introduced to change the rules on the types of vehicles eligible to use red diesel for gritting.

Pending any legislative change, the rules as they now stand will continue to apply but, if, as in the last two winters, the UK experiences a period of

²³ HMRC Brief 45/11 – accessed <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/briefs/excise-duty/brief4511.htm>
Final Draft – 16/01/12

sustained severe weather this winter, HMRC will adopt its previously successful policy of temporarily relaxing enforcement of those rules.

Current rules

Schedule 1 of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979 lists the categories of excepted vehicle. Excepted vehicles are those which are entitled to use rebated fuel. There are excepted vehicle categories for 'Snow clearing vehicles' and 'Gritters'. The rules for qualification in each of these categories differ and are explained in the following paragraphs.

Snow clearing

The law says that a snow clearing vehicle is an excepted vehicle when it is being used or going to or from the place where it is to be or has been used for the purpose of clearing snow from public roads by means of a snow plough or similar device.

This puts no restriction on the type of vehicle that can be used. Therefore, for example, a farm tractor with a snow plough fitted is entitled to use red diesel for clearing snow from the public road.

Gritting

The law says that a vehicle qualifies in this category if it is constructed or adapted, and used, solely for the conveyance of machinery for spreading material on roads to deal with frost, ice or snow.

Qualification is restricted to vehicles designed and used only for gritting. Consequently, vehicles towing gritting equipment mounted on trailers or with detachable gritting equipment do not qualify. A farm tractor, for example, which is neither constructed nor used solely for such work, is not entitled to use red diesel for gritting public roads.

HMRC²⁴ recognise the vital role played by farmers in helping to keep rural roads clear and will adopt a pragmatic approach to the rules. This means tractors on public roads clearing snow or gritting to provide access to schools, hospitals, a remote dwelling, or communities cut off by ice and snow are entitled to use red diesel.

Recommendations

21. In extreme snow conditions, discretion should be used around whether or not to provide salt bins to un adopted roads – this should specifically apply where it can be shown that vulnerable or elderly residents are located;

²⁴ More details can be obtained by calling the Excise and Customs Helpline on Tel 0845 010 9000.

22. The Council should work with neighbouring authorities to ensure that where possible there are consistent levels of gritting on priority routes crossing county borders. We acknowledge that due to operational demands, this may not always be possible, but where achieved, this would enable emergency vehicles to travel safely during ice & snow incidents;

23. Where road humps are used, residents need to be advised of the technical difficulties re snow clearance. For future road design specifications, snow clearance should be a factor taken into consideration prior to construction;

24. Where difficulties arise with road access or clearance, alternative ways of managing snow & ice should be considered – such as utilising a snow warden service.

25. It is recommended that the security of salt bins is improved to deter members of the public abusing the provision in these conditions. Colouring salt may be one idea to consider.

26. Pick up points for grit could be established after the initial snowfall & clearance. These would be accessible only for parish councils, area assemblies, farmers & listed community groups to access. The review group accept that this is subject to salt stocks and that it shouldn't impact on the Council's primary duty to keep the highway safe.

27. With the assistance of the National Farmers Union, Area Assemblies & Parish Councils, service agreements should be put in place for a pool of farmers to assist with the clearance of heavy snowfalls. The Council will agree a suitable rate of payment for those farmers actively supporting the Council & communities in this way. The agreement would state the geographical boundary within which a farmer would operate.

28. Where farmers agree to work with the Council, a subsidy should be provided to pay for equipment for tractors e.g. a plough front.

4.8 Effect of Freezing Temperatures on Heating in Council Properties

Through the Decent Homes Programme, RMBC have replaced 17,000 heating systems in rented homes with condensing boilers. Between the end of November and mid December, 2,645 requests were received for repairs to broken down combination boilers.

The condensing boilers are significantly more energy efficient than traditional boilers because rather than expelling hot waste gases from a flue, they use some of this energy to heat water. However, this process condenses moisture in the gases, with the waste liquid being expelled into the drains through a pipe running down an external wall. It is this pipe that is prone to freezing.

Due to the high number of freezing pipes resulting in boiler failure, the quickest and easiest solution to the problem was to cut the condensate pipe, so that it could no longer freeze. This course of action meant that the repair could be carried out by any repair operative increasing the number of staff

available. However, only when the roads were passable, could 2010 Rotherham Limited and both partnering contractors, Morrison and Willmott Dixon, deploy operatives to perform this work.

