

From D Thomas ;Lead Officer Health, Safety, Fire and Resilience

Summary of paper presented to meeting of Aylesbury Vale Association of Local Councils

13.03.14

Resilience/Emergency Planning – the roles for Local Councils in light of recent flooding

1 Update

1.1 Please see interim report to inform the above meeting on Resilience (Emergency) Planning.

1.2 To discuss roles for local councils in light of recent flooding”

2 Background Civil Contingencies Act

2.1 AVDC is designated as a Category 1 Responder¹ (C1R) under Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and is subject to the full set of civil protection duties. We are required to:

- assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning
- put in place emergency plans
- put in place business continuity management arrangements
- put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency
- share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination
- co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency
- provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management (local authorities only)

2.2 Many of these are done collaboratively within the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, a body that all local C1R belong to. AVDC is represented through the Chief Executive of Wycombe on the forum.

2.3 Category 1 Responders include the following organisations:

- Aylesbury Vale District Council
- Buckinghamshire County Council
- Public Health -Buckinghamshire County Council
- Southern Central Ambulance service
- Bucks Clinical Commissioning Group
- Bucks Healthcare. NHS Trust

¹ Category 1 Responders include Local Authorities, Fire and Rescue Services, Thames Valley Police, HNS Clinical Commissioning Groups and Central South Ambulance Service

- Environment Agency
- Bucks Fire and Rescue
- Thames Valley Police

All the above bring to the table their own expertise with health issues after flooding involving collaborative working between the District Council (Environmental Health Officers), the Clinical Commissioning Groups and Public Health, recently devolved back to Buckinghamshire County Council

2.4 Definition of Emergency

Under the Civil Contingencies Act “Emergency” is defined as :

- (a) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom,
- (b) an event or situation which threatens serious damage to the environment of a place in the United Kingdom, or
- (c) war, or terrorism, which threatens serious damage to the security of the United Kingdom.

For the purposes of subsection (1)(a) an event or situation threatens damage to human welfare only if it involves, causes or may cause—

- (a) loss of human life,
- (b) human illness or injury,
- (c) homelessness,
- (d) damage to property
- (e) disruption of a supply of money, food, water, energy or fuel,
- (f) disruption of a system of communication,
- (g) disruption of facilities for transport, or
- (h) disruption of services relating to health.

For the purposes of subsection (1)(b) an event or situation threatens damage to the environment only if it involves, causes or may cause—

- (a) contamination of land, water or air with biological, chemical or radio-active matter, or
- (b) disruption or destruction of plant life or animal life.

3 Emergency Planning

Emergency Planning is the external facing part of Resilience, and is related to disasters and crises in the community , a scale such as

3.1 Activation of the plan

The plan has been partially activated on three occasions during the last 2 years. Two of which were occasions were due to the River Ouse bursting its banks in Buckingham, overnight 21/22 November 2012 and overnight 25/26 November 2012. On at least four occasions (including the above) the local Community Flood Protection Group (with fire wardens) was active and invaluable in providing feedback as to water levels.

The third activation of the plan was in Aylesbury overnight 7/8 February 2014 where there were 79 properties affected by surface water flooding on the Willows Estate from Stoke Brook. This resulted in 5 people being accommodated at the Guttman Centre with AVDC and the Red Cross in attendance.

3.2 Update of AVDC Emergency Plans

AVDC's Civil Emergency Plan has been updated on a number of occasions, latterly replacing additional staff to cover for staff leaving. Additionally all third party contact numbers have been checked and updated where necessary. The other plan that AVDC was traditionally responsible for has been handed over to the 'FA4B'² group who have worked with AVDC and the Environment Agency to ensure that it is kept up to date and of use should the River Ouse flood. We have also lost the use of Buckingham University as a reception centre in the event of an emergency and have approached both Buckingham Rugby Club and The Swan Pool so that both of these locations can be added to the Flood Plan.

