

Brighton & Hove City Council

Climate Change Scrutiny Panel

Monday 1 February 2010.

**Contribution from Robin Humphries, Civil Contingencies Manager,
Brighton & Hove City Council.**

My Role

The newly created post of Civil Contingencies Manager encompasses two roles, formerly known as Emergency Planning and Business Continuity.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a statutory duty upon councils to plan and prepare for 'emergencies' that may affect their area. The term 'emergencies' is defined in the act, which deviates from the traditional meaning of the word.

The act encourages co-operation, partnership approaches, and joint working to ensure maximum use is made of available resources before, during, and after an 'emergency'.

The role of the Civil Contingencies Team is to ensure that all these 'encouragements' are in place for the city.

To do this we need to look outside our boundaries;

- A significant incident affecting Gatwick Airport
- Flooding in East or West Sussex
- Evacuation of parts of London
- Any other incident;

may all impact upon our city.

The Sussex Resilience Forum

To achieve this, the act sets up 'Local Resilience Forums' based on policing areas. The Sussex Resilience Forum meets on a regular basis, meeting at Chief Officer/Chief Executive level brings together all Category 1 and 2 Responders in East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove (Category 1 and 2 Responders are defined in the act).

Below this are a series of working groups tasked with specific actions targeted at the type of incident defined as a high risk.

We are represented on all the groups where the threat is considered significant to this City, they include:

- Pandemic Influenza
- Fuel shortages
- Coastal pollution
- Severe Weather

Severe Weather Group

This committee will be concerned with the Severe Weather work-stream so I will explain this in more detail.

The group is chaired by the Environment Agency and includes representatives from all the Emergency Services, the Met Office, and Local Authorities, and Health.

Primarily focused on the response to severe weather events, rather than climate change, the group plans the county-wide response to extremes of:

- Heat
- Cold
- Rain
- Snow
- Wind
- Fog
- Drought
- Flooding

To give an example, the planning for heat would not only include a short spell of temperatures up to 35c, but also where rail lines would buckle, road surfaces melt, increased admission to hospitals with respiratory problems etc.

Prevention is not a real option; however for all of these events there is considerable scope to mitigate the impact. Good communications, warning and informing and having robust response plans are vital.

Local arrangements

Having identified the resources required to achieve this mitigation the next task is to ensure that this council has in place the processes and equipment to deliver our part of the response.

This is achieved in two ways:

- Internally through our Emergency Response Team (MIST) where key managers meet on a regular basis to exercise the plans and discuss options and roles

and

- Externally through our local Brighton & Hove Resilience Group which brings together local responders and key players in the City with Emergency Planning, Business Continuity or Safety responsibilities.

For climate change we review the levels of 'extreme' making internal and external recommendations where appropriate.

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