4.8.1 What Worked Well

Led by the Director of Housing and Neighbourhoods, regular contingency planning meetings were held every 2-3 days throughout the period to co-ordinate activity with relevant services;

Prior to Christmas, senior managers agreed their availability over the Christmas period and their contact details to respond to further calls; conference calls were also held on Boxing Day & the 28th December 2010;

Adult Services and Rotherfed worked well together to identify the most vulnerable, affected households re heating issues;

Working hours were extended to 10.00pm and additional staff were called in up to and during, the 'close down' period between Christmas and New Year;

Significant numbers of staff were reassigned from their normal trades by our Contractors; in addition staff were drafted in from outside the borough to assist with boiler breakdowns. A large number of extra household visits to assess problems and/or undertake a temporary repair were undertaken. The cost of this extra resource was met by Neighbourhood & Adult Services.

200 electric heaters were provided by partners in addition to 250 heaters being sourced and distributed immediately before Christmas by Neighbourhood Wardens & housing staff. The cost of this was met by the former ALMO - 2010;

Radio bulletins and press briefings were given to communicate activity across the Borough, and the call pilot system was updated immediately prior to Christmas and again during the 'shut down' period to try and give an accurate up to date picture to customers;

A briefing note was emailed to Members which outlined the boiler repairs issues tenants were experiencing and included details of emergency contacts over the holiday period;

4.8.2 Learning Points

Officers accepted that much more pre planning to respond to freezing weather could have been done & planned response would now be reviewed.

Remedial work was largely required to deal with burst pipes; remedial action & options have now been investigated including:

- Permanent internal relocation of pipe work - Sheffield City Council fitted internal drainage pipes as part of original specification & only 300 failed due to freezing weather;
- fitting taps on boilers to ensure their continued use in freezing weather;
- The cost of these solutions will be in addition to an otherwise forecasted budget.

A high number of non urgent repair jobs were reassigned but not without further delay to tenants;

NAS met the cost of additional budget expenditure was required during this emergency period to cover staff resources plus additional equipment for call handling;

Compounding the situation were difficulties around dealing with such a huge number of calls; on 15 December the Contact Centre experienced a technical fault as the in-queue message stopped playing to customers.²⁵ Unable to remedy the fault, engineers requested a new server. On 21 December calls were switched to a backup Call Pilot server which did not handle as many calls as the main server but played the in-queue messages informing customers what the housing repairs response times were during the period of bad weather.

A number of interim measures were implemented to ensure service delivery could be maintained:

- Prior to the Christmas break, staff across the customer services network were deployed to answer contact centre call and worked additional hours
- The Contact Centre extended its operating hours to 7.00am – 10.00pm over the entire Christmas break
- The service quickly trained additional staff across the Council in the repairs processes to increase the number of call handlers able to deal the increased demand

The continuing bad weather in January 2010 caused similar problems with freezing condensate pipes but to a lesser extent. Action taken following the incidents in January included:

- refitting some boilers with larger diameter condensate pipes from 22mm – 32mm (this was done as an upgrade to the specification as recommended by the manufacturers), unfortunately, the larger 32mm pipes were also subject to freezing;
- boiler warranty claims were pursued, where appropriate, against Decent Homes contractors in respect of failing to fit to specification although the contractors demonstrated that the boilers were fitted to manufacturers' specification in the majority of cases;
- A very small number of condensate pipes were altered to meet specification

²⁵ These messages are played from the Nortel Call Pilot server & inform customers that they have reached the Council. The technical fault meant that customers were only able to hear music playing. This was compounded by the high call volumes & customers abandoning calls & redialling.

Recommendations

29. Assess the most cost effective solution to mitigate future freezing; i.e. consider the re-routing of external pipe work to an internal location where this is appropriate; the refit of boilers with a larger diameter condensate pipe; fitting internal taps to allow internal drainage in the case of freezing;

30. Given the cost to re route pipework – the council supply & fit lagging to vulnerable pipes as a medium term measure;

31. Consider advising tenants on optimum temperatures & duration for boiler usage to reduce the incidents of freezing pipes during severely cold weather – guidance should also relate to the external temperatures in relation to use of boiler;

32. That information & advice relating to keeping warm & tackling fuel poverty is issued extensively to all tenants at the outset of winter. This will link to the Council's (with partners) Affordable Warmth Strategy. Also see recommendations under Elected Members.