4 Community Resilience

4.1 Category 1 responders are required to work with individual communities to make them more resilient to an emergency and to improve their resilience in the event of an emergency. Guidance on community resilience can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60923/PFE-Guide-for-Communities_0.pdf. Being prepared and able to respond to an emergency can often help people recover more quickly. This illustrates how successful community resilience can be and why many communities are already engaged in this planning.

4.2 Community Resilience is about communities using local resources and knowledge to help themselves during an emergency in a way that complements the local emergency services. Answers to the following 3 questions can help to assess how prepared your community is and what can you do:

- Are you aware of the risks you and your community might face? For example, flooding.?
- How can you help yourself and those around you during an emergency?
- What can you do to get involved in emergency planning in your community?

4.3 Your community will be better prepared to cope during and after an emergency when everyone works together using their local knowledge. Things like understanding what requirements most-at-need groups may have in an emergency can make a real difference. Identifying and planning for the risks you may encounter during a severe flood, heat-wave or snowfall could help in reducing the potential impact on you, your family and the wider community.

² Flood Action For Buckingham

4.4 The [Civil Contingencies Act](#) requires the publication of all or part of a risk assessment for your local area (undertaken by local category 1 responders). This may be a useful point of reference for your own risk assessment.

5 Community Resilience in Aylesbury Vale

With the District Council becoming smaller with fewer employees the necessity of working with the community has become paramount. This together with distance means that by the time AVDC arrive things may be too late. It is suggested that we should not just focus on flooding with community resilience important for a whole range of events, both weather events and otherwise.

5.1 Buckingham Flood Group (FA4B)

The local group in Buckingham was created with support from the National Flood Forum and the Environment Agency. Their role is three fold:

- To help residents put up their own property bespoke flood protection equipment
- To help when residents are evacuated
- To open up reception centres as a consequence of any evacuation whilst AVDC staff respond to the emergency

This is in addition to property level flood protection to over 100 properties affected by the 2007 floods. This group has not followed the models elsewhere as the Town Council has not led on this with leadership from 'Churches Together'.

Fortunately we have not yet had to test the defences at Buckingham in a real emergency with all subsequent events not approaching 2007 levels.