33. Report to the Improving Places Select Commission setting out details of boiler repair & pipe replacement programme with rationale for action taken.

4.9 Parish Councils & Community Groups

Key Issues

Communication with the Council & the Police
Awareness of the Emergency Plan process or activation of Business Continuity Plans

4.9.1 What went well?

Harthill and Woodall Parish Council set up a volunteering shopping scheme to support elderly and vulnerable people with basic supplies, they hired a snow plough to clear roads, set up an emergency volunteer car scheme using 4x4's to bring in essential food supplies as the local supermarket could not receive deliveries and ensured that information was circulated to local residents through email contacts, websites and at least daily website updates.

Letwell Parish Council

- Letwell is situated in the farthest corner of rural south Rotherham ten miles or so from the Town Hall.
- The village was saved from isolation by the work of a local farmer and his team who spent many hours clearing roads and rescuing countless stranded motorists in and around Letwell, Firbeck and Woodsetts.
- They cleared a mile of private road leading to a nursing home for the elderly when they realised the staff couldn't get to work. They also dug out the milkman at North Anston so he could reach the village with

supplies. These tasks were carried out without payment; without them the community would have been cut off entirely.

- Local residents worked together to look after the elderly, organising shopping expeditions in 4x4 vehicles, collecting and delivering newspapers and so on.
- Letwell Parish Council commended the refuse collection service; “they performed very well in our view, and the service later on over Christmas and New Year was first class.”

Anston Parish Council

- Parish coped with local issues without the activation of the emergency plan but think that co-ordination between all partners would have better if this had been activated on Tuesday 30th November;
- On the A57, Anston Parish Council & Church Warden were able to set up a temporary shelter & reception point in the Community Hall & supplied food, warm clothes and bedding for stranded motorists;
- They were able to provide accommodation for police to set up an operations room on the top floor of the Community Hall;
- Local elected member was involved in local response & communications via e mail;
- A local builder hired a ‘bobcat’ to clear the access to the Community Hall
- Support from the community was extensive with many examples of local support; e.g. the local school provided food from unused school meals and local residents pitched into support stranded drivers.

4.9.2 Learning Points

Communication is a key area that requires urgent attention in an emergency situation. The parish council told the review that they are there to help the authority, but no-one contacted them throughout the crisis.

They considered that whilst there is much publicity around involving local communities, a great opportunity was missed by the authority on this occasion.

An email or phone call to all parish clerks updating information and activity was expected on a daily basis in times of emergency specifically to inform on gritting schedules, closure of services such as school closures and the halting of refuse collections.

However, the review group found that this information was available on the council website and therefore could have been accessed. School closures are also read out on local radio every morning e.g. Hallam FM & Rother FM.

Parishes requested & supported an agreement with local farmers to clear & grit rural roads.

Recommendations

34. That all Parish Councils are supported to further develop local emergency plans in line with the guidance on Community Resilience Planning; this should involve contributions from the Emergency Services, PCT & other partners to ensure all representations are included;

35. The Area Assemblies should be a key partner in the above along with other identified community groups – such as local church groups/wardens;

36. As referenced above, the Council assist Parish Councils to be able to draw on a 'bank' of available farmers who already have in place an agreement to clear snow in severe conditions;

37. The review group understand that Parish Council Clerks or their representative's are included as key contacts in the Borough Emergency Plan; therefore they must be automatically contacted in the event of severe weather to assess local circumstances.

4.10 Area Assemblies

Key Issues

Lack of communication

More guidance on roles in emergency situation

Lack of planning

4.10.1 What worked well

Members of staff were able to work from home having taken equipment with them;

Local people contacted the Area Assembly offices to ask what they could do;

Area Assemblies were able to discuss this issue afterwards with residents and give them a route to express their concerns.

4.10.2 Lessons Learnt

Some offices couldn't be opened as caretakers were unable to reach them. Where officers were able to get to work, there was very little for them to do beyond notifying people that meetings were cancelled. Officers were not asked to co-ordinate local initiatives nor did they have the equipment to do so.

Any emergency plan/Severe Weather Plan needs to include a role for the Area Assembly Staff which could be around co-ordinating volunteers, issuing equipment, giving out information about local services, acting as a conduit for the main body of neighbourhood & housing services.

Recommendations

38. That consultation takes place with Area Assembly staff to define their role in adverse weather or emergency incidents; this should be an integral part of the Emergency Plan;

39. Area Assemblies should be given the support & resources to develop a snow warden scheme²⁶ for whom they are responsible & will co-ordinate their activities; this role should dovetail with the Network Management Team who will be focussed on road clearance in priority areas including vulnerable locations or residents within the community;

40. A communication role with other volunteers, engaging with local organisations and supporting local members in emergency incidents

41. In the event of adverse weather, churches/undertakers be able to phone a specific number to have routes cleared for a funeral cortege.

4.11 Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR)

During the severe weather in Dec 2010 VAR worked predominantly with Age Concern Rotherham and a few other organisations to help provide services to support elderly and vulnerable people in the Borough. The period of snow during the previous winter 09/10, had highlighted the issues faced when older people were not able to access basic supplies due to a prolonged period of severe weather.

Age Concern Rotherham had already had discussions with VAR and other agencies about possible measures which could be implemented should this situation arise again. However the sudden onset of the severe weather in early December 2010 meant that we had to implement these measures far quicker than we anticipated.

VAR has previous experience of responding to help service delivery during adverse weather. During the period of the Rotherham Floods in 2007 they helped support communities affected by flooding through helping co-ordinate and organise the provision of advice and information, fundraising activity, volunteer support and supply of practical essential items. VAR also supported VCS groups affected by the flooding.

4.11.1 What went well

Media coverage - the CEO of Age Concern Rotherham arranged extensive coverage on local radio to provide advice to older people about self-care in addition to creating awareness of the services being offered by VAR at this time.

²⁶ Community Snow Wardens are volunteers who help clear side roads and pavements of snow in their local area. They would receive formal health and safety training, equipment and bags of salt via the Area Assemblies working in Partnership with Streetpride's Community Delivery Teams.

This included 3 interviews on Radio Sheffield and 1 on Rother FM, which was repeated over a few days. Radio Sheffield also covered the 'Volunteer Driver' scheme;

Support continued to be offered by VAR by operating remotely, as offices had to be closed for 2 days.

Very quickly the severity of the weather caused difficulties for some VCS organisations and their clients. In response VAR immediately sent round an email bulletin alert to over 350 VCS organisations. This bulletin was aimed at:

- Appealing for volunteers to help out with an emergency shopping scheme that Age Concern Rotherham set up – see below
- Appealing for staff from VCS organisations to help out at the emergency contact centre set up by RMBC Adult Services at Bakers Field Court;
- Establishing whether any VCS organisation needed any specific help during the adverse weather conditions;
- Specifically, VAR liaised with Age Concern Rotherham, Crossroads Care Rotherham during this period. We also advised Harthill and Woodall Parish Council who were keen to provide help within their own community who were cut off due to inaccessible roads.

Support offered by other organisations:

- Age Concern Rotherham - whilst the offices were closed for 2 days, reception and other direct dial numbers including Advice and Information and Insurance were staffed remotely. Reception was staffed 8am to 8pm and also 10am to 3pm at the weekend to ensure that older people had a contact point.
- Other services operated remotely and as a result of this, direct support was offered to all current service users (approximately 500 people) on a daily or more basis throughout the bad weather;
- Crossroads Care Rotherham – operated throughout the period and also offered support to the Emergency Shopping Scheme.

Emergency Shopping Scheme

Age Concern Rotherham (ACR) were in the process of developing a plan (Autumn 10) for an emergency shopping scheme using volunteer 4 x 4 drivers. This had resulted from their experience of Winter 09/10. Despite the sudden onset of snow in November 10 they had already got some good publicity for this scheme.

As soon as the impact of the severe weather became clear, CEO's for both Age Concern and VAR decided to put these ideas into action. VAR's primary role in this was to recruit the volunteers whilst Age Concern worked with RMBC Adult Services to identify vulnerable elderly people who needed support and emergency shopping supplies. VAR and ACR then matched volunteers to the shopping needs of particular elderly vulnerable people.