5.2 Ashendon Parish Council

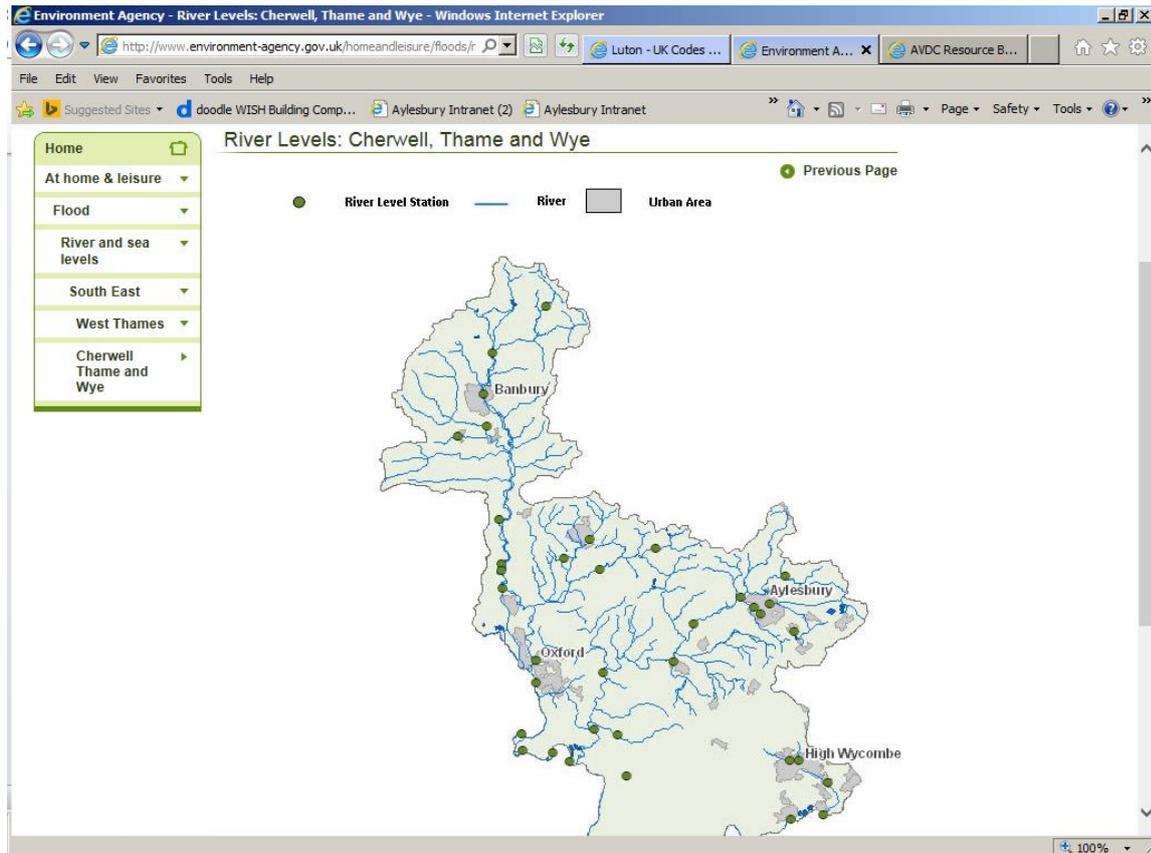
Ashendon Parish Council has put in place its own Community Plan, publicised through the community. It recognises that as a small village there may be larger areas of population that may take priority. They can therefore provide support for the community

5.3 Potential Flooding Events

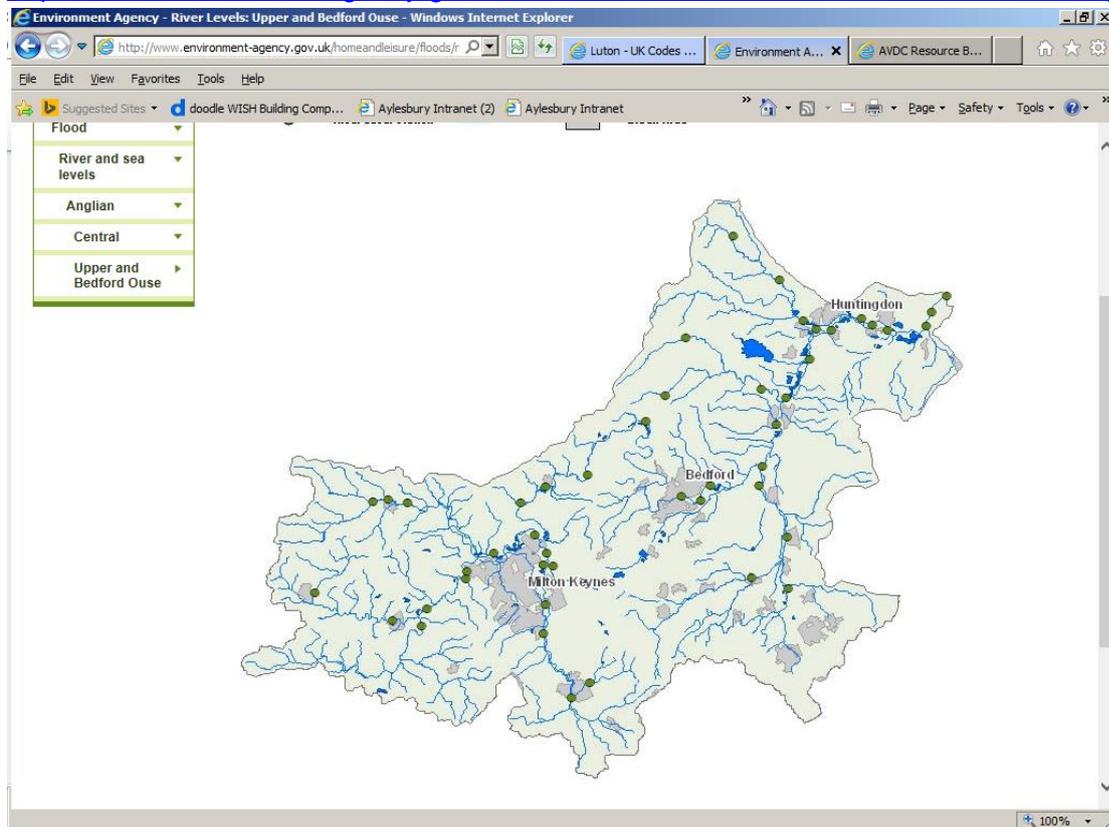
There are several areas of the Vale where there are known flooding risks with Environment Agency warning systems. These include:

- River Thames (Watermead, Buckingham Park)
- River Ray and tributaries – Grendon Underwood
- Bear Brook
- River Ouse
- River Ouzel

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/136497.aspx>



<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/riverlevels/120732.aspx>



This ignores flooding from reservoirs and surface run off.

5.4 Example from elsewhere

BBCs 'Countryfile' focused on community resilience at Porlock Weir (See Appendix 1). This project has been undertaken with support from local authorities and the local fire and rescue service

<http://www.dsfire.gov.uk/News/Newsdesk/PressReleaseArticle.cfm?ReleaseID=941&siteCategoryId=3&T1ID=26&T2ID=36>

6 What do you want from AVDC?

This is the crux of the issue and where input is required from each of the town and parish councils.

What are your responses from 4.2 above?

What training and information do you need to lead on preparing your own community plans?,

Would you and other parish councils appreciate a workshop here at AVDC?

What input do you require from AVDC and other category 1 responders?

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Our Changing Coastline - Newsletter 2

What made Porlock Weir the way it is today?

Everybody has a story they enjoy regaling about an experience at the coast. These stories may involve an extremely high tide changing the appearance of a familiar coastline or a severe storm with crashing waves. With this in mind, the Coastal Change Pathfinder project is attempting to gather a historical archive of local people's knowledge and experience of changes at the coast. For example this could include old photographs and stories that explain how the area has naturally changed throughout time or of how human intervention has influenced the area. The information will be collected in an online resource. Key events which have shaped the coastline in the Porlock Weir area will then be made available to everyone, leaving a lasting legacy for current and future generations. We hope local residents and visitors can contribute with photographs and stories that help explain how and why the coastline at Porlock Weir is the way we see it today.

Shifting shingle

The coastline is far from static. It is a dynamic area that is continually in motion; subtly changing shape after each tide. At Porlock Bay attempts have been made to document these changes, especially following the breach of the shingle ridge. The Coastal Change Pathfinder project would like to continue and expand this work. Again using the website, a record of the changes happening around Porlock Weir can be stored online and continued indefinitely. If you regularly visit the coast around Porlock Weir and would like to be involved with a coastal monitoring group, get in touch with the project team using the details below.

Preparing for Action

Using the historical and monitoring information gathered, we hope to prepare a Community Resilience Plan for Porlock Weir. The plan will focus on responding to the Weir being struck by a coastal flood event, such as a particularly severe storm, an extremely high tide or a mixture of both. This will build resilience within the community and help ensure village life continues no matter what the sea throws at the Weir. The plan could include what to look out for in the run up to a flood, useful procedures to follow, relevant people to contact, a checklist of vulnerable people in the village and whatever suggestions you might think are necessary.

If you have any questions, suggestions or comments about this project, please feel free to contact the Project Officer, Paul Jones on 01823 357337 or e-mail PXJones@somerset.gov.uk

This project is a partnership which is being led by Somerset County Council.



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