The scheme required certain prerequisites due to the speed of implementation:

- They had to use known volunteers or people who were police checked in order to protect vulnerable people;
- Had to recruit local volunteers as the shopping often had to be delivered on foot;
- Set up an appeal for drivers of 4x4's to assist;
- Local radio helped to publicise the scheme to older people who could then contact ACR directly or through RMBC Adult Services;
- Over 40 people volunteered to support the scheme, including ACR's staff and volunteers, VAR staff, some local elected members, LSP Board members and partner agency staff. Many of these have agreed to remain on the list to be contacted in a similar situation in future.
- ACR reviewed this list in September 2011 to ensure the scheme is up-to-date for this coming winter.

4.11.2 Learning Points

Information systems - it was essential to have up to date contact information for staff and volunteers to be able to access specific people quickly and therefore must be kept in a place away from work;

It is also essential to have a backup of these systems in case IT systems fail – this happened during the floods when we had to revert to paper based systems;

Remote access to IT/e mail systems should be in place. Both VAR and ACR have remote access systems which enabled them to operate remotely and continue with service provision;

The protection of vulnerable people is always paramount and therefore volunteers that were unknown to either VAR or ACR could not be utilised. On this basis radio advertising for volunteers was not used;

Referral Systems - clarity is needed around referral criteria to ensure that any support offered is used appropriately so that the scheme is not offered to people who are able to manage in an emergency situation;

Support schemes should not be overwhelmed with requests or donations – in the 2007 floods the local Radio appeal for donated goods resulted in an overwhelming amount of equipment and clothing - some of which was not suitable and had to be disposed.

Communication and publicity – having a central point of contact and getting information out to quickly to people; local Parish Councils Harthill & Woodhall found this was essential. The Parish Clerk was able to use a website to post activities such as road clearance & supplies of bread and milk onto their website;

We need to be clear where people can look for information to try and avoid rumours, mis-information and panic; local media & radio is important as this gives people access to immediate information;

Be prepared for the unexpected - agency & volunteer supporters should be mindful of discovering a longer term physical, social or economic need other than the primary reason for a referral, being severe weather in this case.

Agencies should have in place procedures to ensure longer term care is provided;

Age Concern Rotherham followed up with volunteers after each visit to ensure all was OK. It is important to work together with the statutory authorities and know who to contact here especially out of hours. Risk should be managed by organisations not by individual volunteers. Timing and speed – in similar event, agencies must respond quickly and be clear how long the support & systems are to be in place for. As partners, VAR and Age Concern Rotherham were able to make service decisions quickly & implement them.

Recommendations

41. Ensure that all learning points submitted by VAR are picked up by the relevant council directorates and captured into business continuity plans as appropriate to specific service delivery.

42. Whilst this review focuses on extreme weather situations, some of these points may be relevant to the provision of adult social care at any time of the year. For example, where volunteers (ACR) are actively supporting the elderly & the vulnerable, either in extreme weather or other circumstance, that they have a clear referral point through which to highlight broader needs.

4.12 Elected Members

Key Issues

Communications

Role in Emergency Planning

Role of CMT & Cabinet Members

4.12.1 What went well

- Members were able to use local knowledge to assist the Network Management Team of local priorities and vulnerable residents requiring road clearance;
- Constituents were aware that they could contact their local Members as a focal point to gain more information about council service closures or delays affecting their area – this was both positive and negative depending on the amount of information held by the Elected Member.

4.12.2 Learning Points

Cabinet & the Strategic Leadership Team did not meet during the severe weather period to provide political/strategic steer on proposed action – the review group believe that this was one of the key factors in the Council not activating the emergency plan.

The Emergency Plan sets out the role of Elected Members and states that Members will be informed of an emergency situation and the activated Emergency Plan from either the Leader or Scrutiny Officers on his behalf.

As representatives of the community, input from Elected Members for the Wards affected will be crucial to the Authority's response. They will provide the Authority's officers with a clear understanding of the concerns and needs of the people in the affected area, as well as feedback to local people the work being undertaken by the Authority and other emergency responders and the reasons for any decisions which are taken or which may be made.

The Plan states that 'all Elected Members of the council have a legal obligation to ensure that the Authority is capable of fulfilling its statutory duties. In order to fulfil this role Members will be supported by officers acting under the authority of the Chief Executive who has appropriate delegated powers'.

During an incident where the emergency plan is activated, communications to and from Elected Members would be conveyed through the Emergency Control Room with support from officers from the scrutiny & policy team. Those officers may be based at any location providing they have the means to communicate with Members.

During November & December 10, Members reported to the review that they had little contact with anyone co-ordinating action to deal with the impact of heavy snow. Many members resorted to using the same route as members of the public via the RBT Contact Centre which itself had technical issues to deal with.

In this instance, Members wishing to gain information or report issues to a central location or body, found it difficult to do so. The review considered that this was an opportunity missed given the ability of members to gather local intelligence and feed back to a central point.

Recommendations

43. The role of SLT along with Cabinet Members should be referenced within the emergency plan with particular emphasis on the importance of an emergency meeting to support strategic communication & decision making during adverse weather.

44. Emergency Planning Training for Members that simulates an adverse weather incident rather than a 'chalk & talk' exercise;

45. A pack of relevant information including a who's who contact list detailing Parish & Area Assembly Contacts

46. In the event of adverse weather or any incident that does not result in a control room being established, Members require a priority communication route for sending & receiving information updates. This could be either via a single phone number or an e mail address connecting to a centrally based co-ordinating officer. This recommendation should form part of the review of responsibilities within the emergency plan and business continuity plans.

47. It is recommended that a referral is made to the Member Training & Development Panel to identify training to enable Members to become 'Cold Weather Champions' for their Wards; this would involve distributing information (via council surgeries and other local meetings)) about cold weather projects, payments & grants and other appropriate advice. They would be supported by officers to undertake this role. This recommendation works alongside the principles within the Cold Weather Plan for England.

4.13 Recovery from an Emergency Incident

The Emergency Plan sets out procedures for a Recovery Plan if needed. This is activated by the Chief Executive following consultation with the Senior Emergency and Safety Management Team and the Emergency and Safety Team

The Borough Emergency Plan states that recovery should be considered as an integral part of the response arrangement's to an emergency, and may be instigated for the short, medium or long term depending on the impact of the incident. It is the process about returning a community to normality and will be led by the Authority with strategic input from multiple agencies & partners.

In the case of winter 2010/11, instigating a recovery plan on a short to medium term basis would have been helpful to ensure that all aspects of community life were restored and businesses & public services were back up & running & accessible. Closer links with communities at this time would have been forged via a short term recovery plan and helped to reduce the feeling that the Council had somehow neglected them.

Further work with our communities is required to prepare them for another severe winter at any future point.

The community will be better prepared to cope during and after an emergency when everyone works together using their local knowledge. Things like understanding what needs vulnerable groups may have in an emergency can make a real difference. Identifying and planning for the risks encountered during the occurrence of a severe flood, heat-wave or snowfall could help in reducing the potential impact on individuals, families and the wider community.

Being prepared and able to respond to an emergency can often help people recover more quickly. The principles of community resilience highlights why communities should be supported to engage in this type of planning:

- ✓ Increase individual, family and community resilience against all threats and hazards;
- ✓ Support and enable existing community resilience, and expand and grow these successful models of community resilience in other areas;
- ✓ Remove the barriers which inhibit or prevent participation in community resilience at a local level;
- ✓ Support effective dialogue between the community and the practitioners supporting them;
- ✓ Raise awareness and understanding of risk and the local emergency response capability in order to motivate and sustain self resilience;

- ✓ Provide tools to allow communities and individuals to articulate the benefits of emergency preparedness to the wider community;
- ✓ Provide a shared framework to support cross-sector activity at all levels in a way that ensures sufficient flexibility to make community resilience relevant and workable in each local community.

5 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

5.1 National

5.1.1 In Peterborough, the council has used street cleansing staff to spread salt throughout the main shopping/pedestrianised areas of the city centre. The Council treats 'pay and display' car parks and has a route of 30 pedestrian bridges and subways which receive precautionary treatments carried out by a term maintenance contractor. A secondary gritting network links the main car parks, hospital and train station to the city centre. They are currently trialling alternative de-icing/non-slip products for footbridges as an alternative to salt which can cause corrosion and trialling a new liquid spray treatment which can be applied to pavements using weed-killer spraying equipment.

5.1.2 Birmingham City Council's review has recommended that a procedure is developed for staff that cannot perform their normal duties to be redeployed to winter maintenance activities e.g. pedestrian walkway clearance etc. This procedure will form part of the winter maintenance plan and contain a process for managing the convergence of staff, health, safety and management issues.

5.1.3 Typical of many authorities, East Riding of Yorkshire Council has fitted all of their gritting vehicles with GPS systems that allow sections of the road that have been treated to be clearly identified along with the time and nature of the treatment. Pre-season spreader checks and calibration of all carriageway spreaders is undertaken, following summer maintenance by trained and authorised service technicians. The vehicles are equipped with two-way radio equipment so that contact can be maintained with the control room.

Winter services decision-makers and scouts are issued with mobile phones and decision makers participate in appropriate specialised meteorological training and on all other aspects of their duties.

5.1.4 Buckinghamshire County Council have developed a list of farmers who are now signed up to clear snow from roads.

5.1.5 Kirklees Council have issued detailed practical advice to residents via their website on actions that will help communities & individuals get through a severe snow event²⁷

²⁷ See Appendix 6 for details
Final Draft – 16/01/12

5.2 Local

Wentworth Area Assembly is considering the funding of a snow plough for the local police quad bike so that urgent medical supplies or support to the elderly & vulnerable can be maintained.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The review found that many officers, councillors, members of the public, emergency services and other partners worked extremely hard during this period to ensure that a minimum level of essential public services were provided across the Borough, in addition to assisting with the incident on the A57. Without this effort & determination, the impact on individuals & communities would have been much greater than it was.

The high level of neighbourliness and community spirit in Rotherham was underestimated. Surprise was expressed by officers giving evidence to the review on the extent to which residents pitched in to support their communities. The way in which the people of Anston responded to the developing crisis on the A57 was just one example of this. We believe that the many acts of support and kindness undertaken by people all over the borough could & should have been harnessed by the Council and in doing so, could have achieved a more co-ordinated response.

Local people know their own environments well, which local routes which are important and which services and locations require access at all times; they will also have important knowledge about where vulnerable residents live. The skills & knowledge of local councillors who are key contacts within each community also needs to be more visible & co-ordinated in respect of the emergency planning process.

We have seen examples of other authorities using parish councils for early warnings, using local farmers as route clearers, recruiting individuals as snow wardens, setting up groups of people to visit the potentially vulnerable. In a structured & pre planned way, Rotherham needs to do this too, building on the genuine willingness of people to help others in need and willing to take responsibility when the council are unable to act.

However, there are specific areas where the Council, working with our partners, need to tighten up communications in order to improve our ability to respond to extreme weather or other rare weather related or borough wide incidents. The Council needs to be much clearer across directorates and with our partners around terminology relating to an emergency situation.

Evidence presented to the review suggests that in our interpretation of an 'emergency', leans towards specific incidents that are confined to a geographic area such as road or rail disasters or for example, the Ulley Dam emergency in 2007²⁸ We are less inclined to see 'developing conditions'

²⁸ South Yorkshire Police activated the Borough Emergency Plan and set up 'Gold Control Command' at Atlas Court, Brightside Lane, and Sheffield to co-ordinate the response.
Final Draft – 16/01/12 *Page 54*

such as severe weather patterns as potential emergencies and are therefore less prepared for them when they happen.

Clarity is required around the roles of individuals who are directly responsible for activating the emergency plan and the processes in which this decision is made. This needs to hinge around the anticipated benefits of opening up the Emergency Control Room which could be deemed to be necessary at different 'levels of emergency' and which the Council need to identify in the Emergency Plan.

One of the key messages arising out of this review is that communications would have been enhanced by an emergency meeting between partners. This should have been triggered by the extreme weather and would have enabled more planning to take place in response to a clearly developing situation.

This meeting have provided an opportunity to assess what the problems were likely to be and should have been organised on the basis that severe weather warnings had already been issued. Most witnesses believed that if the Emergency Control Room had been in place from the night of Tuesday 29th November, the levels of co-ordination and communication between the council and our partner's would have been more effective.

Ideally, this meeting would have taken place in a single location; however, if weather or other conditions prohibited this, locations could have been identified around the Borough allowing partner representatives to make their way to the nearest one.

Police Officers need a clearer understanding of the roles they might undertake if reporting to a workplace which is not their usual base; in the event of forecasts of severe snow, there needs to be a list of equipment which aids communication & mobility and which officers are authorised to take home with them.

Better use needs to be made of council staff in these conditions. In the absence of meetings and day to day work, staff could easily be designated for other tasks. The Council need to develop the principles for briefing staff on their roles & responsibilities in the event of such bad weather. This will vary greatly between services, but will provide more substantial direction to staff who cannot get into work or who have to attend an alternative place of work.

With regard to the widespread boiler failure, the Council worked well with partners and agencies to mitigate the disturbance to tenants; however, the potential for this combination of circumstances (being the weather, the number of households affected, the volume of calls and call centre technical fault, the loss of heating and hot water on a major scale) must be mitigated in the event of similar circumstances.

This review has made many recommendations that we believe will go some way to achieving more clarity in our emergency planning arrangements and in particular, in dealing with severe snow incidents or other adverse weather.

Our key recommendation is that the Council acknowledge all the 'learning points' recorded in this report and that these are taken account of in the preparation of a Severe Weather Plan that supports business continuity across the Borough in these conditions.

7 THANKS

7.1 Elected Members

Councillor Gerald Smith – Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth & Prosperity

Councillor Richard Russell – Cabinet Member for Waste & Emergency Planning

Councillor Jahangir Akhtar – Deputy Leader (formerly Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods & Adult Services).

7.2 RMBC Officers

Matt Gladstone – Director of Commissioning, Policy & Performance

Alan Matthews – Emergency & Safety Manager

Annette Senior - Emergency Planning Officer

David Burton – Director of Streetpride

Bob Stock – Formerly Streetpride, EDS

Dave Richmond – Director of Housing & Neighbourhoods

Shona McFarlane – Director of Health & Well Being - Neighbourhoods

Dave Hepworth – Schemes Delivery Team Manager - Hellaby Depot

Elaine Hedge – Community Liaison Officer – Neighbourhoods

Sarah Curer – Area Assemblies

Tracy Holmes – Corporate Communications & Marketing Manager

7.3 Others

David Coldwell – General Manager - Willmott Dixon

Alan Baranowski – Sth Yorks Ambulance Service – Operations Director

Dave Bannister – Sth Yorks - Locality Manager

Kath Atkinson – Formerly of the Primary Care Trust

Michael Gazur – Anston Parish Council

Neville Hamilton – South Yorkshire Police

7.4 Written Evidence

Martyn Sharpe – Clerk to Letwell Parish Council

Michael Moore - Bus Services Officer - South Yorkshire PTE

Peter Garbutt & Rachel Gillbanks – National Farmers Union

Janet Wheatley - Voluntary Action Rotherham (VAR)

8 APPENDICES

8.1 Appendix 1 – Cold Weather Plan for England November 2011

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_130564

Cold Weather Plan Levels	
Level 1	Long Term Planning All Year
	Winter Preparedness programme 1 Nov – 31 March
Level 2	Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert & readiness. 60% risk of severe cold in the following days
Level 3	Response to severe weather – severe weather action
Level 4	Major incident – Emergency response Exceptionally severe weather or threshold temperatures breached for more than 6 days

Level 1 – alerts run throughout winter & indicate that people should be preparing for the possibility severe weather & its effects on health. Everyone has a role to play in this, including individuals, health & social care professionals & a range of community & voluntary sector organisations.

Level 2 – is triggered when there is a 60% risk of severe cold weather lasting at least 48 hours forecast to arrive within the next two or three days. The plan sets out action to be taken by hospitals, care homes & communities to prepare for the potential impact on health.

Level 3 – alerts indicates that the severe weather forecast at level 2 is now occurring, and is expected to impact on people’s health & on health services. It should trigger a series of actions by hospitals, care homes & individuals as set out in the plan.

Level 4 – alert indicates a major incident. It means that exceptional winter weather affects one or several parts of the country.

8.2 Appendix 2 – Section 2 Emergency Plan



02 How This Plan is
Activated....

8.3 Appendix 3 – Section 5 Emergency Plan



05 Key Personnel
Roles and Res...

8.4 Appendix 4 – Section 8 Emergency Plan



08 Summary
Information on Spec.

8.5 Appendix 5 - Recommended Grab Bag Contents

Torch
Battery radio
Toiletries / first aid kit
Important documents (e.g. insurance policy)
List of emergency contact numbers (see right for downloadable templates)
Spare keys to your home / car
Pencil, paper, penknife and whistle
Mobile phone
Cash & Credit Cards
Winter boots, warm clothing and waterproofs
Ready-to-eat food, bottled water and warm drink in flask

8.6 Appendix 6 – Keep Warm & Safe Message from Kirklees Council

<http://www2.kirklees.gov.uk/news/onlinenews/newsdesk/fullstory.aspx?id=3063>